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An ink-stained neoclassicist: Joel Barlow and the publication of poetry in the early Republic

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AN INK-STAINED NEOCLASSICIST: JOEL BARLOW AND THE PUBLICATION OF POETRY IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

by

Willis Burr McDonald III

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in English
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Thesis Supervisor: Professor Phillip Round

ABSTRACT

This study examines the literary career of the eighteenth-century American poet Joel Barlow. Because Barlow, unlike his peers, came to fully embrace print-based methods of authorship and advertising, between 1790-1810 he emerged as the most widely read American poet. Employing a book studies methodology, this project focuses on the publication details surrounding each of Barlow's poems including: his relationships with his publishers, the physical shape and appearance of his works, the cost of those works, how those works were advertised, and the extent of their geographic distribution. The arc of Barlow's career was extraordinary. Barlow's development, his transformation from a standard eighteenth-century club poet who relied on manuscript circulation and oral performance in the 1770s to an international man of letters and a periodical fixture by 1800, highlights the possibilities and limitations of American literary publishing during the early national period. Importantly, Barlow's ability to emphasize, rather than elide, his personal identity in the press, forces scholars to reevaluate their notions of late eighteenth-century republican print culture.

Barlow's career also impacts our reading of American literary history. In an age of caution and deference in American poetry, Barlow was driven to maximize his audience, publishing his poems across all price points and in every medium offered by the time. Barlow's efforts at self-promotion, coupled with his staunch republican politics, allowed his poems to take on a life of their own in the era's fiercely partisan press. Thanks to his association with the transatlantic republican movement and radical religious thinkers, this study suggests that poems such as the "Conspiracy of Kings,"

(1792) “The Hasty Pudding,” (1796) and the *Columbiad* (1807) enjoyed audiences as large and as economically diverse as those of popular fiction. Even in an age marked by the rise of the novel and the beginnings of romanticism, *An Ink-Stained Neoclassicist* contends that Barlow’s proto-mass audience reveals the persistent popularity and cultural importance of neoclassical verse in the intellectual life of many Americans at the turn of the nineteenth century.

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Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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Downing A. Thomas

To Mary

O MAN, my brother, how the cordial flame
Of all endearments kindles at the name!
In every clime, thy visage greets my eyes,
In every tongue thy kindred accents rise;
The thought expanding swells my heart with glee,
It finds a friend, and loves itself in thee.

Joel Barlow
"The Conspiracy of Kings"

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I would like to sincerely thank my advisor, Phillip Round, for his guidance throughout the writing of this dissertation. For three years Professor Round never hesitated to help, patiently reading through draft after draft. Professor Round consistently pushed me to expand the dimensions of this project, saving it from antiquarian obscurantism. The other members of my comprehensive exam and dissertation committee, Matt Brown, Ed Folsom, and Laura Rigal, shaped my scholarly identity and inspired me to investigate a little-traveled backwater of American literary history. I would also like to thank Downing Thomas for his service as the outside member. The opportunity to work with such an erudite group was the highlight of my time at the University of Iowa. I am also extremely thankful for the support I received, throughout my graduate study, from the Graduate College via the Presidential Fellowship.

Historical study has a profound way of making one realize they exist in merely their own terribly brief subsection of time’s long continuum. During the course of my research, I came to feel a deep kinship with the small group of scholars, living and dead, who had investigated the same questions that interested me. I hope that this work serves their efforts by building on what they found. For making my own scrap of history so sweet, I dedicate this work, with love, to Mary.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the literary career of the eighteenth-century American poet Joel Barlow. Because Barlow, unlike his peers, came to fully embrace print-based methods of authorship and advertising, between 1790-1810 he emerged as the most widely read American poet. Employing a book studies methodology, this project focuses on the publication details surrounding each of Barlow's poems including: his relationships with his publishers, the physical shape and appearance of his works, the cost of those works, how those works were advertised, and the extent of their geographic distribution. The arc of Barlow's career was extraordinary. Barlow's development, his transformation from a standard eighteenth-century club poet who relied on manuscript circulation and oral performance in the 1770s to an international man of letters and a periodical fixture by 1800, highlights the possibilities and limitations of American literary publishing during the early national period. Importantly, Barlow's ability to emphasize, rather than elide, his personal identity in the press, forces scholars to reevaluate their notions of late eighteenth-century republican print culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Let us begin with a literary fantasy. Imagine that sometime in the late 1780s the best American poets born in the 1750s decided to convene for a long weekend to discuss the future of American poetry. Our poets want to talk about style and subject matter – of which they all have nearly identical ideas– but they're also interested in the business side of literature, so panels are planned on issues like finding patrons and subscribers, promoting your work, and dealing with publishers. We can pretend that the social restrictions based on race, class, and gender that would have prevented the meeting from taking place are nonexistent. This generation of poets was perfectly positioned to gain historical prominence as "poets of the Revolution" or "poets of the new Nation" and for this reason, our conference contains nearly all the big names of the century's literary history. The conference attendees include male members of the conservative social elite: John Trumbull (b. 1750), David Humphreys (b. 1752), Timothy Dwight (b. 1752), and Royall Tyler (b. 1757), all graduates of Harvard or Yale. Philip Freneau (b. 1752) and Joel Barlow (b. 1754), also university men, are in attendance, though they were not quite of the same class or political temperament. The conference also features a number of female poets, including Ann Eliza Bleecker (b. 1752), Anna Young Smith (b. 1756) and Sarah Wentworth Morton (b. 1759). Sharing some of the strictures these women wrote under, as well as a great many more that were uniquely her own, was Phillis Wheatley (b. 1753). A bit too old to receive an invitation, Hugh Henry Brackenridge (b. 1748) quite humorously participates in the conference through an open window.

Thinking about this fanciful meeting is useful because it brings the differences within the group more sharply into focus. Once they had started talking about publication issues, the conference would have surely fallen apart. For example, a discussion about whether or not one should publish under their own name would be sidetracked by a fierce dispute over whether it is proper for everyone there (i.e. the female poets) to be published at all. Discussions about patronage, how to engage the press, and copyright, would similarly fracture. There was nothing resembling a consensus on these topics, even amongst the male elites, who were freed from the various limitations placed on others. Ideas of authorship were tied to complicated understandings of propriety, deference, class, and political participation, at a time when those concepts were themselves in flux thanks to the Revolution. The expectations and ambitions of American poets were similarly varied. There were a few strivers, poets who dreamed of a large audience, but most attendees had neither the desire nor the means to expand their audience beyond their local base. For this reason, most of these poets would write in the same style and publish in the same formats for their entire lives.

Had the conference continued, however, it seems to me that Joel Barlow, above all the others, would have stood out. The man from Hartford would have had the most diverse set of experiences there. Of those gathered, he was the only poet to have truly thrived on both sides of the manuscript/print divide and the only one to have successfully sought patronage and later served as his own publisher. He also had the most varied set of publications in his repertoire. Through his public stance on copyright and his willingness to experiment, Barlow gives us reason to believe that he would have truly enjoyed such a gathering and been interested to hear differing ideas. By the conference's end, he would

have likely served as a de facto moderator, clearly emerging, on publication matters, as the most knowledgeable voice in the room.

Quite simply, no American poet of the early national period published their work in as many ways as Barlow. Between 1778 and 1809, Barlow circulated poems in manuscript, he read them at commencements, and he published them in pamphlets, in broadsides, in periodicals, in books large and small, expensive and cheap. These poems, after a highly localized beginning, were available on both sides of the Atlantic, and everywhere from North Carolina to New Hampshire. Every avenue of poetic authorship the period offered would be tried by Barlow, mostly with success. At one time or another, Barlow wrote as the college poet, the court poet, the minister poet, the newspaper poet, the collaborator, the controversialist, the gentleman poet. Regarding the publication of poetry during the early national period, Barlow's dynamic career delineates the full possibilities of his age.

Barlow's huge range of poetic activity is the story told by this dissertation. The grand sweep of Barlow's poetic experiences demands our attention because he offers an index into an awkward age in the history of American poetry. Because of Barlow's uniquely diverse career, the more we know about how he published his poems, the more we can make sense of American literary culture in the early national period. Through Barlow, we can better see the gradual emergence of a more modern conception of authorship, one that would not fully develop until later in the nineteenth century. Ideas of authorship were invariably tied to the possibilities and limitations of the print market, which influenced conceptions of the author's identity, audience size, style, how the author might be financially supported, who owned and controlled a literary work, etc.

Although everyone could see that the situation for American authors was changing (which is precisely why new debates over issues like copyright had begun) the process taking place, the birth of modern, liberal, print-based, poetic authorship, was one that would need decades to work itself out. The challenges facing the poets who happened to live during these decades were immense. Under the weight of both practical and theoretical difficulties, the careers of most American poets were flattened, crushed into a dull stasis by their literary burdens. Because Barlow negotiated this difficult environment better than any other American poet, despite no clear advantage in talent, he was likely the most read poet of his generation.

This study traces the dramatic arc of Barlow's career, from his early years as a provincial poet using mostly eighteenth-century methods of publication to his later incarnation as an internationally known figure who was at the cutting edge of literary authorship. Looking at the shape of Barlow's career, I put forward two arguments. First, Barlow's transformation was fueled by his embrace of print as the core of his poetic identity. By this I mean that Barlow came to understand that the older ways of reaching an audience (manuscripts, speeches, clubs, etc.) were limited compared to the growing potential of the American print market. Barlow tried to run his own print shop, and worked closely with the men who published his poems. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Barlow wanted his name on the title page, and he wanted his name in the newspaper. Barlow's understanding that his poems were meant to exist on paper (rather than existing ideally as a speech or a song) eventually manifested itself in works that celebrated the materiality of print. Second, because of Barlow's combination of drive and flexibility, he achieved a much larger audience than we might assume. By the end of his

career, Barlow had a widely distributed audience that was as broad and deep as that of fiction. Barlow has been too easily dismissed as just another Connecticut Wit, just another neoclassical couplet maker writing for a tiny audience. Emphatically, I argue that by the 1790s, this was not the case.

This dissertation is motivated by practical (but important) questions that have been neglected in previous studies of Barlow, and indeed, most previous studies of the poets of the early national period. Who printed Barlow's poems and for what reasons? Physically, what were those publications like, and what purposes were they meant to serve? What poems were sold and how much did they cost? How were they advertised? How large were editions? How many times were poems reprinted, excerpted, or reviewed in the periodical press? Where were these works printed and where were they sold? Using existing Barlow scholarship, studies of the individual printing firms where they exist, and the periodical record, I have pieced together answers to these questions for every poem published by Barlow.

These publication details generate three critical interventions within the field of scholarship on early national literature. First, Barlow's career impacts our notions of poetry's popularity during the period. Second, Barlow troubles our broad notions of republican literary culture. Third, the example of Barlow's career augments our understanding of the early stages of American authorship. Barlow's example points to gaps and problems regarding how we think about the most fundamental aspects of literature during the period. At the same time, Barlow provides a case study that shows us what approaches worked along with others that proved to be no longer effective.

The first critical intervention relates to the question of poetry's audience. As students of the period, we don't truly have any concrete sense of how popular the poets of the early national period were, no sense of how much poetry was bought and sold, how often poems were reprinted or excerpted, etc. The details are buried and scattered, and any sense of relative standing is lacking. Was Philip Freneau or John Trumbull more widely read? What was Timothy Dwight's most popular poem? Basic questions like these can be answered in nearly every other period of American literary history yet remain elusive for the early national period. As I have discovered in investigating Barlow, much of the existing scholarship on these matters still rely mostly on guesswork. The stagnation of the field accounts for these persistent mysteries. The sub-field of early national poetry simply did not experience the reappraisals and reconfigurations that occurred in nearly every other field of American literary studies in recent decades. Other than an increased attention to Wheatley, the canon of early national poets has not significantly changed in fifty years. If anything, it has gotten smaller, as secondary figures such as David Humphreys or Joseph Brown Ladd have essentially stopped being studied.[1] Because of this dynamic, there has been little critical energy dedicated to reclaiming forgotten or marginalized poets, projects which usually inject into the scholarly discussion important details relating to audience size, readership demographics, etc.[2]

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[1] Humphreys's poetry has not been studied in any detail since William Dowling's *Poetry and Ideology in Revolutionary Connecticut* was published in 1990. There has been no sustained study of Ladd since the 1940s.

[2] Additionally, many of the figures that have been recovered, such as Ann Eliza Bleecker, did not have their works printed, or in the case of Annis Boudinot Stockton published their works anonymously.

In this critical environment, the presumed size of poetry's audience has shrunk. Since Cathy Davidson's *Revolution and the Word*, the dominant concern of specialists in the historical period has been the novel, which has come to be understood as *the* popular form of the era. Davidson's work links the rise of the American novel to "the democratization of the written word" (vii) and highlights the way in which the novel gained resonance amongst women and those marginalized by the social elite. The implications for poetry's producers, audience, and cultural meaning are clear. Davidson takes direct aim at the Connecticut Wits, considering their work representative of "a somewhat hypocritical gentry determined that the Revolution should proceed no further" (257). This dismissive reading of a huge portion of the early republic's literary culture has a long lineage. After all, the Connecticut poets were a group that Vernon Louis Parrington had referred to as "the tie-wig school" (xix). Parrington however, nevertheless believed that this group needed to be better understood, and he produced an anthology of their work and gave them ample attention in his sweeping cultural history. By the end of the twentieth century, however, Davidson would argue that the traditional attention given to Barlow and his peers had warped our understanding of the time.[3] Instead, the early American novel was what needed to be studied and taught, as it came to be seen as the form with a "proto-mass audience" (Davidson 43). By implication, poetry, aside from newspaper verse, has little to tell us about the wider literary experience of most people of the time.

If the attention given to the novel by Davidson and her followers has crowded out verse from the histories of the period, wider print studies such as Trish Loughran's *The*

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[3] See Davidson 257-260.

Republic in Print have persuasively argued that the distribution of any work, in any genre, was likely to be much smaller than once believed. Loughran has highlighted the extreme limitations of the print market during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, revealing the profound economic and technological limits of the print market prior to the 1830s. *The Republic in Print* shatters the notion than any work, even Paine's *Common Sense*, could have had a large, national audience anywhere near the size they were once assumed to have had.[4] Clearly, if Paine's audience must be reduced, then almost no one could have been reading long poems like Barlow's. Combined, Davidson and Loughran provide both theoretical and practical arguments suggesting that Barlow, like most early American poets, must have had a small, isolated, elite audience.

However, as I studied the distribution of Barlow's poems, I was surprised to see just how popular and available his work was. The limitations demonstrated by Loughran are significant and Barlow's early career everywhere shows the difficulty of disseminating literature in the revolutionary era. Yet, in light of what we now know about the size of the American print market, Barlow's achievement becomes even more apparent. Barlow's poems seem to have been just as widely read, just as commented upon, as the average popular novel, if not more so. The potential implications of this fact are vast and beyond the scope of this study. However, as we assess the literary culture of the early national period, it is vital that we note that Barlow's *Columbiad* was likely read

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[4] In *The Republic In Print* Loughran sets out to shatter "American nationalism's preferred techno-mythology" (3) the notion that specific works in print were crucial in forming the national identity and sparking the American Revolution. Instead, Loughran argues that until the 1830s, there was nothing resembling a national print network or a unified national print culture. Instead, prior to that emergence, "fragmented pieces of text circulated haphazardly and unevenly" (Loughran xix). For Loughran's dismantling of the legend of Paine's nation-wide dissemination, see 33-104.

by as many people as was, say, Charles Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn*. Furthermore, because of Barlow's political associations and his connections to the radical press, there is good evidence that Barlow's readership was socially and economically diverse, not homogenously wealthy and university educated.

My second critical intervention concerns wider notions of republican print culture during the early national era. Specifically, Barlow's example troubles the argument put forth by Michael Warner in *Letters of the Republic* that republican print ideology presumed or implied an impersonal zone of contact between author and reader, a new field of discourse dedicated to reasoned argument as opposed to individual interests.[5] Barlow, a republican writer in both the broad and specific sense, who understood and eventually relished the print medium, should be an ideal example of Warner's argument. Instead, at almost every turn, his actions contradict it. Rather than elide them, Barlow sought to recreate older forms of personal contact through print, and he was one of the first American poets to attempt to build for himself literary celebrity.

As Christopher Grasso has shown, changes in the meanings and use of print did augur wider shifts in political and cultural authority in eighteenth century Connecticut.[6]

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[5] Building off of Jurgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Warner's study is an attempt to "analyze the historical transformation in print discourse as fully historical – to analyze it without attributing its significance to an ahistorical point of reference, such as the intrinsic nature of individuals, reason, or technology" (xi). For Warner, this means investigating what he terms "the cultural meaning of printedness" in the early national period. The notion of impersonal discourse, "the negation of persons in public discourse," (Warner 42) the understanding that gave a pamphlet a different political meaning than a personal letter, is a key component of a Warner's model. See 34-43.

[6] Grasso's *A Speaking Aristocracy – Transforming Public Discourse in Eighteenth Century Connecticut* applies Warner's model to a specific state. Describing the changing social dynamics both in print and in the political climate of the state, Grasso writes, "old literary forms and rhetorical strategies evolved, and new ones appeared. New media developed, fundamentally altering the system of communications for an increasingly complex society and economy. A new

Barlow was a product of those changes, yet his use of print takes such an unexpected shape that it demands closer attention. Three times near the end of his career, to defend himself and to continue to promote the *Columbiad*, Barlow published letters in the periodical press, re-personalizing the medium with some efficacy, even as he more firmly established himself as an upright republican. Barlow's example demonstrates how wide swaths of print culture, even those within a highly republican context, used print technology in divergent and contradictory ways.

The third intervention my study makes concerns the history of literary authorship. Importantly, Barlow wrote during a transitional stage in the history of American authorship. Copyright, in particular, existed only at the state level. National copyright protection for authors became law only in 1790, near the midpoint of Barlow's career. As Grantland Rice has shown, despite the wide support of authors (including Barlow) the need or desirability of copyright protection was not obvious during the period.[7] Competing understandings of authorship that rejected the liberal copyright model were widespread and remained viable deep into the nineteenth century. As Meredith McGill notes, the old republican or utilitarian model of authorship, premised around the free circulation of works, enjoyed a "strong half-life" (14) in American literary culture for

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politics emerged, based on the consent of an informed citizenry and upheld by the institutionalization of reasoned debate and the dissemination of knowledge to a vastly expanded 'public'" (4-5).

[7] In *The Transformation of Authorship in America* Rice analyzes the tensions and anxieties surrounding copyright during the period. As Rice points out, although numerous authors campaigned for a copyright, many were simultaneously "unsettled by the whole concept of literary property" (7). The eventual copyright law, passed in 1790, was a compromise measure attempting to satisfy competing desires, protecting a work as the author's property (the liberal model) but also allowing free distribution after a certain amount of time (the utilitarian republican model). As Rice writes, the new copyright law, "merely suspended" (7) the conflict between these two notions. For these competing models of authorship see Rice 70-98.

decades, sustaining what McGill has termed the "culture of reprinting" in the periodical press.[8] Although Barlow has gained notoriety as an early advocate of copyright protection, there is little evidence that the matter impacted his own career. Barlow's example shows that, whatever their rhetoric, for many writers circulation was ultimately more desirable than complete authorial control.

Copyright was just part of a larger theoretical tangle vexing writers of the period. On the whole, there was a broad movement away from the aristocratic model of authorship, which was rooted in notions of the gentleman amateur and courtly patronage.[9] Emergent at the time, yet not really fully possible, was a new conception of authorship as a profession. Generally, Charles Brocken Brown is remembered as America's first professional author, yet where Brown experienced angst and anxiety over his authorial presence in the print marketplace, Barlow was exhilarated by the opportunities he saw.[10] Barlow's early career is especially revealing in this regard, because it shows how the young poet was able to exploit a fluid marketplace. American authorship was in a mixed state at the end of the eighteenth century. In the mid-1780s, Barlow seems to have found that his best course of action was to use what was left of the

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[8] In *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-53* McGill describes the decentralized antebellum print market. McGill argues that the republican view that printed materials were essentially communally owned entities, was persistent enough to shape nineteenth century publishing history. McGill writes, "a republican belief in the inherent publicity of print and the political necessity of its wide dissemination, stressed the interests of the polity over the property rights of individuals" (47). "Perpetual private ownership and control over printed texts," McGill continues, "was unacceptable in a culture that regarded the free circulation of texts as a sign and guarantee of liberty" (48).

[9] For an explanation of the aristocratic model and the rise of modern, professional authorship, see William Charvat, *The Profession of Authorship in America*.

[10] For a portrait of Brown as the first professional author in America, tortured with anxieties see Kenneth Dauber's *The Idea of Authorship in America*, 39-77.

aristocratic model to make himself into a modern author. Thus, at a time when Barlow was receiving large amounts of essentially traditional literary patronage, he also aggressively turned to advertising to promote his work in the press. Barlow's advertising campaigns are especially important because they occur so early in American literary history, beginning in the mid-1780s with his revision of Watts's *Psalms*. Barlow attempted to promote his works in an essentially modern way, and accepting and utilizing print was integral to that process. This version of Barlow, a daring and audacious self-promoter, is more interesting and more important than the neoclassical dinosaur that has come down to us in the anthologies and recent histories of early national literature.

Before discussing the history of Barlow criticism and offering a preview of the individual chapters, which trace the arc of Barlow's career in greater detail, I should offer a brief outline of Barlow's biography. Barlow was born in Redding, Connecticut, in 1754. It is difficult to locate precisely what Barlow's class position was, but we know that Barlow's father was a farmer who owned a small amount of land. A further clue lies in the size of Barlow's inheritance, which was not large. When his father died in 1774, Barlow used his patrimony to transfer from Dartmouth College to Yale. Barlow's inheritance got him through college, but was exhausted by the time he graduated from Yale in 1778. At best, his social position was seen as middling, which is probably why his marriage to the socially prominent Ruth Baldwin had to be done in secret. A literary reputation and a Yale pedigree allowed Barlow to be invited into the homes of the prominent families of Connecticut, but he was not really one of their own. At Yale, Barlow's reputation as a poet was born, and after graduation he was placed as a chaplain in the Army, a choice appointment that would allow him to continue writing. Between

1778 and 1782, Barlow orbited between the Army and Yale, where he was pursuing a graduate degree. It was during this period that Barlow published his first three poems.

In 1782 Barlow and his wife moved to Hartford, where the poet started a newspaper. In Hartford, Barlow's publishing methods began to evolve. Working as an editor and a publisher, print became a more important part of his poetic repertoire. Barlow began to experiment with newspaper advertising in the 1780s, constructing a new kind of literary identity. At the same time, he still needed to rely on older methods of promotion, such as the subscription list, to publish his most important work of the decade, 1787's *Vision of Columbus*. In 1788, Barlow left Hartford for Europe, where he lived until 1805. Between 1788 and 1792, Barlow moved between Paris and London multiple times, running in revolutionary circles in both cities. In Europe, Barlow became an adept and prolific pamphleteer in the early 1790s, publishing a number of works of poetry and prose. He became close friends with Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft, and likely dined with William Blake, who was at this time familiar with Barlow's work. By 1792-3, while living in France, he became deeply involved with the Girondists, the moderate and market-friendly republicans then in power. After being named a French citizen, he ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the National Assembly. In the middle 1790s, for the only period in his life, Barlow stopped writing, instead serving as a diplomat and working in international trade. It was at this point in his life that Barlow became a wealthy man. The final stage of Barlow's career came in 1805, when he returned to the United States. Barlow spent the next five years consumed by the publication of his last work, *The Columbiad*. By this point, Barlow fully understood the power of print and he celebrated the growth of the American publishing industry in his poetry. He became one

of the most famous literary figures in the nation. At the height of his fame, in 1811, Barlow returned to France as a diplomat, an assignment which led indirectly to his death in Poland in 1812.

This dissertation is the first sustained examination of Barlow's publishing career, the first assessment of his development as a poet, author, editor, and self-promoter. Before addressing the specific ways in which this project expands our knowledge of the poet, it is important to give a summary of the relevant scholarship. To begin, it should be noted that three older works have provided the foundation of Barlow studies. The first of these is Theodore Albert Zunder's *The Early Days of Joel Barlow*, published in 1934. Zunder was the first modern scholar to focus on Barlow. As Zunder writes, earlier work on Barlow was either "casual or stereotyped" (vii). Prior to his work, the only major study of Barlow, was Charles Burr Todd's 1886 biography. Todd, a proud member of the extended Barlow family who relied heavily on fellow relatives for his information, was not entirely accurate or objective in his handling of Barlow's career, and the work is riddled with a number of factual errors. Mining the archives objectively, Zunder sought to rectify this situation. His *Early Days of Joel Barlow* provides a more reliable factual foundation for discussion of Barlow's career. Focusing on Barlow's life up to 1787 (the year the *Vision of Columbus* was published) Zunder's study is still an important source for information about Barlow's time as an army chaplain (1780-83) as well as the little-discussed poems written at the onset of his career.[11]

[11] Zunder planned to write a companion study on the second half of Barlow's life, but he died mysteriously (apparently falling out of a hotel window) in 1945 at the age of 44.

Leon Howard did for the entire Hartford group (including Timothy Dwight, John Trumbull, and David Humphreys) what Zunder did for Barlow. Howard intended his 1943 work *The Connecticut Wits* to be a starting point for future scholars of the four major members of the Hartford group, and the bulk of subsequent Barlow criticism reflects that goal's success. Howard's history of ideas approach did much to establish the Connecticut Wits, and especially Barlow, as sophisticated and complex thinkers. Describing a group that is often dismissed as derivative, Howard writes, "the greater part of their literary work represents a serious attempt to grapple with the aesthetic, intellectual, and social problems of one of the most important periods in modern history" (4).

Beyond the details of individual readings and biographical findings, which are extensive, Howard's great contribution to Barlow scholarship is that he legitimated Barlow as an object of study beyond mere antiquarianism. In an effort to trace Barlow's literary development, Howard recovers a number of lost sources and influences upon Barlow's poems, and in so doing he takes Barlow's perpetual seriousness seriously. Howard's study favored Barlow as the most attractive member of the group. Howard argues that Barlow was the most intellectually curious member of the coterie and gives Barlow credit for being – in places – ahead of his time. In concluding his portrait of the poet, Howard writes, "Barlow anticipated Shelley by two decades in his efforts to exploit the ideas of the French atheists, the discoveries of science, and the speculations of the mythologists as material for poetry which would reform the world" (405-6). Howard avers that Barlow's much maligned grandiosity must be respected because his poems

"preserve the vitality of the dreams and hopes and fancies that affected Jefferson and Madison" (339).

The third of the early important studies of Barlow is James Woodress's *A Yankee's Odyssey – The Life of Joel Barlow*, published in 1958. *A Yankee's Odyssey* remains the standard biographical study of the poet.[12] As the title suggests, Woodress views Barlow's life as a representative triumph, "an American success story – the saga of a poor New England plow-boy who climbed to wealth and reputation in Europe and America" (23-24). For Woodress, Barlow is a fascinating character who "played a bit part in the same American drama that featured the colossi of American history" (24). The extensive biographical details provided by Woodress's study allows the literary critic to better ascertain the shifting contexts of Barlow's life especially the confusing and complicated years in Europe, where Barlow lived from 1788 to 1803. Importantly, *A Yankee's Odyssey* argues that Barlow was more than just a Hartford Wit, aiming to expand the historical portrait of his subject. To that end, although Woodress dutifully chronicles all of Barlow's publications and offers close readings of many poems, a definite sense of disappointment in Barlow's persistent versifying sometimes creeps into the work. Woodress's Barlow is much more interesting as a political insider, diplomat, or essayist than as a poet.[13] Similarly, Woodress does not always find Barlow's relationships with publishers, printers, and booksellers worth further investigation.

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[12] Arthur L. Ford published a short literary biography of Barlow in 1971 for the Twayne American Authors Series which is also of some use, see *Joel Barlow* (New York: Twayne, 1971).

[13] For example, when discussing Barlow's decision to dedicate his efforts to publishing the *Columbiad* Woodress writes, "Vanity and lost opportunity! Barlow squandered his months in fanning the thin, feeble coals of poetic fire when he might have been writing the history of the United States" (245).

Writing again about the *Columbiad*, Woodress laments that Barlow, "frittered away the days in the minutiae of book manufacture" (252).

Following Woodress's biography, critical attention to Barlow was relatively scant for the next three decades. A handful of articles were published on individual poems and some attention was paid to Barlow's work in comprehensive studies of the American epic.[14] The most important work during this period was done by Carla Mulford, who published two articles analyzing Barlow's poems from the 1790s, along with an edition of Barlow's letters from the early part of his career.[15] The next major study of Barlow was William Dowling's 1990 *Poetry and Ideology in Revolutionary Connecticut*. As Howard had done, Dowling connects Barlow and his peers to a wider transatlantic world of ideas. Drawing upon the insights of Bernard Bailyn and scholars of eighteenth century republicanism such as J.G.A. Pocock, Dowling argues that the Connecticut Wits, like so many other American writers and politicians of the time, were inheritors of the Country Ideology tradition. For Dowling, the Wits wrote according to an Augustan mode which stretched from Horace to Dryden to Timothy Dwight, the contemporary of Barlow who Dowling considered the last Augustan. This "lost poetic language" (Dowling *Poetry and Ideology* xv) of literary Augustanism was dedicated to exposing the corruption and vice of those in power and premised upon "a notion of poetry as ideological intervention, an actual belief in the power of language to remake the world" (Dowling *Poetry and*

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[14] The most influential of these wider genre studies is John McWilliams's *The American Epic – Transforming a Genre, 1770-1860* (1989). Barlow's long poems also received notable attention in Ernest Lee Tuveson's *Redeemer Nation – The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (1968), as well as Cecilia Tichi's *New World, New Earth* (1979).

[15] See Mulford's "Joel Barlow's Letters", "Joel Barlow, Edmund Burke, and Fears of Masonic Conspiracy in 1792", and "Radicalism in Joel Barlow's The Conspiracy of Kings (1792)."

Ideology ix). As such, Dowling replaces the old criticism of the Wits as derivative neoclassicists with a new vision of them as social critics dedicated to political engagement.

Dowling's approach has major implications for understanding Barlow. In Barlow, especially the later Barlow that emerges in the 1790s, Dowling sees a precursor for the Marxist writers of the nineteenth century. Barlow's mature work, culminating with the *Columbiad* is "primarily a poetry of unmasking or ideological exposure" (Dowling *Poetry and Ideology* 100). Dowling likens Barlow's authorial pose to that of Marx in *Capital*, arguing that Barlow considers himself "a lonely soul in touch with the laws of objective history" (*Poetry and Ideology* 108). Along these lines, Dowling shows the centrality of demystification as an anti-ideological tool for Barlow, who in the *Columbiad* attacks the systems of superstition and false consciousness that have produced only centuries of suffering.[16] Dowling's reading of Barlow was extended in the late 1990s, when a trio of readings by Ralph Bauer, Danielle Conger, and Eric Wertheimer, argued that Barlow attacked the values of the Old World by valorizing the anti-conquest struggles of the Incas and Aztecs in *The Vision of Columbus* and *The Columbiad*.[17]

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[16] Although Barlow breaks from Dwight, Trumbull, and Humphreys in adopting a secular and materialist understanding of history, Dowling shows how each of the Connecticut Wits shared a similar methodology, a shared relish for "ideological warfare that operated at the most fundamental level by ceaselessly stripping away the veils of ideology" (*Poetry and Ideology* 18).

[17] See Ralph Bauer, "Colonial Discourse and Early American Literary History – Ercilla, The Inca Garcilaso, and Joel Barlow's Conception of a New World Epic." Danielle E. Conger's, "Toward a Native American Nationalism: Joel Barlow's *The Vision of Columbus.*" And Eric Wertheimer's *Imagined Empires: Incas, Aztecs, and the New World of American Literature, 1771-1876.*

According to Bauer, Barlow not only demystifies English history, he employs "countercolonial discourse" (206) as a part of his progressive narrative.

Steven Blakemore's 2007 *Joel Barlow's Columbiad – A Bicentennial Reading* is the most recent major study of Barlow's work. Blakemore offers an extremely thorough reading (384 pages) of Barlow's last published poem, walking the reader through the poem's various allusions in arguments nearly line by line. Blakemore argues that this close attention is merited – typically the *Columbiad* has only been analyzed via a single chapter or at article length – by the fact that the poem is "one of the most significant intertextual nineteenth-century poems in American literature" (Blakemore 5). Blakemore is perhaps the most enthusiastic champion of Barlow's poetry to emerge in the last century. Blakemore not only demonstrates the poem's complexity, he states that it "contains lines of remarkable beauty" (5). According to Blakemore, "the *Columbiad*'s place in American literary history needs to be reassessed" (330) with the poem finding its proper place in the history of the epic genre and wider discussions of "the origins of an evolving American literature" (330). Continuing Dowling and Bauer's work, Blakemore reads the *Columbiad* as the first American poem to offer a "sustained postcolonial critique of the British Empire" (35).

This dissertation provides an important contribution to Barlow studies in three ways. The first relates to the matter of scope. Scholarship attempting to deal with the entirety of Barlow's career has been rare. Given how varied that career was, this has led to a disjointed and often incorrect interpretation of his work and his place in literary history. The Barlows of Hartford, Paris and London, and Washington exist separately,

with little explanation of how any of them came to be.[18] This study gives Barlow's career a clear coherence, suggesting that he was not a dilettante or an opportunist, but a serious poet committed to working through the difficulties he faced as a provincial poet. Furthermore, by discussing every one of Barlow's published poems I provide new readings and collect new details surrounding Barlow's more obscure works, while bringing to light new editions and reprints which have been mostly ignored.

My methodology offers two additional contributions for future scholars. This is the first full length examination of Barlow from a book studies perspective. As Jonathan Rose defines it, "book studies" is an inter-disciplinary approach that applies the concerns and methods of book history (bibliography, the history of publishers, the distribution of texts, etc) to research in fields such as literary studies.[19] Here, I use the evidence from the book history side of Barlow's career (as it may have been defined in a more rigid age) to gain new insights into Barlow's poems, both as poems and as material objects existing in the world. This fused field of literary analysis and attention to book history details also allows us to have a better sense of literary culture in the early republic. It is a surprising and ironic circumstance that Barlow's career has never been analyzed in this way, given that much of his notoriety has related to his interest in copyright and the elaborately made 1807 *Columbiad*.[20]

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[18] The only recent critic who attempts to make sense of Barlow's career as a whole is Dowling, who finds a consistent political framework behind the entirety of Barlow's work.

[19] See Rose's essay, "From Book History to Book Studies."

[20] The only research on Barlow that is fully invested in a book studies methodology is John Bidwell's article on the 1807 *Columbiad*, "The Publication of Joel Barlow's *The Columbiad.*"

Looking at the publication details using a book studies approach, the first point that emerges is that our understanding of Barlow's career is vastly augmented by noting how central a steady embrace of print was to Barlow's literary identity. This allowed Barlow to separate himself – geographically, bibliographically, and ideologically – from his initial literary peers. Through his use of advertising and his various innovations in the 1807 *Columbiad*, Barlow's publication methods were at the vanguard of American literary history. Secondly, turning to a different concern of book studies, this study offers a picture of who was reading Barlow. In locating their class, political position, and geographical location, this study allows us to return to earlier readings with a different perspective and new questions. The bulk of criticism since the 1990s has argued that Barlow was a sophisticated ideological critic engaged with questions of colonialism and empire. Because Barlow's poetry was not merely hollow versifying we need to have a sense of who published, sold, and read his work. Looking at the historical record, it is readily apparent that Barlow's contemporaries considered him an important political voice, and his distribution history reveals how he benefited from the transatlantic network of republican editors and publishers.

In order to convey the sweep of Barlow's career, his arc of development and his rise to fame, I approach Barlow's career chronologically. Chapter 1 discusses the literary culture in which Barlow began his career at Yale in the late 1770s, arguing that print was only a small component of the life of a poem, or of what made one a poet. Examining the circumstances surrounding Barlow's first three published poems, this chapter argues that Barlow's initial years as a poet were rooted in an older coterie, club, and salon culture that placed great value on manuscript circulation, oral performance, and a poet's network

of personal relationships. This was the semi-private world that had been a feature of the wider British sphere – from Bristol to Boston to Barbados – for over a century. When it came to print, the options available to Barlow in Connecticut at this time were extremely limited by a thoroughly localized publishing industry. The contents of two of Barlow's first three poems to be published, "The Prospect of Peace" and "A Poem, Spoken At The Public Commencement at Yale College in New Haven" were commencement poems that both delivered orally and were widely known before being published. Appearance in print marked not the birth of a poem, as a commemorating device, it preserved it near the end of its life.

In his next decade, outlined in chapter 2, Barlow fully embraced print as his poetic medium. This new understanding of the importance of the printed word touched all elements of Barlow's life. In 1783 he prominently argued for a national copyright, and in 1784 joined in the postwar newspaper boom by starting his own newspaper, the *American Mercury*. Over the next three years, Barlow was extremely prolific, publishing a revision of Watts's *Psalms* (1785) and the *Vision of Columbus* (1787) while contributing to the *Anarchiad* (1786-87). Barlow was also highly flexible during this period, publishing his work as a single, named author, while also participating in the pseudononymous group authorship of the *Anarchiad*. Moreover, despite his links to modern notions of authorship thanks to his push for copyright, Barlow continued to rely heavily on distinctly old-fashioned forms of patronage, such as subscription publishing, which he used to publish the *Vision of Columbus*, his most important publication of the period. As such, I argue that Barlow's example, seen as a hybrid of eighteenth and nineteenth century authorship,

shows how one especially ambitious and open-minded poet responded to the transitional state of literary publishing in the early national era.

Chapter 3 covers Barlow's time in Europe. Mixing in revolutionary circles in London and Paris, and exposed to large markets for the first time, Barlow changed the way he wrote and his mode of authorship. Barlow turned to new genres and wrote in a more aggressive and polemical style. Inspired, in 1792-93, he published an important new poem, *The Conspiracy of Kings*, two prose works on political theory, a translation of Brissot's *Travels*, an edition of Trumbull's *M'Fingal* and a revision of the *Vision of Columbus*. In 1793, he completed "The Hasty Pudding," which would be first published in 1796. Ironically, in Europe, Barlow had greater access to American readers on the American seaboard, and his European publications circulated further than his Connecticut publications in the 1780s had done.

Barlow returned to the United States in 1805, quickly dedicating himself to the publication of the *Columbiad*, a much-revised version of *The Vision of Columbus*. Chapter 4 focuses on the first edition of the *Columbiad*, the elaborate and expensive 1807 quarto published in Philadelphia. The 1807 *Columbiad* was a gigantic book and a large-scale publishing project that intended to be not only the great American epic poem, but also a demonstration of the expertise and talent of the American publishing industry. This chapter makes two arguments regarding the 1807 *Columbiad.* First, the reception history of the poem records that the *Columbiad* was initially extremely well-received and fully understood as a patriotic celebration of the skills of American book-making. Second, when considering the purpose and format of the work, especially Barlow's didacticism and the bookishness in which he employs large amounts of explanatory prose, the

Columbiad should be considered a kind of republican reference work, a sourcebook of Barlow's progressive theories of history and political ideas.

As detailed in chapter 5, the story of the *Columbiad* did not end in 1807. In 1809, Barlow capitalized upon the success of the project with a second edition of the poem, a two-volume duodecimo priced at $2.00. The second edition, which was well publicized and widely available, demands a reassessment of Barlow's place in American literature at the end of his career. Significant evidence suggests that Barlow enjoyed a broad audience by 1809, finding readers and champions across the spectrum of society and in nearly every American state. Because of the level of overall attention given to the *Columbiad* during this time, I argue that Barlow was one of the most popular and widely read American authors of the period, with an audience comparable in size to that granted to the early American novel. Importantly, real criticism of the poem did not begin until after the second edition had been published, and this chapter outlines the extent of the attacks on Barlow, as well as his efforts to defend himself in the press.

In the conclusion I discuss Barlow's death in 1812 and the end of his literary career. In this section I offer a final assessment of Barlow's career as a whole and suggest how he should be read in conjunction with his peers. For the convenience of the reader I have also attached an appendix listing each of Barlow's published poems. The appendix reproduces in one place the findings laid out in each chapter. (The relevant footnotes, for simplicity's sake, remain in the chapters themselves.) Intended as a shorthand form of the details of this study, for each poem I have noted where it was published, reprinted, excerpted, and sold.

A final word should be said about the poems I have not included. In outlining the development of Barlow's career, I have included in this study every poem that Barlow published during his lifetime. Works that were unpublished or went unfinished, such as "The Canal", "Advice to a Raven in Russia" or "Sunset: in Epic Stile" are for the most part left out of this study. This is because they had essentially no distribution and no audience during Barlow's lifetime, which are my primary concerns.[21] Furthermore, during his lifetime Barlow was often speciously or maliciously attributed as the author of poems in the periodical press, with little historical evidence to suggest his authorship. Although Barlow continued (and in some cases continues) to be the presumed author of polemical works such as "God Save The Guillotine" and "The Second Warning" for a number of years, I have found little evidence to substantiate these claims. Finally, a number of even more obscure newspaper and carrier's poems are sometimes linked to Barlow, vexed by the same lack of evidence.[22] By the late 1790s, Barlow was one of the most famous living American poets, and one of the most well-known literary republicans in the Atlantic world, making him an obvious guess for any newspaper editor or publisher. Absent any specific connection, I see no reason to go against Barlow's own denials of his authorship of these minor works. On the whole, although these apocryphal works strengthen my argument that Barlow was a prolific and popular writer who altered

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[21] "Sunset: in 'Epic Stile'" is the working title given to an unpublished poem or fragment discovered by Zunder in the 1930s. See Zunder, "A New Barlow Poem."

[22] In the case of the carrier's poems, complicated questions of genre convention, intention, and authorship, arise since they were produced during a time when Barlow was an editor and publisher of his own newspaper, and the poems were used as way for the carriers to receive tips. Though it is possible that Barlow authored some of these poems, it is just as possible that he did not, and there is no sense in Barlow's own correspondence or diaries that he considered these works to be his own.

his publication methods to maximize his reach, including their publication details would do more to confuse and muddy our understanding of the poet than the opposite.

Remarkably, Joel Barlow was able to thrive in New Haven in the 1770s, Paris in the 1790s, and Philadelphia in the 1800s. Because of his innovative spirit, Barlow became the most widely read American poet of the early national period. In his time, we truly find no other American poets who had a career approaching Barlow's in terms of versatility and consistent success. The publishing details of Barlow's career force us to reevaluate our previous understanding of his poetry and his place in literary history. In a time of transition, Barlow found the spaces in which he could still work. In recognizing Barlow as *An Ink-Stained Neoclassicist* we can more clearly see the differences between eighteenth and nineteenth century literary culture in the United States.

CHAPTER I

BELATED PUBLICATIONS: THE ORAL AND MANUSCRIPT FOUNDATIONS OF BARLOW'S CAREER

At least twice in the early 1780s, Joel Barlow, a Yale graduate, Army chaplain, and aspiring poet, lost track of his horse. First in 1780 and then again in 1782, Barlow was desperate enough to place advertisements in *The Connecticut Journal* in New Haven asking for help from his neighbors and promising a reward.[1] These two obscure notices in the *Connecticut Journal* are revealing because they are the only advertisements Barlow placed, in any paper, until 1784, when he announced that he had begun working on a revision of Isaac Watts's *Psalms of David*. By the time of his second search for his mare in 1782, Barlow had published three pamphlets: *The Prospect of Peace* (1778), *A Poem, Spoken at the Public Commencement at Yale College in New Haven* (1781) and *An Elegy on the Late Honorable Titus Hosmer, Esq.* (1782). Barlow made no effort to promote these works in print, despite established relationships with the editors of Connecticut's two major papers, the *Connecticut Journal* and the *Hartford Courant*. For the young poet, newspapers were more a place for finding one's horse than making one's name.

The Barlow of 1782 hardly resembled the poet who would later become adept at advertising his works and whose career would culminate with the 1807 *Columbiad*, a bookish national epic that fully embraced and celebrated print technology. This chapter

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[1] The 1780 advertisements were dated July 29, 1780, and ran in the *Connecticut Journal* twice in August. *Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 10 Aug. 1780:4. 17 Aug. 1780:4. The second advertisement appeared in 1782. *Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 4 April 1782:3. 05 May 1782:1. Barlow lost his horse the first time in Fairfield, the second time in New Haven.

tells the story of Barlow's beginning, his background in a literary environment that was much closer to the early eighteenth century than the nineteenth in its attitudes. The shape of Barlow's career as a poet dramatizes the changes in literary authorship which took place during the period. As such, Barlow offers scholars of the early national period an index into the age. Barlow emerged during the great era of pamphlet publishing, and it was in that form that his first three poems were printed. Yet, he was never interested in marketing, distributing, or editing his pamphlets. Strangely, Barlow never embraced the pamphlet form even while he remained obsessed with establishing his fame as a poet. This curious attitude stands out precisely because by the latter stages of Barlow's career, Barlow's work was heavily publicized in print and he enjoyed a near-national audience. Initially, Barlow shared with his peers the typical attitudes towards authorship that dominated the provincial world of New England. The finest poetry was shared not with the public at large, but within the intimate audiences (all mimicking an idea of Augustan London) of the college, the club, and the gentleman's house. Print publications, not likely to find a wide audience anyway, were often authored simply by "a Gentleman," as there was still an idea that to have one's name on the title page was to have one's name in the street. Barlow eventually left that world, embracing print with a greater energy and enterprise than any other American poet of his generation.

Barlow, like many of his fellow literati, sought in the 1770s and 1780s a kind of literary existence tied to elite patronage. Phillis Wheatley entered print under the protection of the aristocratic abolitionist the Countess of Huntingdon and it was the patronage and influence of George Washington that allowed David Humphreys to pursue literary fame. For his own part, during the early part of the 1780s Barlow hunted down

literary patrons in the form of minor officers in the Continental Army, Philadelphia merchants, Connecticut lawyers and, somewhat amazingly, Louis the Sixteenth of France. These were the readers who mattered to Barlow, and they didn't need to be reached through the newspapers or with a printed copy of one's poem. Instead, they were to be found by the letter, the personal introduction, the good word of another patron. For this reason, Barlow appears to have been indifferent to promoting his pamphlets to a general audience. By 1782, he had achieved a sizeable portion of his poetic reputation in New Haven without the help of print. Barlow thus began his career in an Augustan literary culture that oscillated, in David Fairer's phrase, "between manuscript and print."[2] Nurtured by the lawyers and ministers of the Yale aristocracy of Connecticut, Barlow initially presented himself as a poet in a literary environment that stressed public eloquence and private wit just as much as print notoriety, a world described in detail by David Shields's *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America*. In New Haven, Barlow primarily displayed his skills as a poet in performance and in manuscript.

This chapter examines Barlow's formative years, when the poet's published work was grounded in a provincial and old-fashioned literary culture. An examination of Barlow's early poems make clear that print publication was not the key to literary popularity in Revolutionary Connecticut. The literary culture that nurtured Barlow was neither liberal nor modern, nor centered rigidly on print. Instead it was organized around manuscript circulation, oral performance, and small locally-produced print runs. How are we to understand *The Prospect of Peace* and the other pamphlets Barlow had published

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[2] See chapter one of Fairer's *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, 1700-89* for his discussion of the interplay between manuscript and print modes.

during this time? What purpose did they serve and how were they consumed? To get a sense of their proper place it is useful to draw an analogy between these pamphlets and the current way one watches television today. These poems were published in a way that was similar to the "on-demand" or digital rental programs offered by the cable and satellite services of the present. Like the sitcom reruns or old movies available on-demand for subscribers in the twenty-first century, Barlow's early pamphlets were published after the fact. They were already in existence as cultural artifacts and had already *happened*. Rather than marking their birth as literary objects, print publication offered readers a way of catching up with or remembering a favorite literary performance. Barlow's early poems were made available in print form only after achieving a status of familiarity and esteem in the community. In a way, the post-facto status of many eighteenth-century printed documents is a familiar story, especially in an American context dominated by reams of printed sermons. Barlow's early poetry was consumed in much the same way as those sermons, with poems like *The Prospect of Peace* appearing during the last days the of manuscript and on-demand dominance, before regional distribution networks emerged. To get a better sense of how Barlow's career began and to extrapolate more widely as to the shape of the literary culture of Connecticut in the 1770s-80s, we need to take a closer look at the circumstances and details surrounding his first three on-demand publications: *The Prospect of Peace* (1778), *A Poem, Spoken at the Public Commencement at Yale College in New Haven* (1781) and *An Elegy on the Late Honorable Titus Hosmer, Esq.* (1782).

The Revolutionary Connecticut that launched Barlow's career and provided him so many literary encouragements was a small but bustling place, with a mature export

economy that had boomed during the middle part of the eighteenth century. The colony left the struggles of subsistence behind. As noted by Bruce Daniels, “a traveler on any Connecticut highway after 1740 would be struck by the presence of large centers of urban life, by the ubiquitous villages, by the all-pervading commercial activity” (166). Connecticut grew rapidly in the years leading up to and immediately following the Revolutionary War. In fact, despite a precarious position near multiple front lines and a dual reliance upon the mercantile economies of Boston and New York, even during the war itself, Connecticut’s population expanded. The Federal Convention of 1787 in Philadelphia estimated that the state’s population was 202,000; but only three years later, in the Census of 1790, that figure was 237,946. In 1800, that number had swelled to 251,002.

Compared to most other states Connecticut was unique in that it lacked a true frontier and the related tidewater/frontier cultural and political divide that dominated early national culture. This was especially beneficial to Barlow, who had a modest background and was from the small town of Redding. Nevertheless, he had little trouble being accepted by the state’s elite. During this period, Connecticut’s internal population redistribution was rather in the opposite direction of frontier growth, as it urbanized, albeit on a much more reduced scale than that term might otherwise suggest, considering that the state’s largest towns had less than 4,000 people. Alexander Johnston points out that even during the war new towns were founded, and that “the attainment of peace was like the throwing down of a dam – the new towns numbered two in 1784, five in 1785, thirteen in 1786, and ten between that year and the close of the century” (329). As Daniels outlines in his study of Connecticut towns, because of Connecticut’s town-centric

constitutional structure and the importance of town meetings, the incorporation of a town was not just a formality, but a way of ensuring adequate political representation and participation. Coupled with tangible shifts in population, these concerns over representation and participation took on a charged meaning during the Revolutionary period, fuelling further incorporation.[3] For Barlow and other Connecticut poets of the time, the growth of the colony's towns and small cities meant a more fertile literary environment, concentrating readers and patrons, while also encouraging further growth in the field of publishing.

Nowhere in Connecticut was growth more apparent and dramatic than in Hartford. Although Hartford had been one of the colony's two capitals since 1665, throughout the first half of the eighteenth century it was smaller and decidedly more provincial than New Haven, which was both a seaport and a university town. In describing the lack of attention accorded Hartford until the 1770s, Johnston notes that, "there does not seem to be any surviving map, plan, picture, sketch, or verbal description of the town, or of any public or private building, until about the time of the Revolution" (120). As the land around it became more populated, however, Hartford's advantageous position on the Connecticut River and status as the half-way point on the Boston-New

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[3] In Daniels's view, the Revolution encouraged town incorporation in Connecticut in three, inter-related ways: 1) through the rise of a new political consciousness and an interest in political rights 2) the frequent town meetings brought on by the conflict made new demographic circumstances more apparent, while also annoying citizens who, in an earlier era with less meetings called, had been willing to endure a long trip to a distant meeting and 3) from a legal perspective the Revolution provided an opportunity to address political and administrative issues in a potentially simpler way. Moreover, as Daniels points out, "not only did Connecticut men develop a heightened sense of the need for participation in town government, they also developed a more aggressive style to get their way; before 1767 petitions for town status *asked* for the privileges in order to bring law and order to the community; after 1767, with increasing assertiveness, they *demanded* their rights and liberties" (36). For more on the Revolution and town formation, see Daniels 34-44.

York post road made it more and more attractive. Rather suddenly, sometime shortly before the war, a critical mass was reached and Hartford was transformed into a bustling and even cosmopolitan city, "the flourishing commercial center of the state" (Howard 169) and an important cultural hub.

Poetry played a critical role in Hartford's cultural emergence, highlighted by the rise of the so-called "Hartford Wits" in the 1780s. As their poetry, particularly the 1786-7 *Anarchiad*, circulated and became widely known, Hartford earned a nationwide reputation as one of the literary centers of the early republic. Crucially, *none* of the poets behind this reputation – Barlow, Timothy and Theodore Dwight, David Humphreys, John Trumbull, Lemuel Hopkins and Richard Alsop – had actually been born in Hartford. Instead, all were Yale men who either moved to Hartford in the early part of the 1780s (Barlow, Trumbull and Hopkins) or were frequent visitors to the city (Humphreys, Dwight) who published and collaborated with writers there. Barlow followed the pattern of many in Revolutionary Connecticut. Via Yale, Barlow moved from a small town to the cosmopolitan New Haven, and after army stints in Massachusetts and New York, ended up in Hartford in 1781 with an eye towards financial and literary success.

As Connecticut's population grew and centralized, there was a "tremendous growth in the number of imprints published," (Grasso 11) contributing to "a special vitality in the cultural life of Connecticut" (Silverman 400). At the same time, Connecticut was beginning what would be a remarkably protracted movement towards a new social structure. Although Connecticut would maintain an established church until 1818 and could generally be considered one of the most staid and conservative states, the power of the clergy and other traditional elites would steadily wane in the second half of

the century. Increasingly, print technology has been seen as force for change in the democratization of Connecticut. Christopher Grasso argues that the rise of a full-fledged print culture changed political life in Connecticut by transforming both public and political discourse, along with the qualifications needed for public "speech." Building on Michael Warner's thesis that print engendered a new model of impersonal readers and impersonal republican state authorities, Grasso maps out how the ascendance of print in Connecticut transformed the state from a Puritan aristocracy into a Yankee democracy.[4] According to Grasso's research, there were only nine works published in the colony in 1728, compared with 164 in 1798. Nor was this a gradual uptick either, as publications in Connecticut increased dramatically in the 1760s, which not surprisingly coincided with an explosion of newspaper activity. Each of Connecticut's four wartime papers was new, as all were founded between 1763 and 1773, encouraged by economic and political conditions which created readerships.[5] Along with the increased mobility and demand for information within the colony, newspaper publishers benefited from a local strength in the industries of print. While paper shortages were common during the period throughout the colonies, reaching a near epidemic during the war years, Connecticut's pressmen enjoyed relative stability in this regard. Grasso points out that "Connecticut entrepreneurs began making their own paper (1766), casting type (1769) and building presses (1775),"

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[4] Beyond Grasso's work, this transformation of the social order has been a major theme in Connecticut histories. For the rise of commercial and mercantile attitudes in the colony, and the decline of the clergy's moral authority, see Bushman's *From Puritan to Yankee; Character and Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765*. For a study of the state's gradual acceptance of democracy and the fall of the Congregationalist/Federalist worthies, see Parnell's *Connecticut in Transition*.

[5] Those papers and founding dates are as follows: *The New London Gazette* (1763), *The Hartford Courant* (1764), *The New Haven Post Boy* (1767), *The Norwich Packet* (1773).

(300) all of which helped facilitate an increase in publications and professional stability for printers.

In his study of the Connecticut press, Charles L. Cutler describes the war years as "a period of growth for the newspapers in the state" (40). Although seventeen of the forty-two colonial newspapers folded during the war, the Connecticut pressmen benefited from this cull. Nor were newspapers the only material that continued to be printed or sold in wartime Connecticut. Cutler notes that "print shops offered grammars, works in Greek and Latin, studies in mathematics and philosophy, and political tracts" (53). To that list we can add poetry, which Barlow, along with many others continued to publish even during the most intense stages of the conflict. Revealingly, in Barlow's wartime letters there is little evidence, from him or anyone else, that his poetic aspirations were unusual or that they would need to be put on hold. On the contrary, Barlow's ambitions were repeatedly encouraged by numerous parties, including the Continental Army which provided him with a little-deserved position as a chaplain. Barlow had little religious training and even less religious sentiment, which seemed to be of no concern to anyone. As a chaplain however, Barlow did have the time to write extensively while in camp. Encouraged by Connecticut's wartime appetite for poetry, Barlow was confident after the war that he would find readers and patrons. The local market for newspapers seemed so strong that by 1784 Barlow believed that Hartford could support a second newspaper, his own *American Mercury*.

The central challenge facing scholars of this period is to establish what the growth of the publishing industry really meant. Importantly, what Barlow perceived as a new world of print opportunities should not be mistaken for a larger and more modern market

than it really was. New England's print network *was* growing, but only growing into something that was still limited, an industry populated by publishers and authors always on the verge of collapse. Everything operated on a tremendously local scale. Indeed, localized growth was the entirety of the press expansion. New publishing firms and newspapers were starting not as part of some nationalized or coordinated wave, but in an atomized and disconnected manner. More towns began to have newspapers in much the same way more towns might have begun to have blacksmith's shops or tanneries. As Trish Loughran's powerful study of print culture in the early republic has shown, in North America in the late eighteenth century there was no national print culture, no national market for print and no efficient way for texts to circulate or find truly national audiences. Instead, in *The Republic in Print*, Loughran argues that what we have come to think of as "print culture" or "book culture" was a decidedly local phenomenon, "a series of disconnected locales" (Loughran 35) that lacked effective ways of coordinating with one another. As Loughran demonstrates, even supposedly omnipresent and highly influential works like *Common Sense* and *The Federalist* were much more local affairs than has been remembered. At best, both works achieved a brief moment of regional reach, but little more.[6] Likewise, despite what booksellers and magazine editors like Mathew Carey may have said about their national reach, an audience on that scale was

[6] Loughran points out that *Common Sense* was "reprinted in just thirteen towns in only six of the thirteen colonies… only once south of Philadelphia (in Charleston)" (47). *Common Sense* was essentially a Philadelphia publication that also received a scattered reprinting in New England. Along with the mostly untouched South, *Common Sense* was also never reprinted independently in New Jersey, Maryland, or Delaware. In much the same way, *The Federalist* also saw only a "piecemeal dissemination," (111) with the vast majority of its print appearances occurring in New York City.

little more than a rhetorical fiction.[7] In "a world of profound non-correspondence and non-simultaneity," (Loughran 9) any true dissemination was limited, as "fragmented pieces of text circulated haphazardly and unevenly in a world still largely dominated by the limits of locale" (Loughran xix).

Because of these limitations, it is necessary to examine the specifics of Barlow's career in the 1770s and 1780s to get a sense of what seeing his work into print meant for him, as opposed to what it meant for later writers. Because Barlow did not enjoy true access to non-local readers, many of the ways in which we experience print and generally theorize it – as abstract, rational, de-personalized, timeless and placeless – simply could not be achieved in early America. In Barlow's world alternate forms of communication, from letter-writing to word of mouth, were just as effective as print, and as such, were not crowded out by it. In the late eighteenth century, print functioned more as a small part of a much wider field of communication, rather than as the primary site of author-reader contact. Loughran writes, "most authors still expected their writing to be received into a known (and knowing) community" (69). This was true not only for statesmen, but for poets as well. In an intensely local environment, print was merely the last step in the life of a poem, because nearly every possible reader of the poem might have already been exposed to it by other means. Thus, print's localness tended to also mean that it stayed

[7] Loughran notes that Carey was only able to turn a profit when he abandoned his national aspirations. Loughran writes, "a discrepancy between how booksellers talked in early America and how they did business" (17). "In 1787, printers, publishers, and even consumers may have begun to imagine and discuss the potential of an emergent federal market that could connect… but a functional national market zone, or unified field of exchange, had still not materialized" (Loughran 17).

personal, the body of the author was never far from the body of the text.[8] This local character of print in the Revolutionary Era is a key element of what I am calling Barlow's "on-demand publishing." Until Barlow left for Europe in 1788, every one of his publications was initiated, justified, and sustained by personal relationships between the poet and his audience. Barlow's readers, in great proportion, were people who would have recognized him in the street.

Barlow's first signed publication, *The Prospect of Peace*, was published by Thomas and Samuel Green of New Haven, in 1778, shortly after his graduation from Yale. Brothers, Thomas and Samuel were part of a Green printing dynasty that was well over a century old and stretched from Massachusetts to Maryland. The Green family had been employed as printers in New England since the 1630s, and had expanded from their original shop in Cambridge into Connecticut in the early eighteenth century, where they became especially dominant. Thomas Green, who would make his younger brother Samuel his partner in New Haven, had learned the trade from his father in New London, before eventually setting out on his own in 1764, when he founded the influential and long-standing *Hartford Courant*. Although Green maintained financial ties to the *Courant* until 1770, in 1767 he left Hartford to return to New Haven, and founded the *New Haven Post Boy* (later named *The Connecticut Journal*, and *The Connecticut Journal; and New Haven Post-Boy*). Earlier in his career, Green had worked in New Haven, publishing the *Connecticut Gazette*, the colony's first newspaper. By the time the war began, Green had achieved stability and success in New Haven, where he published a

[8] As evidenced by the many persecuted and harassed printers during the period, this was certainly true for printers as well, "like other forms of preindustrial production, print often leads back to actual bodies in the eighteenth century" (Loughran 115).

variety of works in addition to the *Post-Boy*. As his ancestors had done in Cambridge, Green also profited from a special relationship with the local university, publishing numerous materials for Yale. Green was so confident of his financial stability, that he undertook the ambitious project of building a paper mill in 1776, a remarkable venture given the overriding uncertainty of the times.

The publication record of Thomas and Samuel Green in 1778, the year they published the *Prospect*, is instructive in the way it reveals an eclectic blend of heady, highly topical, publications with more mundane offerings, a situation that was likely the case for most printers. Thus, four of the firm's ten 1778 offerings could have been found in any other year. There were three imprints directly tied to Yale, two course catalogues and the funeral sermon for a deceased student, along with an almanac. The conflict with Britain did lead to other, more topical publications by the Greens, such as Paine's *The American Crisis* and a sermon by Chauncey Whittelsey, a New Haven pastor, titled *The Importance of Religion in the Civil Ruler, Considered*. Somewhere in the middle of this spectrum, between Paine and the next year's almanac, was Barlow's *Prospect of Peace*, a belletristic disquisition upon contemporary affairs and a visionary imagining of the glorious future to come. In addition to *The Prospect of Peace*, the Greens rounded out their 1778 output with two editions of Wheeler Case's *Poems, Occasioned by Several Circumstances and Occurrencies,*[sic] *In the Present Grand Contest of America for Liberty*. Case's highly occasional collection included poems such as "The Lamentations of General Burgoyne" and "A Contest Between the Eagle and the Crane" and was written in the same bouncy, couplet-laden style used by Trumbull in *M'Fingal*. The fact that the Greens were willing to issue a second edition of Wheeler's collection, suggests that there

was a healthy audience for this type of work, and indeed, in 1779 three editions of Case's *Poems* were published in New Jersey as well.

Politically, Thomas and Samuel Green's *New Haven Post Boy* initially fell in line with the *Hartford Courant* and the *New London Gazette* as firm supporters of the Patriot cause, having baited the British from the first opportunity and serving as "a leader in opposition to the Stamp Act" (Cutler 25). Throughout the newspaper boom of the 1760s, the Connecticut press had been overwhelmingly anti-British and remained so during the war years, serving as "a mouthpiece for the Revolution" (Cutler 20). Eventually, there were hardly any loyalists remaining. In 1776, the loyalist founders of the *Norwich Packet* sold out and fled to friendlier environs in New York. For this reason, when rumors of the Greens' supposed Tory sympathies spread as the war dragged on, the Greens became lonely targets. The primary cause of suspicion seems to have been that the Greens were Anglican, a long-distrusted minority in Congregationalist Connecticut. Looking at their published materials however, including Barlow's *Prospect*, it is hard to see much direct evidence to support this suspicion. At worst, the Greens would "in a subtle way throw into obscurity some of the events now considered landmarks in national history," (Morse 18) including, in 1776, printing a copy of the Declaration of Independence on the back page of the paper, surrounded by advertisements. In any case, in 1781, Ezra Stiles withdrew Yale's business from the Greens, labeling them a "Tory press" (qtd. in Cutler 25).

Barlow's relationship with the Greens began when the firm still stood favorably in the eyes of Yale. In January of 1777, Barlow had privately printed a broadside, formatted and numbered to look like a biblical page, which humorously criticized the policies of

wartime Yale and President Naphtali Daggett, especially the early dismissal of students in the winter of 1776 due to financial concerns. With all probability the Greens printed Barlow's burlesque, and he may have established a relationship with them that encouraged him to work with them. In 1778 Barlow's poem "The Prospect of Peace" (originally read as part of the July commencement ceremonies) was, "rushed into print as though it were the product of an illustrious litterateur" (Bernstein 21). In the days after the ceremony, with the poem already known by the people of New Haven, Barlow was encouraged by numerous friends, who responded to the poem with "the greatest favor," (Zunder *Early Days* 59) and begged him to have the poem printed. Barlow welcomed their enthusiasm. A twelve-page, duodecimo fold pamphlet, *The Prospect* was printed on laid paper and featured a self-wrapper, with its own paper forming the front and back covers. The 234 line poem stretched over ten pages on the $8^{1/16}$ x $5^{1/4}$ pamphlet. Barlow's poem "captured the public imagination," (Mulford 26) and made him a man of note of in New Haven, both among the young ladies who considered him an attractive literary celebrity and among the male intelligentsia, who arranged his highly fortuitous chaplaincy.[9]

A reception history of the poem reveals Barlow's literary foundation both in ceremonial university culture and the world of polite manuscript exchange. As Barlow worked on "The Prospect of Peace" in the summer of 1778 it circulated in manuscript around New Haven, and was already well known when it was published later that year. On July 10, 1778, Ezra Stiles – who had been named the new President two days before –

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[9] For Barlow's status as a favorite with the young women of New Haven, including Betsey Stiles and Elizabeth Whitman, the inspiration behind *The Coquette*, see Mulford 29-30 and Bernstein 21.

appointed Barlow the class poet, an honor that Barlow had expected, as further confirmation of his growing reputation. The public's familiarity with his poetry, especially within Connecticut's cultural elite, was further increased on July 23rd when Barlow read the poem during Yale's commencement ceremonies inside the University Chapel. Following a "Cliosophical Oration in Latin" by classmate Josiah Meigs, Barlow read the entirety of "The Prospect of Peace," which thanks to Stiles's meticulous notes, we know took twelve minutes, beginning at 3:59 and ended at 4:11. According to Zunder, the audience "carefully listened" (*Early Days* 56) to Barlow and responded well to his poem, which blended Enlightenment concepts with respectable Yale Calvinism.

In this way, we can see that publication was not the primary cause of Barlow's growing acclaim. It merely served as its culmination and final proof. Barlow's reading of his patriotic work at Yale's commencement gave him an almost official status as a poet, signaling to the elite of the colony (nearly all of whom were Yale graduates) his establishment credentials as a literary voice. After the appearance of *The Prospect of Peace*, Barlow would not publish again until 1781, yet his reputation continued to grow around the state. In person and in manuscript, Barlow impressed a variety of audiences: his male classmates and younger male friends of his generation, Yale faculty and the New Haven elite, the daughters of the New Haven elite, and officers in the Army. Throughout this period Barlow was an active distributor of his work as he assiduously sought out readers, patronage and literary advice.

In his study of British American polite society David Shields introduced the concept of being "published in manuscript," a wonderful turn of phrase which aptly describes Barlow's status in the late 1770s and early 1780s. Like Shields's example of

Joseph Green, a satirist who made himself the nemesis of Mather Byles in the 1730s, Barlow made his work "public" in a variety of ways, taking advantage of his expanding Yale and Army connections to do so.[10] Unlike Green, however, Barlow did not maintain a clear generic or tonal distinction between works geared towards either mode of distribution. He seems to have simply used whatever method appeared most expedient at any given time. This attitude extended to Barlow's thinking about the relationship between audience and medium. While a generation earlier Joseph Green had used manuscript to address a more specific audience than print allowed, such as his club friends or fellow merchants, for Barlow there was only one audience, and indeed the most fundamental fact about his poetry throughout his life was that there was essentially only one message as well. The same people read the same poems with the same themes, sometimes in one medium, sometimes in another, over and over again. Although Barlow obviously looked to his friends and associates as the initial members of his audience, he never conceived of a distinctly private readership. For Barlow, private and public collapsed into the same general audience.

The contrast between Barlow and Green illuminates the subtle differences emerging between their eras. Barlow was not an avant-garde poet and he shared many of the literary attitudes and assumptions held by Green's generation. Nevertheless, with regards to how he approached literary publication in the late 1770s, Barlow's concerns were in the end pragmatic ones. Lacking Green's sophistication, Barlow simply didn't theorize print positively or negatively during his Yale days. In that respect, he was already more modern, as we can see how his attitude towards print lacked the old

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[10] For more on Joseph Green, see Shields 249-263.

aristocratic resistance. Rather, Barlow expressed mostly indifference, a feeling that print might or might not have much to offer. He was generally satisfied with what non-print methods were already achieving. This attitude was clearly reinforced by the fact that his first two major poems were going into print as pamphlets only as a kind of bonus after a successful appearance in other formats.

The relative unimportance of print to the history of "The Prospect of Peace" extends to the poem's being nearly ignored in the periodical press. Barlow's poem did not receive a significant boost from the newspapers. *The Norwich Packet* (Norwich, CT) was the only newspaper to reprint the poem, publishing the poem in thirds in the fall of 1778.[11] A partial explanation for this lack of republication lies in Barlow's indifference to promoting the poem through the press, indifference that would shift to fervor in later years. In the late 1770s, however, Barlow saw no reason to deliver copies of his poem to newspaper editors in the hope they might reprint the poem. Although Barlow was quite happy with the poem's success, he must have realized years later that he had missed out on an opportunity. Not only did Barlow grow into an adept promoter, "The Prospect of Peace" proved to be a cannily designed poem. As such, it gained traction years after the war's end, appearing in two important anthologies in the contentious 1790s, Elihu Hubbard Smith's *American Poems* (Litchfield, 1793) and James Carey's *The Columbian Muse* (New York, 1794). Thanks to its ambiguous synthesis of political republicanism and Calvinist millennialism, Barlow's poem aged well, speaking to both sides of the post-Revolutionary political and cultural divide.

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[11] *The Norwich Packet* [Norwich, CT] 5 Oct. 1778:4. 26 Oct. 1778:4. 16 Nov. 1778:4.

Cornelia Wegener has shown how Barlow employed "both traditional and liberal ideas about the nature of man and his relationship to God," in the poem, creating a millennial vision that is neither "exclusively orthodox in its religious views, nor… exclusively Arminian or Deist" (263). A celebration of science, the arts and freedom, and a map of the glories of the coming future, "The Prospect of Peace" is the first version of a poem Barlow would essentially spend his entire career re-writing. Until he physically and philosophically left for France in 1788, Barlow blended republican politics with "the orthodox Calvinistic teleological notion of the 'fulfillment' of the historical process in a spiritual millennium" (Wegener 266). Wegener argues that Barlow offers his audience a poem open to alternative readings thanks to his strategy of "rhetorical ambiguation," (275) especially in the first two thirds of the poem. Wegener suggests that Barlow could only maintain his intentionally ambiguous position for so long before he eventually lost his nerve, steering his vision safely towards Yale orthodoxy. Thus, the poem's Calvinistic grounding is especially strong at the conclusion of the poem, when Barlow's earlier praise of man's ingenuity and inventiveness is made safe by a series of biblical allusions. After references to Bethlehem and the "swarthy millions" (line 193) who will come to know the Gospel, the shining Western Sun, so consistently an image of the Americas, is described as a symbol of Christ's "long and glorious reign on earth!" (line 224).

Barlow's decision to reconfigure the rising nation into "the Church elect" at the conclusion of "The Prospect" is especially understandable if we return to the poem's original performative context. Barlow delivered his poem inside a chapel and to an audience that included pious men such as Stiles. Moreover, the poem was part of a commencement ceremony imbued with religious overtones. Yale students in the 1770s

were required to read Jonathan Edwards, and heterodox beliefs were still grounds for dismissal. Only twenty four and without fortune or any familial connections of importance, Barlow could hardly have taken so bold a step as to not ground his poem in Calvinism. The structure of the poem suggests that this Congregationalist-friendly ending was tacked on. On page ten of the pamphlet printed by the Greens, having concluded his vision of the future, Barlow reaches a natural stopping point:

> These are the views that Freedom's cause attend;
> These shall endure 'till Time and Nature end.
> With Science crown'd, shall Peace and Virtue shine,
> And blest Religion beam a light divine. (179-182)

These lines summarize Barlow's poem and crystallize his hybrid or ambiguous position between the secular and the sacred. Signposted by the repeated intonation "these" they go so far as to call attention to themselves as efforts at summarization, as the point where the argument of the poem should conclude. Instead, Barlow avoids the closure offered here, and over the next fifty lines which conclude the poem, decouples the secular (Science, Peace and Virtue) lights and sacred (Religion) lights which he had previously fused. For what was his first mature poem, and one delivered under charged circumstances, Barlow nevertheless managed to position himself as generally acceptable and pleasing to a broad public, qualities the poem would need to be published.

After 1778, Barlow began to be pulled away from New Haven, a development which would significantly alter his career as a poet. After graduation, Barlow initially enrolled as a graduate student at Yale, but by the spring of 1779 he was not a regular inhabitant of New Haven. Army service, uncertain finances, and his secret marriage to

Ruth Baldwin in 1781, bounced Barlow from place to place for two years.[12] By February of 1781 Barlow was finally settled in Hartford, where he would live, with occasional interruptions, for the next eight years. Aside from occasional contributions to the *New Haven Post-Boy, The Prospect of Peace* was Barlow's only work to be published in New Haven until April of 1796, when the Greens joined several other firms in printing Barlow's *Hasty Pudding*.[13] The rest of his literary, professional and political life would be a slow but inexorable movement away from the place of his first maturation.

Without work in New Haven Barlow made Hartford his home, signaling the beginning of an important transition in his career from being a class poet and college wit into a wider role. For a time, Barlow would remain a Yale poet, stationed in Hartford, but Yale's direct influence could only hold for so long. In time, Hartford would become Barlow's true literary home. Until he left for Europe in 1788 everything Barlow published originated in Hartford, which was becoming the literary capital of Connecticut. Thus, even though Barlow's next publication was another Yale commencement poem,

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[12] From 1779-81, Barlow was extremely mobile and seems to have relied largely upon the generosity of friends for lodging and financial support. Barlow was especially transient in 1780, the year he was appointed as a chaplain for the Fourth Massachusetts Brigade. Between stays in Guilford, New London, New Haven, Lyme, Redding, and Hartford, Barlow also spent extended periods in both New York and New Jersey during the fall, before ending the year with a return to New Haven and a two week stay at Litchfield. In January of 1781, Barlow orbited between New Haven, Kensington and Farmington, the latter where he secretly married Ruth Baldwin on January 26, 1781.

[13] According to Zunder, "The Post-Boy's Present to His Customer's" was sent to patrons of the Green's *New Haven Post-Boy* (which at that time was titled, *The Connecticut Journal; and New Haven Post-Boy*) as a single-sheet, on December 31, 1778. Although Barlow was always extremely proud of his literary activity, he makes little mention of his carrier and newspaper verse, and made no effort, as he would do with his other publications, to preserve these verses or publish them later in life. For more on this poem, see Zunder *Early Days* 64 and Mulford "Letters" 88.

this time in 1781, Barlow had the work published by the Hartford firm Hudson & Goodwin.

That second commencement poem of 1781 marked the climax of Barlow's identity as a Yale bard. During a May visit to New Haven, Stiles had asked Barlow to read another poem at that year's commencement, an offer Barlow excitedly accepted. Barlow would also be receiving his M.A. at the ceremony, which he had pursued in an unsuccessful attempt to join the university faculty. Published as *A Poem, Spoken at the Public Commencement at Yale College in New Haven,* Barlow's offering was packed with large selections of material that Barlow had already composed for *The Vision of Columbus*. For this reason, the 386 line *A Poem* was nearly double the length of *The Prospect of Peace*. According to Leon Howard, the poem's devotion to the arts and increased separation from reductive Yale Calvinism, marks it as a much more original work than Barlow's first commencement poem. It is also a more specifically Yale poem, which may explain why it did not quite match the popularity of its predecessor in subsequent anthologies, a possibility raised by Barlow himself in the preface to the printed version of the piece.[14] The poem repeatedly and directly addresses the commencement audience ("ye sons of Yale") highlighting Barlow's growing confidence as a poetic voice. Barlow opens the poem with an 84-line introductory movement which bursts with a level of feeling rare in his works. Speaking at the first public commencement since the beginning of the war, Barlow assumes an end to the conflict is close at hand:

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[14] "A Poem" was reprinted Smith's *American Poems*, but has not been found anywhere else by Barlow scholars.

> Once more, thou sacred Seat, the changing year
> Hath circled heaven and bid the day appear,
> That opes thy portals, gilds thy spiry dome,
> And calls thy children from their joyous home.
> Thro' seven long years hath war's terrific power
> Rang'd every town and crimson'd every shore,
> Pursu'd fair Science from each happy seat,
> Rav'd in her domes and forc'd her last retreat,
> And oft, Yalensia, doom'd thy final fall,
> While thy sad Genius trembled for thy wall.
> Now see, at last, the venerable train,
> Thine elder sons ascend thy courts again! (1-12)

Barlow goes on to salute Yale's "patriot worthies" (45) who have helped banish the enemy and who can now return to their service to the higher aims of the intellect, such as science and the arts. He next directly recalls his own battlefield experiences and speaking in a first-person voice that is almost entirely absent from his body of work:

> As late, when war's grim terrors sought repose,
> And evening mists and distant fires arose,
> Far in a gloomy grove I pensive stray'd,
> Where death's pale phantoms walk'd the midnight shade (55-8)

Amidst the "sickening damps" (59) of the battlefield and "all my country's woes" (62), Barlow's greatest sorrow is for "Neglected Science" (64) and how seats of learning, even Yale, the loveliest of all, had been turned to "scenes of slaughter" (69). Barlow concludes his gloomy wartime reminiscence with a reference to the death of his patron, Titus Hosmer, a Connecticut statesman and a Yale graduate. Struggling with "saddening gloom" (75) the poem seeks solace in hope for the future. A celebration of the values of enlightenment and university culture, "A Poem" glories in the pending return of Science and the Arts, which along with Commerce – always a key for Barlow – will be uniquely at home in the new nation.

The second Yale poem is important because it was the culmination of the first stage of Barlow's career. Being asked to read another poem at another commencement was a validation of his success at 1778's ceremony and a final sanctioning of Barlow's status as a literary spokesman for his generation of Yale graduates. The war and the birth of the new nation, quite surely, gave this designation profound resonance. The Yale period launched Barlow's career just as their days as high-profile poets at Princeton set forward the careers of Freneau and Brackenridge earlier in the decade. As a college poet, location not only defined Barlow's audience, it drove his methodology. As an approved insider, Barlow could reach everyone in the Yale sphere through manuscript, personal readings, and high-profile orations such as those at the commencements. In this way, Barlow conceived of his reading of his poem as an event or a performance. Prior to the ceremony, as he spent another summer in camp with the Army, Barlow wrote to his wife three times in August of 1781 asking that she wear a special gown to the commencement. In his final letter on the subject, dated August 25th, Barlow told Ruth that he had arranged for her to purchase something of her choice, with financial assistance provided by Barlow's friend Chauncy Goodrich. Barlow implored, "don't fail you sweet creature to make a grand appearance upon that day, for my happiness depends upon it" (Mulford "Letters" 252).

Like "The Prospect of Peace," Barlow's "A Poem" was well-received, both during the ceremony itself and in the days that followed. Yet despite another post-commencement wave of enthusiasm and praise for his work, Barlow held off on

publication for at least a few weeks.[15] In his preface to the printed version Barlow explained that the poem was essentially two parts, "several passages taken from a larger work which the author has by him, unfinished" and a "Commencement Auditory," the former he worried might be improper to print, the latter, of limited interest outside Connecticut. Barlow then addressed each concern in kind, and concluded, of course, that his poem did indeed justify publication. Like *The Prospect of Peace, A Poem* should be seen as another on-demand publication, coming into print only in the final stages of its life.

In this way then, Barlow's concerns about his poem's status as "Commencement Auditory" were thus anxieties about audience size, and not, importantly, worries related to genre. In his study of poetry and rhetoric during the early national period, Gordon Bigelow points out that eighteenth-century Americans did not view poetry in the same way as their post-romantic descendents would.[16] In particular, both the poets and readers of Barlow's generation did not adhere to a strict distinction between poetry and rhetoric as separate modes of discourse, with separate rules and goals. This is why "most literature of the early national period in prose or in verse is what we would today call propaganda, a literature of polemic and invective" (Bigelow 15). The imaginative or aesthetic qualities of a work were important, but secondary to the more purely rational

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[15] The exact date of publication is unknown, but according to Barlow scholars the poem was published by the end of the year, sometime in the winter of 1781.

[16] Bigelow defines rhetoric in what he considers inclusive and moderate terms, namely that it is tied to oratory and persuasion. Part of Bigelow's argument is that, in actuality, the close association between rhetoric and poetry has been the norm, historically speaking. Rhetoric and poetry only become truly disassociated after romanticism.

elements and the success of the argument.[17] Even though Barlow considered himself a "visionary" poet, the visions he produced in *The Vision of Columbus* and the *Columbiad* have little to nothing in common with the romantic conception of the visionary. They are not even the poet's visions, or Columbus's, but the visions offered by visiting divinities who are stock stand-ins for history itself. Barlow's visions are thus not about the power of the imagination, but merely instructive lessons offered by history. Working in the subset of the neoclassical tradition that celebrated oratory and rhetorical verse, Barlow placed the poet at the center of his republican utopias because of poetry's ability to convey a rational argument. Crucially then, Barlow exemplifies that line of Augustan literature that cannot be fully incorporated into Warner's reading of republicanism. For Barlow, rooted in the Opposition tradition, reasoned argument and learned persuasion were not associated with "the cultural meaning of printedness" (Warner xi) but rather with the cultural meaning of poetry. Print was important only insomuch as it preserved and made portable the powers that poetry already had.

Barlow's beginning as a commencement poet and his experience as a poet/orator was typical of his generation. With rhetorical and oratorical training a large part of education and with ideals of poetry already geared towards persuasion and the making of arguments, poetry in the second half of the eighteenth century became more and more tied to public speech. Noting just how many poems written during the period were meant to be spoken before an audience Gordon Bigelow argues that, "the function of the poet

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[17] Edward M. Cifelli has extended Bigelow's thesis into a sustained defense of the least-loved Connecticut Wit of all, David Humphreys. In his book on Humphreys for the Twayne United States Authors Series, Cifelli outlines Humphreys's "epideictic poetry," a term he takes from Bigelow, which blends oratory and poetry in a "highly stylized form adapted from classical rhetoric and elocution" (8).

and the orator tended to fuse," to the extent that it is difficult to say whether many of them should be labeled "declamatory poems or poetic orations" (28). Commencement poems, which demanded oratorical skill, emerged as a central aspect of the college poet's role on campus. Being asked to participate in the commencement as a poet was almost a necessary step to fame, giving a few select individuals a greater prominence in an environment when almost everyone was writing poems. Their importance would continue throughout the period, as evidenced by the notoriety generated by Robert Treat Paine's commencement poems at Harvard in the 1790s. There seems to be an ever-increasing desire for more and more oratory and performance in both the literature and the graduation ceremonies of the eighteenth century. In both places, older tastes, long denied, were being revived. Kenneth Silverman describes how the commencements even went so far as to begin featuring thinly-disguised plays, the ultimate in literary frivolity and impropriety from the old Puritan perspective. These performances were made acceptable because they were advertised as debates and dialogues and because they so often highlighted the rising glory of the New World. The rhetorical qualities of a literary work were what made it fully socially acceptable in a New England cultural climate that was still in thaw, still coming out of a deep suspicion of modern literature. To this end, it becomes clear why the commencement ceremony, a celebration of the rhetorical and oratorical skills of the graduating class, became a safe place for literary expression.

The implications of these facts extend far beyond specific concerns about the nature of poetry or university culture in the revolutionary period. Given the wide-ranging importance of speech, Sandra Gustafson has asked, "what if oratory and not print was the defining genre of political modernity in the age of democratic revolution?" ("American

Literature" 471) Drawing upon the body of analysis that has emerged since the early 1990s, Gustafson counters the Habermas/Warner school, arguing that "print did not define the republican public sphere" ("American Literature" 472).[18] This perspective, along with that brought forward by David Shields regarding manuscript poetry and salon and club culture, helps explain how Barlow could begin his career fully within the republican oeuvre, yet also be mostly indifferent to print.

Significantly, Barlow's first two publications were not only originally delivered as speeches they were also published in ways which drew attention to this fact. As the titles of these publications remind us, they positively screamed their original (and perhaps their ideal) identity as oral performances. Barlow's second commencement poem, as we have seen, takes this to an absurd level. As it was performed at Yale's commencement, the poem was called "The Genius of Literature" a title which, in print, as a pamphlet, became *A Poem, Spoken at the Public Commencement at Yale College in New Haven*. There was no reference made on the title page, or in Barlow's preface, to the original title. This forcefully frames the poem in a specific way and modifies the pamphlet into something commemorative and, to our eyes, almost more journalistic than much of which appeared in the actual newspapers of the day. Barlow's example reminds us of just how prevalent this peculiar form of publication was in the period, and how it could extend into genres and realms which might not otherwise be logically connected. The allure of speech, even literary speech, was so powerful that it manifested itself in obviously

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[18] Gustafson's essay "American Literature and the Public Sphere" cites Jay Fliegelman's *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, and the Culture of Performance* (1993), Christopher Looby's *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States* (1996) and her own *Eloquence is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America* (2000) as the key studies of oratory and performance in the early republic.

fictitious vehicles like the 1781 broadside, *A Poem, spoken extempore, by a young lady, on hearing the guns firing and bells chiming on account of the great and glorious acquisition of […] York-Town."* In the same year Barlow published his second commencement poem, in addition to the ubiquitous printed sermons, Hudson & Goodwin published titles such as *An Oration, on the rise and progress of physic in America*, by James Potter. Published speech was everywhere.

Barlow's first published work of prose was also rooted in speech. In 1787, Hudson & Goodwin published Barlow's *An Oration, Delivered at the North Church in Hartford at the Meeting of the Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati* (twenty pages, quarto). The persistence of speech publications, whether political, theological or literary, suggests that the spread of new print ideologies was uneven and gradual. Barlow's on-demand publications were mostly identical reprints of his spoken words, and they unashamedly presented themselves as such. They seem to have been published for the convenience of interested readers. It would be too grandiose to say they attempt to reproduce speech or the oratorical event, for there is no general effort made to capture the details of the speaker's voice and rhythm, and few mentions of the audience and their reaction. Instead, an "in case you missed it" quality is unmistakably present in pamphlets of this kind. Because of manuscript circulation and oral performance the poems had already been released, they were already "out." Existence in print was simply another way of literary distribution and preservation. From Barlow's example we can see that a kind of continuum connected manuscripts, oral performance, and printed works.

Moreover, this was a continuum without a defined hierarchy or necessary order of appearance; rather, these modes supplemented and mimicked each other.[19]

Barlow concluded the first stage of his career with his third publication, *An Elegy on the Late Honorable Titus Hosmer, Esq.*, another Yale-related and locally-concerned piece. Titus Hosmer, a former Speaker of the House in the Connecticut Assembly and a member of the Continental Congress, had died suddenly in 1780 at the age of forty-four, just as he had been elected as one of three judges to sit on the newly created Federal Court of Appeals.[20] In "A Poem" Hosmer's death had formed a part of Barlow's introductory catalogue of woe and address to "Yalensia" and as he would do throughout his career he felt no compunction about returning to the topic in a later work. Barlow had met with Hosmer multiple times during the late 1770s, and there exists a tradition of references to him as Barlow's "patron." This perception was likely generated by Barlow's "graceful though perhaps exaggerated tribute" (Howard 144) in "An Elegy". By all indications however, Hosmer's support was primarily moral, rather than financial. Hosmer encouraged Barlow to keep writing and was sympathetic to his difficulties, but as Woodress puts it, "the great man also kept his strongbox locked" (51).

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[19] Drawing from Shields, Grasso points out that manuscript coteries and literary clubs "were all different aspects of the same process: creating and sustaining a community of shared sentiment based upon the virtuous pleasures of the fine arts" (293). Community was created and sustained by standards for taste, but looking at Barlow's commencement poems, we can see how print, just like other modes, could create (or refer, or reinforce) social and communal ties, elaborate and define tastes and strengthen personal bonds.

[20] A powerful politician and lawyer, like Stiles, Hosmer was fond of hosting conversations on science and literature at his home in Middletown, and according to the nineteenth-century historian David D. Field, "by nature he had the genius of a poet and there is said to be a hymn in existence composed by him" (97). For more on Hosmer's biography, see Field's local history of Middletown, *Centennial Address and Hsitorical Sketches* (Middletown, 1853) pages 96-100.

Though Hosmer died in 1780, Barlow did not complete Hosmer's elegy until the winter of 1781 and would not see it to print until spring of 1782, a rather lengthy delay for this kind of poem. As with "A Poem," Barlow did not aggressively rush the elegy into print. In fact, he seemed unconcerned with matters of timeliness. In spite of the delay, Barlow was proud of the elegy, writing to his wife Ruth on January 5, 1782, "it is the best piece I have to brag of in the world" (Mulford 265). Zunder notes that in January of 1782 Barlow discussed the publication of the poem with Hudson & Goodwin, but waited until he had the approval of Hosmer's widow – to whom the poem was dedicated – before he would ask for the poem to published. Perpetually on the road, Barlow travelled to Middletown the next month, where he delivered the poem to Mrs. Hosmer and received permission to have the work printed. Barlow thrived on encounters such as this, and his polite deference to Mrs. Hosmer's wishes may have also been motivated by another excuse to discuss his work with a member of Connecticut's elite, something Barlow pursued aggressively. The whole of Barlow's dealings with the Hosmers indeed illustrate just how much he cherished any form of support or encouragement for his work. Unlike more socially established literary peers – Trumbull, Humphreys, and Dwight – Barlow relied on poetry to open the doors of influence, and his success in achieving this access continued to fill him with unrealistic hopes of finding future patrons. In the importance of these social considerations, we again see how relatively unimportant getting into print was during the early stages of Barlow's career.

Critics have not shared Barlow's enthusiasm for "An Elegy on the late Honorable Titus Hosmer" and the poem remains the least discussed of Barlow's published works.[21] Even Zunder, the poem's most attentive critic, goes so far as to conclude that there is "nothing to be gained by summarizing the content of the poem," which he finally believes is merely "an academic exercise and not a sincere expression of the poet's sorrow" (*Early Days* 144). Influenced by English poets Gray and Shenstone, Barlow's poem is a jumble of standard elegiac tropes and "effervescent confidence" (Bernstein 27) in the new American nation, a kind of Gray's "Elegy" grafted onto Barlow's earlier patriotic poems. The only poem Barlow ever wrote in quatrains – Gray's influence again – "An Elegy" suffers from the two consistent weaknesses in Barlow's work; namely, being too long by half, coupled with a propensity for overstatement and pomposity. Over the course of 240 lines (Gray needed only 128) Barlow asks that Hosmer return to him, reflects on Hosmer's passage from his bodily existence into one in Heaven, and then imagines him viewing the conflict with Britain and the growth of the rising nation from above. Though he has been "orphan'd" by the loss of Hosmer, the poet finds reassurance in Hosmer's example and his certain joy in the Revolution. Leon Howard cynically suggests that Barlow was motivated to write the poem because, "religion, patriotism, and death were the three subjects that guaranteed unquestionable solemnity of attitude and nobility of sentiment," (144) and for most of his Connecticut audience that was what

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[21] For example, two major studies of Barlow, *A Yankee's Odyssey: The Life of Joel Barlow* by James Woodress and A.L. Ford's *Joel Barlow* do not discuss the poem at all. Howard does not go much further, giving "An Elegy" less than one page of attention in *The Connecticut Wits*.

mattered, not literary merit.[22] Still, while solemn and religious, *An Elegy* is replete with lines which, unintentionally, are markedly silly:

> Fix'd in a brighter sphere, with surer aim,
> Tho' greater scenes his growing views employ,
> Yet Hosmer kindles with an Hosmer's flame,
> And his dear country feeds his noblest joy. (lines 177-80)

All the same, the poem praised one of Connecticut's worthies and reaffirmed the nobility and inevitable success of the Revolutionary cause, and thus likely read much better in the Hartford or Middletown of 1782 than it does now. In spite of Barlow's multiple themes and the numerous figures who make appearances in the poem – Barlow's muse, various angels, Cynthia the goddess of the moon, and the "universal Being" – the wandering elegy begins and ends with Hosmer, who is much praised. To further remind readers of his pious intentions and the local importance of the work Barlow dedicated the poem to Hosmer's widow, whom he praised as a "worthy consort" (*Works* 14).[23] It was a literary environment dominated by these sorts of gestures of politeness and deference and Barlow knew how to make a humble bow.

Both *A Poem* and Hosmer's elegy were published by Hudson & Goodwin of Hartford, the most important publishing engine in the state, if not all of New England in the early 1780s. The editors and publishers of the *Hartford Courant*, Hudson & Goodwin

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[22] Howard writes, "for Barlow, gay as he frequently was in company, was completely serious about his literary reputation; and, in spite of his praises for Trumbull, he knew that Connecticut had looked coldly upon the poet who had attempted to usher the comic muse into respectable company. The public had a way of ignoring the quality of verse and questioning the poet's sentiments and attitudes" (143-4).

[23] In his inscription Barlow wrote, "as a testimony of the Author's Veneration for the many amiable Virtues which rendered her the Delight and Ornament of so worthy a Consort, and still render her an Honor to a very numerous and respectable Acquaintance" (Barlow *Works* 14).

were brought together by a unique and fascinating set of circumstances. Because Hudson & Goodwin were so successful and because they published a number of Barlow's works, it is worthwhile to briefly outline their story. When the Greens left Hartford for New Haven in 1767 day to day operation of the *Hartford Courant* passed into the hands of Ebenezer Watson, who guided the paper through the tense pre-war years and established it as a firm voice in opposition to the British. Watson remained in partnership with Green until 1770, and the two published additional materials – almost exclusively almanacs and religious works – out of the Hartford under the imprint Green & Watson. For the next seven years, in addition to the *Courant*, Watson continued to publish regular almanacs and hundreds of religious pamphlets, while also adding political materials to his repertoire, including reports from the Continental Congress in 1774 and a flurry of patriotic offerings in response to the battles at Lexington and Concord. When Watson died of smallpox in 1777, his widow, Hannah Bruce Watson, assumed ownership and control of the *Courant*, and famously insured that the paper did not miss an issue. Seeking assistance, the twenty-seven year old mother of five young children named George Goodwin, a twenty-year old printer who worked at the *Courant*, her business partner. Even though she took on Green as a partner, Watson was far from an editor or printer in name only. Like her deceased husband, Hannah Watson was not afraid to push the *Courant* in specific editorial directions, including continued support for the Revolution.[24] Eventually however, in March of 1779, Watson married her neighbor, Barzillai Hudson, who moved into her place on the masthead and joined Goodwin to

[24] As Morse puts it, she was an "editor of positive views," and the *Courant* "blossomed forth with articles on temperance, cleanliness, and the happy effects of feminine society on men" (13).

form Hudson & Goodwin, a partnership which would last until Hudson's death in 1823. According to *Courant* historian James Eugene Smith, Hudson & Goodwin thrived because of their blend of talents. Goodwin, who had worked with Watson, knew how to publish a newspaper, in both a journalistic and mechanical sense, while Hudson was "a citizen of some importance" (Smith 15) in Hartford who acted as "a responsible person to manage and expand its business interests, while Goodwin gave full time to printing" (Smith 16).

Thanks to the regular work generated by the Connecticut State Assembly, a new influx of Yale-related jobs (caused by Stiles's political mistrust of the Greens in New Haven) and the reliable presence of almanacs and religious works, in the early 1780s Hudson & Goodwin had no shortage of business. Interestingly, while publishing a Tory work would have been unthinkable during those years, Hudson & Goodwin were not reflexively partisan in all matters or unwilling to take a neutral stance in local dispute, including potentially combustible religious debates, especially if it seemed to promise buyers. For example, in 1781 at least two local religious pamphlet wars were played out entirely under the Hudson & Goodwin imprint. John Bacon and Joseph Huntington engaged in extended public debate regarding Huntington's belief in Universalism, an exchange noted for its dedication to witty sarcasm on each side.[25] Similarly, from 1778-1781, controversy swirling around the First Congregational Church in West Stafford and

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[25] Huntington began the matter by publishing a work titled, *Letters of Friendship*, which thus prompted Bacon to entitled his subsequent 1781 attacks on Huntington, *Letters of Gratitude*, ironically thanking Huntington for educating him on the problems faced by orthodoxy. Huntington, meanwhile, then attacked Bacon with *A Droll, A deist and a John Bacon, master of arts, gently reprimanded*. Bacon replied, of course, with *The reprimander, reprimanded.* All of these works were published by Hudson & Goodwin.

the doctrines of its minister, Rev. Isaac Foster. As they did in the Bacon/Huntington dispute, Hudson & Goodwin offered Foster and his enemies a voice, publishing pieces which attacked Foster's heresy and alleged vice, but also those which came to Foster's defense.[26]

In addition to their two offerings from Barlow, the firm offered a variety of literary works, from anonymous occasional poems like 1781's *The Fall of Lucifer, An Elegiac Poem on the Famous Defection of Benedict Arnold* to Trumbull's *M'Fingal*.[27] Along with *M'Fingal*, Hudson & Goodwin's most notable publication of the decade was likely Webster's spelling book, which was produced in multiple editions and variations during the 1780s. Publishing works in a wide range of fields, compared to other Connecticut firms, what stands out about Hudson & Goodwin during this period is that they lacked a defined niche or specialty: save for pro-British propaganda, they published everything.

Given that they had the same publisher and were composed within a year of one another, it is not surprising that as physical objects, Barlow's second and third publications looked very similar. As the Greens had done with *The Prospect of Peace*, Hudson & Goodwin printed both *A Poem* and *An Elegy* as self-wrapped pamphlets printed on laid paper, totaling sixteen and fifteen pages, respectively. Both technically quarto folds, *A Poem* and *An Elegy* are actually a bit smaller than the duodecimo

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[26] While less witty than the Bacon/Huntington affair, the titles in this pamphlet war tell the story. Hudson & Goodwin published David Rowland and Theodore Hinsdale's, *Heresy, detected and exposed, in a brief narration of the unhappy disputes that have arisen*, then Foster's reply, *Misrepresentation and falshood, detected and exposed, in a true and fair narration of sundry things very falsly and unfairly narrated, by David S. Rowland and Theodore Hinsdale.*

[27] *M'Fingal* was almost immediately pirated in Hartford after publication in late summer of 1782, leading to Trumbull's early efforts, along with Barlow, to establish a copyright.

Prospect of Peace: *A Poem* measured at $7^{7/16}$ x $5^{1/4}$ with Barlow's tribute to Hosmer an even smaller $7^{7/16}$ x 5. These are roughly the same dimensions the firm used for *M'Fingal* and other pamphlets during this time. Both publications featured page numbers listed in parenthesis at the center of the top heading, a period convention favored by American outfits. Like other Hudson & Goodwin publications of this time, both publications lack illustration or elaborate bordering, featuring only the same small ornament or flower**,** a wave-like image laid out in a triangular shape, descending to a point, which marked the conclusion of the poem.[28]

These three simple pamphlets, *The Prospect of Peace*, *A Poem* and *An Elegy* helped establish Barlow as a literary figure in Connecticut and gave his efforts a permanence which allowed Smith to anthologize all three eleven years later in his *American Poems*. In many ways, the pamphlet was an ideal format for Barlow at this stage of his career, especially regarding size. He did not yet have enough poems for a volume and he was too verbose to fit easily on a newspaper page, especially in the war years when newspaper space was tight thanks to paper shortage-induced smaller formats. A pamphlet allowed Barlow the freedom to elegize Titus Hosmer in two hundred and forty lines, if that was what he thought was needed. Finally, the pamphlet remained closely tied to the performative literary culture of the time. Nevertheless, Barlow seems to have lacked a true enthusiasm for the form during these years, and never shared in the

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[28] Throughout the late 1770s and early 1780s, difficult and chaotic years for the firm, Hudson & Goodwin favored simple, clean designs: a bold title page in roman face, with occasional use of a line (or "rule") separating the title and author from the publisher's imprint, prefatory material set in italics, and little else in the way of design, save for the small border ornaments like those placed at the end of Barlow's poems, which may have been reserved for literary pieces.

spirit of the pamphleteer on his native soil, despite the contemporary prominence of that role. Barlow would not fully awaken to the possibilities of the pamphlet until he was exposed to the more radical revolutionary energies of London and Paris in the 1790s. Instead, Barlow delayed the publication of his second and third poems and gained as much satisfaction from distributing his work in manuscript and as part of an oratorical performance. Importantly, Barlow's audience felt much the same way, as Barlow's reputation spread mostly in parallel to his appearances in print, rather than because of them.

The hallmarks of on-demand publishing: post-facto publication in print, a local focus, and links to manuscript and oral performance defined the beginning of Barlow's publishing life. Barlow's career to this point shows how these different mediums could exist as a continuum, one that connected manuscripts, oral performance, and printed works. For Barlow, there was no tension between these mediums and no sense that print demanded changes. This may have been due to the fact that print's offered audience was only slightly larger than what manuscript or speech could achieve. Barlow's early career was sustained by a small, almost intimate readership, organized around his Yale connections, the polite drawing rooms of New Haven, and the gentlemen officers he met in the Continental army. There was no national readership available to be reached in the early 1780s. Moreover, print remained rooted in the private world. Barlow's pamphlets were made possible and legitimate by the personal connections he had made with men and women like the Hosmers, Ezra Stiles and David Humphreys. Barlow's lost horse notices in 1780 and 1782, which concluded by simply listing the names of various people to contact in different towns, remind us that above all else, this was a small world. It was

also a provincial world, lagging behind London by a generation in most respects. New England's literary culture was only beginning to make use of print in the ways that would make the period noteworthy in the history of authorship. The persistence of speech publications, whether political, theological or literary, suggests that the spread of new print ideologies was uneven and gradual. To trace Barlow's career from his days as a Yale poet through the rest of the decade is to see him gradually opening up to new modes of publication, while slowly, concurrently, developing a more print-based conception of poetry, and the poet-reader relationship. In this first stage of Barlow's career, newspapers played almost no role. That was about to change however. As the war ended and his marriage to Ruth was made public, Barlow decided to make publishing his first professional venture, becoming, in the standard formulation, an editor/publisher/bookseller in Hartford.

CHAPTER II

THE MANY FACES OF EARLY NATIONAL AUTHORSHIP:

BARLOW'S TURN TO PRINT IN THE 1780S

Barlow's actions in the 1780s are fascinating because they mark the beginning of his transformation into a modern poet in an environment that was not really ready to be modern. Pushed out of the Yale incubator, Barlow began to turn to print communication and advertising as the basis of his literary identity. Imagining a truly national audience for the first time, Barlow began to theorize the author's place in the new nation, expressing what would become the foundation of nineteenth century authorship. On January 10, 1783, he wrote to Elias Boudinot, President of Congress, concerning "the embarrassment which lies upon the interests of literature & works of genius in the United States" (qtd. in Mulford "Letters" 325). Acting as an Articles of Confederation era lobbyist, Barlow requested that Congress recommend to the States a fourteen year copyright, matching the British standard. Copyright protection, Barlow argued, would elevate the quality of the national intelligence and bring international prestige, while at the same time, protect the rights of the individual artist. Such protection was necessary because

> there is certainly no kind of property, in the nature of things, so much his own, as the works which a person originates from his own creative imagination, And when he has spent great part of his life in study, wasted his time, his fortune & perhaps his health in imparting his knowledge & correcting his taste, it is a principle of natural justice that he should be entitled to the profits arising from the sale of his works (qtd. in Mulford, "Letters" 325)

By the end of the month, Connecticut enacted the first statewide copyright, but Barlow and other advocates of a national copyright would have to wait another seven years before a national protection existed. The desirability of copyright was simply not self-evident in the 1780s. As Grantland Rice has shown, despite the near universal support of writers and the patriotic arguments used by copyright advocates, late-eighteenth-century understandings of print, publication, and the role of literature were strongly communitarian and made the codification of knowledge and expression as legal property difficult.[1] In fact, thanks to Meredith McGill's work on the antebellum print market, we know that these communitarian ideas of literary property, tied as they were to republican political ideology, remained prevalent and influential well into the mid-nineteenth century.[2] As such, despite the historical notoriety of the arguments for copyright and its implementation in 1790, a great number of alternative practices and conceptions of authorship not based in a liberal copyright model continued to flourish

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[1] In *The Transformation of Authorship in America*, Rice argues that the 1790 Copyright Act was both a departure and a compromise, one that "signaled a radical cultural attempt to reconfigure what it meant to communicate to a reading public in print, one that did not develop evenly nor result in an easy or clear verdict" (7). As Rice argues, the fact that copyright was limited to fourteen years, in fact, was a sign of compromise, a belief that eventually even an author's private property needed to be released into wider availability, "the legal structure of the 1790 Federal Copyright Act… merely suspended two contradictory notions of authorial acting… a utilitarian conception which defined authorship as the invention of useful knowledge and sought to guarantee the free circulation of that knowledge, and a Lockean conception which figured authorship as the creation of unique, possessable property" (7).

[2] McGill's first chapter (pages 45-75) in *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting* provides an excellent summary of American attitudes towards copyright in the early nineteenth century. In a thoroughly decentralized market, "texts achieved a remarkable mobility," (McGill 13) and it is this essential mobility of material that McGill describes as the "culture of reprinting." McGill highlights the anti-copyright attitudes in American publishing and in American politics which favored dissemination over an author's proprietary rights, an attitude which had an eighteenth-century foundation. Deep into the antebellum era, "a long-standing tradition of considering print as public property arrayed book and periodical publishers against the consolidating forces of the general economy" (McGill 11).

during the time. A bridge decade, the 1780s produced publications that William Charvat believed followed an "aristocratic" model, which coexisted alongside nascent modern practices.

This chapter covers Barlow's career in the middle of the 1780s, focusing on a rich three year period in which Barlow published three very different works in three very different ways. The first of these publications was *Doctor Watts's Imitation of the Psalms of David, Corrected and Enlarged, by Joel Barlow* (1785) a project initiated by the ministers of Connecticut intended for devotional use, yet noteworthy as an early example of authorial self-promotion. Barlow's psalm book was followed by his participation the next year in *The Anarchiad* series (1786-87), a periodical satire attacking the Anti-Federalists, in which Barlow contributed anonymously. As the *Anarchiad* series was winding down, Barlow published his first long poem *The Vision of Columbus* in 1787, considered both then and now to be one of the most important publications of his career. *The Vision of Columbus* only went into print after Barlow had spent four years searching for patrons, who Barlow eventually sought through the subscription list. During this period Barlow transformed himself from a local New Haven poet into a literary figure of a wider regional renown. In an age when the majority of American poets spent their entire careers with static readerships, Barlow began to distinguish himself as a man of literary ambition.

Barlow's career during this time provides a case study for what it was like to publish during a time of transitioning ideas about authorship along with increased industrial development in American printing. For Barlow, the best path to success ended up being one of compromise and hybridity. Barlow's career is a particularly useful entry-

point into the era because by the middle of the 1780s he was so clearly embracing print for the first time. In his letter to Boudinot Barlow argued for more attractive conditions for writers on the print market and throughout the decade, Barlow sought his own success on that market, changing his practices and profession to do so. As a commencement poet and college bard, Barlow was initially a product of an older literary culture founded on essentially personal relationships and their manifestations in oral performance and manuscript circulation. In the 1780s, that began to change, with Barlow leaving the world of on-demand publishing and moving into newspaper publication, book production, and print advertising. Importantly, Barlow did so in such a way that he was able to maintain his personal connection to his audience through print technology.

Barlow's practices sometimes lagged behind his more forward-thinking ideas. In so doing, in the 1780s, he kept one foot in the eighteenth century, even as he stepped forward into the nineteenth. None of Barlow's three major publications during the 1780s – *Doctor Watts's Imitation of the Psalms of David, Corrected and Enlarged, by Joel Barlow* (1785), the *Anarchiad* (1786-87) and *The Vision of Columbus* (1787) – were written or published along the liberal copyright model espoused in his letter to Boudinot. Only the *Vision of Columbus* initially received copyright and the models of authorship Barlow employed in writing those poems remained fairly traditional. Barlow was not unique in this regard. Even in early copyright-protected Connecticut, which had codified authorial protection in 1783, many works were still being published anonymously, reflecting a completely different approach to authorship. As Cathy Davidson writes, "the early national era antedated the Romantic period's notions of the author as the prime creator of art and a concomitant critical privileging of the artist's intentions" (29-30).

Within the realm of literature, attitudes were uneven towards the importance of print during the early national period. As discussed in the first chapter, print publication was not a crucially defining stage in the life of a poem for American poets such as Barlow in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Clearly, for Barlow and for others, seeing works into print would become more important as publication opportunities increased and a republican dream of a national, even global, print market gained currency thanks to legends surrounding the wide dissemination of *Common Sense* and *The Federalist*. The challenge facing scholars of this period, as Trish Loughran argues in *The Republic in Print*, is in finding a way to accurately account for this emergent attitude and the very material reality of a large increase in the number of publications, while also noting the limitations of print culture and the ways in which the entire communications circuit remained old-fashioned in the early republic. Going against the print culture school in American studies, Loughran rejects the notion that print played a major role in creating a sense of national identity, labeling this account "ahistorical, a postindustrial fantasy of preindustrial print's efficacy as a cross-regional agent" (xix).[3] Nor did print, as both Loughran and McGill show, immediately produce a liberal or an impersonal sense of authorship; it was too fragmented and too local to do so.

In sum, in a variety of ways, Barlow was in a historically tenuous position. Barlow was a member of the literary generation that came of age during this preindustrial age of print. Importantly, Barlow *did* clearly embrace print in a new way in the 1780s,

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[3] Loughran contends that this account of print's importance also makes federalism an "inevitable outcome," (xix) and a major part of her project lies in demonstrating how the idea of a strong centralized government was only possible as a fiction during this time. When the print marketplace was actually capable of uniting the country as an imagined community from the 1830s onwards, the American public was shocked to learn how little they had in common.

only in most ways the print market was not capable of providing what he wanted. Barlow could not immediately abandon the practices of the mid-eighteenth century, because in most cases those practices were still more effective in the Connecticut of the 1780s. Thus, despite his own efforts to promote individual authorship and to become the nation's first professional author, Barlow's major publications in the 1780s reflected attitudes which were much more Augustan and aristocratic than modern. Barlow continued to publish anonymously and collaboratively while relying on patronage and aristocratic holdovers like the subscription list.

Unlike most of the poets of Connecticut, who quickly settled in the ministry or in law, Barlow was an active participant in the postwar expansion of print as a publisher/editor and bookseller. Despite a lack of money, Barlow left the ministry, then probably the most reliable profession in Connecticut, at war's end. Barlow's enthusiasm for his new career was intense, but short-lived, underscoring both how powerful print was becoming in the minds of men like Barlow, but also how limited the industry was. In July of 1784, with Elisha Babcock, a journeyman printer from Springfield, he launched the *American Mercury*, a weekly newspaper that aimed to compete with the *Connecticut Courant* in Hartford. The partnership was based on a simple arrangement: Babcock would set the type and operate the press, while Barlow would write and use his Yale pedigree to lend the enterprise prestige and business contacts. Barlow & Babcock also published books & pamphlets and ran a bookstore/stationary shop/grocery store. The firm's business model (which was typical), along with its implicit attempt to negotiate the hierarchies of Connecticut society, illustrates the deferential, rather than leveling, character of Connecticut's print culture. As Loughran reminds us, "printing in the 1780s

was still very often a matter of personal relations. Early national books, newspapers, and magazines were not yet being made in factories by faceless workers… but in small, artisanally organized shops" (115). The partnership between Barlow and Babcock lasted eighteenth months, dissolving amicably in November, 1785. As part of the settlement, Barlow took over the firm's store, which he ran through 1786.[4]

On August 23, 1784, barely a month after its first issue, a notice appeared in the *Mercury* announcing that Barlow would be working on a revision of Isaac Watts's *The Psalms of David,* under the sanction of the General Association of the State of Connecticut, a body of ministers who governed Congregationalist worship in the state. The revision would be published by Barlow and Babcock and was their "chief publication venture" (Woodress 79) for 1785. Barlow's psalmody remains one of the more curious episodes of his career and stands in sharp ideological and theological contrast to his later work. Although Barlow was not as anticlerical in the early 1780s as he would later become, his decision to author the revision of Watts seems not to have been motivated by religious feeling. Instead, the project likely appealed to Barlow's patriotism, and, more importantly, represented a tremendous opportunity to further his literary reputation. Barlow's involvement in the project also serves as a reminder of the broader composition of both New England culture and New England publishing culture

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[4] The *Mercury* would remain in print until 1833 when it merged with *The Independent Press,* and Babcock and his son served as the editors well into the nineteenth century. Despite sharing Barlow's republican sentiments, from the 1790s through the War of 1812, a bewildered Babcock repeatedly leaned on staunch Federalists, including Theodore Dwight, to supply most of his copy. Because of this, Jeffrey Pasley writes, "Connecticut Republican politicians regarded his paper as pathetically subservient to the state's Federalist establishment" (109). By the War of 1812, the *Mercury* was little favored by either party, nominally republican but "increasingly inadequate… after 1811 the Federalist *Connecticut Courant* rarely even bothered to attack its rival anymore" (Pasley 376).

in the 1780s. Even for one of the most secular American poets of the time, Barlow's early success was tied to what remained a deeply religious society. A positive association with Connecticut's ministers would be just as valuable in boosting his career as the more worldly sanction he had been given by the Yale establishment had been. Moreover, the ministers could deliver even more readers. Thus, while *The Anarchiad* and *The Vision of Columbus* achieved some measure of historical significance in literary history, the revision of Watts was his most widely read work during this period.[5]

Watts's *Psalms*, first published in 1719, had only slowly gained popularity in New England, where for decades the venerable *Bay Psalm Book* (1640) remained the psalter of choice with conservative congregations who valued fidelity to scripture over singability, which had been Watts's primary motivation. By the 1780s, however, due in large part to the ascendance of New Light Congregationalist ministers and attendant ideas of worship which valued singing, Watts had become well established. According to Rochelle Ann Stackhouse's study of Watts's hymns in America, "singing rose again as a central part of the lives of Christians in worship and at home, out of a time when tunes had been forgotten and singing seemed more a duty than a delight" (45). This change in religious practice and liturgical attitudes mirrored the widespread interest in the spoken (and sung) word in eighteenth century America. As Sandra Gustafson notes, public discourse included speeches and song, and even the printed works of the period

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[5] Stackhouse notes the incredible "staying power" (162) of Barlow's revisions in her study. Although Barlow's changes fell out of favor among Connecticut Congregationalists, Presbyterians in New England and the Mid-Atlantic re-printed Barlow's revisions, "well into the middle of the nineteenth century" (173). In addition to at least ten Congregationalist reprints of Barlow's psalms (which end around 1801) Stackhouse has discovered over thirty Presbyterian reprints and anthologies of Barlow, dating as late as 1833.

frequently appealed to "the aural qualities of language" (465). Gustafson cites the frequent "blurring of the line between spoken and written forms" (474) throughout the entire early national period. As noted in chapter one, Barlow's literary beginnings reflected this performative context. Given that his early career had been rooted in verse oration, it was natural that he would attempt to produce his own psalms and hymns.

Ironically, although the Revolutionary War strengthened the New Lights and further encouraged the use of Watts, it also led to various attempts to revise or remove *The Psalms of David* from the standard hymnody because of their numerous allusions to the British Empire. In 1781, the first American revision of Watts appeared in Massachusetts and despite only hasty and superficial changes, quickly sold through to a fifth edition.[6] Seeking a standard statewide text and hymns in the national interest in June of 1784 the governing ministers of Connecticut decided to commission their own revision, selecting Barlow as their reviser.[7] That the General Association, via a three-person committee of the Revs. Timothy Pitkin, John Smally and Theodore Hinsdale, could select Barlow for such a weighty task is more evidence of Barlow's literary prominence, despite his modest publishing history of just three pamphlets. Barlow was a considerable literary celebrity in Connecticut well before he had much of a publishing record.

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[6] This work was published in Newburyport, Massachusetts by a little-known printer/editor named John Mycall. Mycall simply removed most, but not all, references to Britain found among Watts's 138 hymns, and replacing them with "America". For more on Mycall's revision see Stackhouse 68-75.

[7] Barlow took the Association's anxiety about a too great diversity of psalters to heart, writing in his preface to his revisions, "it is a object of great importance that harmony should be established as extensively as possible in the use of Psalmody" (Barlow *Watts* A2).

Barlow's revisions were approved by the Association in January of 1785, and on March 21 *Doctor Watts's Imitation of the Psalms of David, Corrected and Enlarged, by Joel Barlow* appeared in Hartford. The three hundred and sixty page book appeared in duodecimo format – a common size for religious materials – and was printed under the Barlow & Babcock imprint. It sold well, eventually providing Barlow with "significant income" (Stackhouse 77). The project was a success for the former college bard and chaplain in his new role as pressman: Barlow had advertised the work in his own newspaper, printed it on his presses and sold it at his shop. Beyond illustrating Barlow's embrace of print and emergence as a more professional poet, the publication and promotion details of the Watts revision shed light on the state of American literary publishing and authorship in the mid 1780s. Effectively, Barlow's career during this time was a cross between that of Philip Freneau and that of Phillis Wheatley, two poets whose careers epitomize the variety of American literary production during the late eighteenth century. Barlow vacillated between a print-based newspaper-heavy approach (Freneau) which engaged, or at least tried to engage, the popular market and an older way of producing poetry which was grounded in patronage (Wheatley). The political difference between these two sides is plain, especially given the conservative bent of patronage production. As long as Barlow remained in the Connecticut mainstream, he attempted to find support from both sides.

In his preface to *Doctor Watts's Imitation of the Psalms* Barlow heaped praise upon Watts, cataloguing his virtues and claiming that his work was "undoubtedly to be preferred" amongst the scores of alternatives due to his "model of style and versification" and poetic gifts, which "have perhaps never been equaled in our language" (Barlow *Watts*

A2). Barlow underplayed the extent of his revisions, listing only six psalms as "considerably altered" and pointing to twelve new additions of his own, taken from the twenty three psalms Watts had considered unfit for translation.[8] Nevertheless, the title of the work suggested that these alterations and additional materials were nothing more than minor "corrections" and "enlargements" of Watts's original work. As Stackhouse has shown in her detailed analysis of Barlow's revisions, Barlow actually made something like one hundred and thirty changes to Watts's text. This fact was not lost upon Barlow's contemporaries. While the overall reception of the work was positive, there was a consistent thread of criticism regarding the scope of Barlow's revisions. Though his preface spoke only of removing Watts's British references and a smoothing out of certain grammatical anachronisms, Barlow also changed the theological content of at least thirteen psalms, moving Watts closer toward Barlow's own "Deism, or at least humanistic Calvinism" (Stackhouse 138). In keeping with his cosmopolitan humanism, instead of merely inserting America into Watts's psalms, Barlow tended to instead universalize the geography and refer to the many nations of God. Finally, as might be expected from a Deist, Barlow softened Watts's stark seventeenth-century imagery, as in Psalm 49, when he replaced "laid in the grave for worms to eat" with "and leave his glories in the tomb." As the years passed and fears of Barlow's liberal religious beliefs increased, the Congregationalist establishment viewed more and more passages with

[8] Barlow listed the 21st, 60th, 67th, 75th, 124th and the 147th psalms as "considerably altered".

suspicion. In 1799 the General Association asked Timothy Dwight to produce a more acceptable revision than Barlow's edition.[9]

Barlow's revision of Watts has always been, at most, a miscellaneous side-note in Barlow scholarship and the details of the project remain little known. Significantly, the massive advertising campaign he waged in the newspapers of New England, one that virtually blanketed Connecticut, has gone unnoticed by previous studies. Barlow's advertising is important however. The advertising campaign Barlow waged was historically novel in eighteenth century America, there simply weren't other poets trying to promote their works in this way. Furthermore, in terms of evaluating Barlow's development as a poet, his advertising campaign reveals his increased comfort with print. These ads reflect Barlow's attempt to recreate, on a regional scale, the intimate literary culture of his New Haven youth. Barlow attempted to use print – advertisements in newspapers – to create on a regional scale the old Yale environment in which everyone knew his work.

Barlow promoted his revisions in three major waves, each organized around a separate notice. Notably, two of these advertising pushes occurred pre-publication, suggesting a deep level of concern with publishing material to an audience not already familiar with and approving of it. Unlike his two commencement poems or his *Elegy on the Late Honorable Titus Hosmer*, Barlow's revision of Watts, which was over three hundred pages long and defined by hundreds of small changes, was not suited to

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[9] Predictably, Dwight's 1801 revision was more theologically and linguistically conservative than Barlow's had been. Comparing the texts of Dwight and Barlow, Stackhouse writes, "for the most part they reflect the difference between the two men in what might be called theological vehemence" (139).

manuscript circulation or oral performance. Furthermore, for the first time, Barlow was writing for a wider audience, potentially every Congregationalist in Connecticut, not just his friends in New Haven. In this way, we can see Barlow's ambitious ad campaign as a move which reaches forward to a more mature nineteenth-century literary marketplace, with its healthier literary periodicals and endless "puffs" and backwards to the older, more local and smaller-scale world of on-demand printing from which he came, the world brought to light by David Shields's *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters*. Barlow's excitement, along with his anxiety about the public being exposed to his project uninformed, is manifested by the stacks of newspapers from 1784-5 in which he advertised. Barlow wanted to make all of New England the New Haven of his college days, aiming to have everyone familiar his work prior to its appearance in print.

Barlow's first venture into advertising was formatted plainly (no larger typefaces, use of capitalization or spacing) and text heavy, a one-paragraph letter addressed "To the Public" which explained the task assigned to him by the General Association. Signed "Joel Barlow" and dated "Hartford, August 21, 1784," the paragraph closed by stating that "with the assistance of several other Gentlemen," he hoped to have it "ready for publication in a few weeks" ("To the Public" 3). Designed to look like a public notice, the advertisement was primitive, resting its appeal solely on Barlow's reputation and the strength of his signature. From August 23, 1784, "To the Public" appeared in seven issues of Barlow's *American Mercury*, three issues of both the *Connecticut Journal* (New

Haven) and the *New Haven Gazette*, and two issues of the *Norwich Packet*.[10] The majority of these notices appeared in the fall of 1784.

Barlow's next two advertisements were more overtly commercial and eye-catching than his first attempt had been. As the calendar turned to 1785, Barlow realized that his promise of a new edition of Watts in "a few weeks" had not been met. Therefore his second advertisement conveyed a mix of exasperation and expectation, again striving to make the public familiar with a product they had yet to see. Barlow's second notice thus began, "*NOW IN THE PRESS* and will be ready for sale in a few weeks." Printing the revision's typically long eighteenth-century title, the ad nevertheless emphasized the word "PSALMS" in the upper portion of the text, reaching out to the always strong religious market. Using a variety of text-sizes and a liberal amount of emphasis-adding line-breaks, the second notice was much larger than the first (around one-third of a full column) and more clearly an advertisement. Although it was laid out more like a typical back-page ad, "Now in the Press" again carried with it a suggestion of more formal bonds, featuring what would become the Association's preface to the edition in the bottom-half of the ad. This preface explained the purpose of the edition, Barlow's selection, and closed with not only the names of the committee which had selected Barlow, but also the three heads of the Association at large. Like its predecessor, "Now in the Press" founded its sales pitch upon the reputation of the General Association, singling out six ministers directly by name. Fundamentally personal, Barlow's two pre-publication

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[10] "To the Public." *American Mercury* [Hartford] 23 Aug. 1784: 3. 30 Aug. 1784: 4. 06 Sept. 1784: 4 13 Sept. 1784: 4. 20 Sept. 1784: 4. 27 Sept. 1784: 4. 11 Oct. 1784: 4. *Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 25 Aug. 1784: 3. 01 Sept. 1784: 4. 08 Sept. 1784: 2. *New Haven Gazette* 02 Sept. 1784: 4. 16 Sept. 1784: 4. 30 Sept. 1784: 4. *Norwich Packet* 02 Sept. 1784: 3. 16 Sept. 1784: 4.

advertisements for his revision are not manifestations of new ideologies of print, but rather clear attempts to use print technology to simulate and appeal to very traditional community hierarchies and relationships, the same coteries that had supported the "on-demand" publishing of his college years.

"Now in the Press" urged the public to hold out for just "a few more weeks" (4). This second notice had a wider reach than "To the Public" as Barlow added new papers to his push, including at least three outside Connecticut. In total, "Now in the Press" ran three times each in the *Mercury, Connecticut Journal,* and *New Haven Gazette*, twice in the *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford) and six times in the *Norwich Packet*.[11] Outside Connecticut, the ad appeared three times in the *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester), once in the *New York Packet* (New York) and seven times in the *United States Chronicle* (Providence).[12] Concentrated in papers dating from February and early March of 1785, "Now in the Press" was the last minute push of Barlow's pre-publication advertising strategy, aiming to generate familiarity before the public might forget about his psalms. When the book was published on March 21, 1785, Barlow began the third and final plank of his promotional campaign (now over eight months long) by placing another round of notices. This time they began with "*JUST PUBLISHED,/ And now selling*" ("Just Published" 4) and gave new prominence to the author and the work's title. Now however,

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[11] "Now in the Press." *American Mercury* [Hartford] 10 Jan. 1785: 4. 31 Jan. 1785: 4. 21 Feb. 1785: 4. *Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 02 Feb. 1785: 3. 09 Feb. 1785: 4. 16 Feb. 1785: 4. *New Haven Gazette* 24 Feb. 1785: 3. 03 Mar. 1785:4. 10 Mar. 1785: 4. *Connecticut Courant* [Hartford] 01 Feb. 1785: 4. 01 Mar. 1785: 4. *Norwich Packet* 10 Feb. 1785: 2. 17 Feb. 1785: 4. 24 Feb. 1785:4. 03 Mar. 1785: 4. 10 Mar. 1785: 4. 10 Mar. 1785: 4. 17 Mar. 1785: 4.

[12] "Now in the Press." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester] 03 Feb. 1785: 3. 17 Feb. 1785: 3. 24 Feb. 1785: 4. *New York Packet* 14 Feb. 1785: 4. *United States Chronicle* [Providence] 27 Jan. 1785: 3. 03 Feb. 1785: 4. 10 Feb. 1785: 4. 17 Feb. 1785: 4. 03 Mar. 1785: 4. 10 Mar. 1785: 4.

Barlow could also direct the reader to the Barlow & Babcock store, "near the Southern House in Hartford" ("Just Published" 4) in order to buy a copy. In some variations of the ad, as had been the case with its predecessor, "Just Published" continued to be closed with the General Association's quasi-imprimatur, a reprint of their explanatory preface. In a quaint reminder of both the state of retail sales in Connecticut and Barlow's newfound profession as a newspaperman, "Just Published" also noted that "Cash, Grain, Cotton & Linen Rags, or any kind of Public Securities" (4) would be accepted as payment. To say the least, the price was variable and negotiable.

Interestingly, as opposed to being Barlow's largest venture, "Just Published" was actually a slightly smaller ad-buy than "Now in the Press" had been. Outside Barlow's own paper, which ran the ad eleven times, "Just Published" made only a limited number of appearances.[13] *The Massachusetts Spy*, *Norwich Packet* and the *United States Chronicle* were dropped altogether as advertisers and the *Connecticut Courant* ran the piece in just three issues.[14] It was easier to advertise un-made books than to sell new ones. Ads in more distant papers only made sense if the readers in those towns had a local bookseller offering the work. This took time, given that essentially no regional networks for distribution were in place. In the words of Trish Loughran, the "national" (in name only) book trade was "splintered and embryonic" (43). However much Barlow may have wanted to create a regional network of buyers, other than through hundreds of individual

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[13] "Just Published" *American Mercury* [Hartford] 28 Mar. 1785: 4. 04 Apr. 1785: 4. 11 Apr. 1785: 4. 18 Apr. 1785: 4. 25 Apr. 1785: 4. 02 May 1785: 4. 16 May 1785: 4. 23 May 1785: 4. 30 May 1785: 4. 06 June 1785: 4. 13 June 1785: 4.

[14] "Just Published" *Connecticut Courant* [Hartford] 22 Mar. 1785: 3. 29 Mar. 1785: 4. 05 Apr. 1785: 1.

agreements with local newspapers and booksellers the state of American publishing left Barlow with no means of doing so. Instead, copies of Barlow's psalms, for which it must be noted there was a huge potential market, made haphazard appearances without pattern. In New Haven, the *Connecticut Journal* ran a single "Just Published" on April 13, 1785, with the place of sale amended to Abel Morse's store.[15] Not until October, 1785 did *New Haven Gazette* run "Just Published" spreading the ad over seven issues which reached into February of 1786.[16] Variations on the ad, with local sellers eventually appeared in a single issue of the *Independent Chronicle* (Boston) and two issues of the *New York Packet* in August, with the out of state *Packet* even reprinting the sanction of the Connecticut ministers.[17] That fall, beginning in November, the *Independent Gazetteer* of Philadelphia began advertising Barlow's *Psalms,* a sale probably totally independent from Barlow's initial efforts. Nevertheless, the Oswald notice also reprinted the ministers' preface. Between November and May of 1786, the ad appeared in the *Gazetteer* eight times.[18]

Barlow's aggressive marketing of both the project and his own unabashed status as a reviser of Watts violated gentlemanly notions of authorship and deference. Yet, encouraged by the sales of his revision and perpetually optimistic about his literary

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[15] "Just Published" *Connecticut Journal* [New Haven]: 13 Apr. 1785: 3.

[16] "Just Published" *New Haven Gazette* 20 Oct. 1785: 1. 27 Oct. 1785: 3. 10 Nov. 1785: 4. 12 Jan. 1786: 1. 19 Jan. 1786: 1. 02 Feb. 1786: 1. 09 Feb. 1786: 1.

[17] "Just Published" *Independent Chronicle* [Boston] 14 July 1785: 4. *New York Packet* 15 Aug. 1785: 4. 18 Aug. 1785: 1.

[18] "Just Published" *Independent Gazetteer* [Philadelphia] 12 Nov. 1785:4. 10 Dec. 1785: 4. 07 Jan. 1786: 3. 04 Feb. 1786: 4. 18 Feb. 1786: 1. 04 Mar. 1786: 4. 06 Mar. 1786: 1. 13 Mar. 1786: 4.

prospects, Barlow was oblivious to any unease about his over-extended authorial presence in the hymnbooks and newspapers of Connecticut. On August 29, 1785 Barlow & Babcock published *A Translation of Sundry Psalms Which Were Omitted in Doctor Watts's Version; To Which is Added, A Number of Hymns*, a 7 ⅛ x 4 ⅜ fourteen-page pamphlet. The pamphlet was a redundant offering, simply a repackaging of the new psalms which Barlow had already added to his revision of Watts. This additional self-promotion could not have sat well with men like Ezra Stiles, who was already upset with Barlow for merely putting his name on the title page of the revision. Stiles wrote in his diary, "Barlow has mounted up at one Leap to all the Glory of Watts. This is a new way of Elevation of Genius and Acquest of Honor" (Stiles 3: 156).

In this way, Barlow's willingness to advertise was not the only modern attribute of his authorship. Throughout his career, Barlow was unusually comfortable with placing his own name on the title page of his works. Barlow was surrounded by contemporaries (literary and non-literary) who for a variety of reasons liked to publish anonymously or under a pseudonym. This fashion for anonymous publishing had deep roots in both aristocratic and republican thinking, both of which were wary of appearing too tied to the world of trade, the world of the market.[19] Anonymous publishing allowed one to appear personally detached, or in the language of the time, "disinterested." This was especially true for Barlow's poetic peers in Connecticut. Trumbull and Dwight published some of their most important poetry with unsigned title pages, including *M'Fingal, The Progress*

[19] As Gilmore puts it, "disowning authorship can be seen as a republican gesture. It comported with both the self-denying and the elitist strands in civic humanist ideology," just as it was "considered beneath the dignity of a gentleman or gentlewoman to publish belles lettres under his or her own name" (552).

of Dulness and *The Triumph of Infidelity*. The more minor Connecticut Wits – Richard Alsop, Lemuel Hopkins, Theodore Dwight and Elihu Hubbard Smith – were even fonder of the device, and rarely signed anything directly. Not coincidentally, the minor Wits, writing in the late 1780s and 1790s, tended to be more conservative than their predecessors and were preoccupied with maintaining hierarchical social codes and a proper decorum. In the mind of the late eighteenth century, publishing a poem merely as "a Gentleman" spoke to a proper sense of aristocratic behavior. Barlow, on the other hand, from *The Prospect of Peace* to *The Columbiad* was always "Joel Barlow" in print. In this way reveals a similar personal and political temperament to a fellow poet he seems to have little known, Philip Freneau, who likewise consistently signed his collections with his name.

If Barlow heard any cries of self-aggrandizement, he was undeterred by them. In February of 1786, ads announcing a second edition began to appear.[20] Having dissolved his partnership with Babcock at the end of 1785, Barlow published the second edition with Hudson & Goodwin on March 20, 1786.[21] Curiously, the second edition of Barlow's psalm-book was not promoted as vigorously as the first. We cannot be sure, but a number of factors seem to have contributed to this change. First, Barlow lost his daily physical and intellectual contact with the press and saw his attentions shift elsewhere. Although he was still running a book and paper shop in Hartford, Barlow was no longer a printer or a newspaper editor by 1786. Instead he was spending his time attempting to

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[20] *Connecticut Courant* [Hartford] 13 Feb. 1786:2. 20 Feb. 1786: 4. 20 Mar. 1786: 4.

[21] Another squat, three hundred and fifty six page duodecimo, at fourteen centimeters tall the second edition was two centimeters shorter than the first edition and the shortest book published by Hudson & Goodwin that year.

establish a legal career and trying to get the *Vision of Columbus* into print. Second, as evidenced by the end of his partnership with Babcock and his brief foray into law, Barlow was experiencing financial troubles by 1786 and likely lacked the disposable income (and possibly the time) needed to promote the second edition widely. Thirdly, excited by the success of the first edition, Barlow may have not considered more advertising necessary or felt that the prominence of Hudson & Goodwin and their *Connecticut Courant* would be all that was needed. Related to this point, as exhibited by his handling of the first edition, Barlow seemed to believe that the most important stage of promotion was pre-publication. Whatever the cause, his zeal for advertising did wane in 1787. The *Courant* did carry house advertisements for the edition, but on a much smaller scale than Barlow had done in his *Mercury*: five ads in 1786 and only one in 1787.[22] The lack of sustained enthusiasm from his new publishers mirrored that of the public and the second edition sold poorly.[23] However, the first edition remained a success, and Barlow's new psalms would prove to be extremely popular in later collections. On the whole, like subsequent innovations in advertising, Barlow's handling

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[22] The *Courant* advertised the second edition twice before publication (13 Feb. 1786:2. 20 Feb. 1786: 4.) then more or less dropped the matter. The initial advertisement was almost an entire column in length, combining the older endorsement preface which had appeared in earlier ads with another letter of praise from Joseph Huntington, the names of fifteen approving ministers and a paragraph listing pricing options and selling the edition's affordability, "cheaper than any imported Psalm book." The second advertisement was slightly smaller (removing the letter from Huntington) setting the pattern for future ads. After March, the *Courant* ran four more notices advertising the work, eventually removing the recommendations altogether. *Connecticut Courant* [Hartford] 22 May 1786: 4. 19 June 1786: 4. 16 Oct. 1786: 3. 12 Feb. 1787: 4.

[23] Zunder speculates that one edition was all the market could bear, "the first edition had satisfied all immediate demand, and the second edition did not find many purchasers." (*Early Days* 185).

of the project was successful but controversial, earning him both sales and principled detractors.

Fundamentally, what Barlow's experiences in the 1780s reveal is a hybridized moment in literary publishing, an extremely uneven state of transition. No consensus existed on the basic matters of authorship. No one agreed about how a work should be promoted, whether the author's identity should be known to the reader, or if the author owned exclusive rights to their work. Oddly, both aristocratic attitudes from the sixteenth century (and earlier) and newer republican ones encouraged anonymous and un-copyrighted works. Barlow could not fully escape these attitudes, which continued to shape his literary milieu. Thus, although Barlow was notably interested in self-promotion, the work he was advertising so diligently was not even entirely his own, an irony he was not troubled by. Held up to the liberal notions of proprietary authorship that came to dominate in the nineteenth century, with authorship as the expression of an individual vision and the creation of private property, Barlow's revision falls short, a fact which has clearly played a role in the project being mostly ignored by later scholars. Even Barlow specialists have been largely uninterested. Barlow collaborated to a still unclear extent with Lemuel Hopkins and John Trumbull in completing the work, producing a text that was thus a revision of Watts's *Psalms*, which was itself supposedly merely an "imitation" of the works of David, who was himself hardly a solitary author in the modern sense. There wasn't much individual genius to be found in the pages of the revision. Revealingly, the major critical concern regarding the text for the last two centuries has been directed towards retrofitting Barlow's revisions onto the grid of liberal authorship,

namely, through the obscure critical dispute dedicated to defining the individual authors of specific passages.[24]

Meting out proper credit to Hopkins and Trumbull for their individual contributions has been considerably more important to twentieth-century critics than it was to the men themselves. Indeed, in considering their poetic identities as they understood it, an overall attitude which deemphasized their writing as a personal expression is one of the most instructive aspects of the entire revision. Like Barlow's next literary project, *The Anarchiad*, the revision of Watts is best understood as an example of – to use Michael T. Gilmore's phrase – "public literature."[25] As Gilmore writes, "the letters of the early Republic should be described as republican and communal… a literature that was public, functional, and possessed by all" (Gilmore 544). Brought about by the political and theological concerns of a quasi-governmental body (the General Association) with real power, the revision of Watts was a collaborative work meant for communal use in one of New England's most public places, the meeting house. As Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay had done with *The Federalist*, the authors of the *Anarchiad* followed a utilitarian model of authorship which put dissemination and the supposed community benefits imparted by the work above any

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[24] The claims in favor of Lemuel Hopkins are mostly unverifiable, stemming from remarks made by his nephew shortly after his death in 1808, and the fact that for a time the Barlows lived with Hopkins in Hartford. The case for Trumbull is more solid. Trumbull's copy of the first edition, currently held by the Connecticut Historical Society, contains a number of markings which seem to suggest specific authorship at times. Using Trumbull's copy, Victor E. Gimmestad deduces that four of the twelve new psalms added by Barlow were done by Trumbull, along with one of the new hymns. For more discussion of specific passages and their authors, see Gimmestad 114-6 and Stackhouse 78-82.

[25] Gilmore develops this idea in his essay "The Literature of the Revolutionary and Early National Periods" collected in *The Cambridge History of American Literature, Vol. 1* 539-693.

claims to the work as private property. These ideals meant that "in no other period of our history has literature been so often a matter of collaborative rather than individual authorship" (Gilmore 550). Collaborative authorship was thus the sister of the also self-denying fashion for anonymous publishing. As a poet who began writing in the 1770s, Barlow was too awash in this literary environment to escape the attraction of collaborative authorship, even as he pushed further in the opposite direction. As highlighted by Barlow's interest in copyright law, advertising, and his aggressive promotion of his own authorship, Barlow inhabited his role as a public author with an eye towards future developments. That there was a contradiction exhibited by his behavior and the shape of the project, Barlow seems not to have noticed.[26]

Because Barlow was essentially revising scripture when he edited Watts, his contemporaries were even more acutely attuned to his deviations from the standards of public authorship. A certain degree of self-indulgence with regard to a secular work might merely be considered unfashionable, but to do so in spiritual literature, for many in Congregational Connecticut, was unacceptable. Not coincidentally, questions regarding Barlow's fidelity to orthodoxy arose after the publication and promotion of the work. Barlow's rumored liberal beliefs and liberal edits of the semi-sacred Watts text were related offenses and signs of a hubris which needed to be reined in with Dwight's more conservative set of re-revisions. Years later, Barlow's conservative enemies circulated an apocryphal anecdote laying bare these criticisms. In *The Political Green-house for the Year 1798* (a collaborative work by a number of Connecticut poets) Barlow was fingered

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[26] In this regard Barlow's sense of authorship was similar to Thomas Paine's. In Loughran's reading, Paine shows, "a complicated understanding of his own authorship – one part of it classical republican (self-effacing) and the other liberal (and self-aggrandizing)" (85).

as an infidel and, critically, the literary thief of work by David Humphreys. Richard Alsop, the text's likely author, added a footnote which reached back to the mid-1780s. As the story goes, Barlow was reportedly confronted by Oliver Arnold, the cousin of Benedict Arnold, who was known for an ability to produce extemporary rhymes. Alsop's little story would put a fitting end on the history of Barlow's psalms amongst respectable Congregationalists in Connecticut:

> When Mr. Barlow was about the business of correcting Watt's psalms, for the use of the churches in Connecticut, (a work executed much to the disadvantage of Watt's version) the celebrated Arnold, who has so often amused his acquaintances by his singular talent at rhyming, met Mr. Barlow, and addressed him in the following just, and prophetic lines –
>
> "Tis God's blest praise you've sought to alter,
> "And for your pains deserve a halter;
> "You've proved yourself a sinful creature,
> "Murder'd great Watts, and ruin'd metre. (Alsop 13-14)

Though his days as a publisher and a psalmist were to give way to equally brief attempts at law and shop-keeping, Barlow was too involved in the literary and political life of Connecticut to remain quiet. A year after the Watts project, in the fall of 1786, Barlow was pulled into another collaborative effort, *The Anarchiad*. Primarily a response to Shay's Rebellion, the "rage" for paper money (as Madison put it in "Federalist 10"), and a series of drummed up (and dreamed up) insults to the Society of the Cincinnati by a local judge named William Williams, *The Anarchiad* was the work that earned the Connecticut Wits their name and solidified their reputation as a circle or school. A call for a stronger national government and constitution as well as a catalogue of insults against anti-federalist villains and the "horse-jockeys" who followed them, the project was organized around an interesting but poorly executed premise, the discovery of a lost

society's national epic in Ohio. That epic was the *Anarchiad*, a poem that satirically chronicled the success of Anarch and his thinly disguised contemporary allies in implementing chaos. Excerpts from this imagined epic, with their anti-federal heroes, appeared in twelve segments titled "American Antiquities."[27] Averaging around two newspaper columns in size, the individual numbers of the series were barely larger than some of Barlow's advertisements for his psalm book. The series began in October of 1786 and ran intermittently through September of 1787. Submitted anonymously, the *Anarchiad* was the work of the Watts collaborators – Barlow, Hopkins and Trumbull – along with a new poet, David Humphreys.

Historically, the critical consensus has been that the *Anarchiad* project was initiated by Humphreys, who had read the *Rolliad*, a popular British satire of 1784-5 criticizing the Pitt administration, and saw the potential for a local application of its method. Hopkins, it seems, produced a plurality of the project's material, especially the prose sections, with Trumbull functioning as the "generally regarded" (Cowie 10) leader of the group. Beyond those broad conceptions, little is known about the authorship of individual numbers in the series. As with Barlow's psalms, each poet has had individual sections claimed for them, but these are mostly mutually contradictory and highly speculative. Nor has it mattered. Composed by a group of men who were briefly part of what they called "The Friendly Club," in quality and in tone the *Anarchiad* is the product of the tavern, coffeehouse, and circular letter. At heart, it was not a serious work; there

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[27] It would seem that the more accurate title for the series should be "American Antiquities" given that many of the entries contain substantial prose sections, while others are so digressive as to contain none of the *Anarchiad* at all, instead including other "newly discovered" poems. Nevertheless, the convention within scholarship has remained to refer to the series entire as *The Anarchiad*.

are too many obvious flaws and whimsical turns to think otherwise. It was ideologically motivated, to be sure, but it was also largely an attempt to be amusing, albeit in a showy and bookish, way. The literary reputations of the Connecticut Wits may be slight, but they have never rested on the *Anarchiad*.[28]

Although the *Anarchiad* was published anonymously or, we might say, quasi-pseudonymously – in the first installment the author/editor identifies himself as an antiquarian, but never gives a name – it would be a mistake to argue that for this reason the series was a kind of naked argument laid on the unadorned page, as might be suggested by those who have overemphasized print's role in shaping public discourse. The *Anarchiad* is really not about argument. Instead, the *Anarchiad* always gestures back to its creators, the fused persona of the poets as a group, a learned set of elite observers able to make sense of political chaos and dismiss it with their wit. Fundamentally, the *Anarchiad* is deeply analogous to its more famous political ally and genre cousin, *The Federalist*, a work that has been much more vigorously theorized. In different ways, both Trish Loughran and Albert Furtwangler have shown that the *Federalist* rests, above all else on the figure of "Publius," the series' author persona.[29] As Furtwangler demonstrates systematically in his study, each of the traditional claims made for the

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[28] According to lore, members of the Friendly Club met at the Black Horse Tavern or The Bunch of Grapes in Hartford and included Noah Webster as well as other poets such as Dwight, Richard Alsop and Mason Cogswell. For a somewhat romantic account of the club see Parsons 13-46.

[29] The title "Publius" referred to Publius Valerius, also known as "Publicola," a fifth-century Roman politician celebrated as "the people's friend" in neoclassical histories of the Roman Empire. "'Publius' was a cut above 'Caesar' or 'Brutus' or even 'Cato'. Publius Valerius was not a late defender of the republic but one of its founders" (Furtwangler 51). In his Bahktinian reading of the *Federalist*, James Jasinski argues that "Publius" has a number of unstabilized voices, and that "a careful reading of the text reveals 'Publius's" internal dialogic struggle" (29).

Federalist – its influence, its insight into Hamilton or Madison's political thought, its expression of a unique political philosophy – is simply not sustainable in light of a close reading of the work or a proper understanding of its publication. Instead, whatever efficacy the *Federalist* had then, or any true political value it has now, is entirely credited to the rhetorical strength, the rhetorical pose, of the "Publius" persona.[30] While it remains debatable as to who knew who "Publius" was or when they knew it, as Loughram forcefully points out, in a larger sense, the question was irrelevant: "general readers did not need to know the precise details of a pseudonymous person's identity in order to discern the *kind* of person who might be lurking beneath such a person" (136). That authorial persona was tied to the rising class of university educated politicians, lawyers, and merchants centered in the cities and along the coast. Both the "Publius" persona and the collective voice of the *Anarchiad* were essentially different shades, different temperaments, of the same political and cultural elite. Importantly, both for the authors of the *Federalist* and the Connecticut Wits, their collaborative projects are dramatic assertions of a learned, politically connected, identity. This identity is defined by its superiority to what they characterized as the un-lettered and incoherent anti-federalist mob.

A further clue to the cultural voice behind the *Anarchiad* and the prevalent attitudes towards authorship during the time can be found in the publishing history of the

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[30] Furtwangler calls his *The Authority of Publius- A Reading of the Federalist Papers,* "the intellectual biography of the composite figure that grew behind that signature" (11). Furtwangler writes against the tendency to use the papers as an entry-point into the sacrosanct mind of genius "founding fathers" and instead argues that the series is more a demonstration of the elite's collective intellectual power. *The Federalist* is thus a show of civility and urbanity, but also a show of intellectual force; and it is this display which produces an overall tone that is the series' source of authority.

series, which appeared initially in the *New Haven Gazette, and the Connecticut Magazine*. Originally a newspaper, in February of 1786 the *New Haven Gazette* was re-launched as a quarto-sized weekly magazine (hence the new, longer name), which promised its readers less advertising and a higher quality of content. Edited by Josiah Meigs and Eleutheross Dana, the new magazine presented itself as a more sophisticated and intelligent alternative to the local newspapers, and one with a more national perspective.[31] This intellectual prestige, along with Meigs's Yale connections and personal friendship with Barlow made the *Gazette* a good fit for the *Anarchiad,* despite the fact that it was located in New Haven instead of Hartford. Politically, the *Anarchiad* and the *Gazette* were perfectly aligned, given the magazine's "unrelenting hostility toward the issue of paper money" (Sturr 186) and its own fixation on Shays.[32] The *Gazette* enjoyed an early success, aided in part by the noteworthy satire, and frequently saw its material reprinted in other periodicals. By 1787 the magazine had a weekly circulation of over nine hundred.[33] An elitist voice speaking to the increasingly elitist Connecticut establishment, the *Gazette* provided an ideal platform for the *Anarchiad*.

The "wicked wits," as they referred to themselves in the *Anarchiad,* struck a richer vein of popularity with satire than they would find with the epic or the lyric. By the

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[31] The attitudes of Meigs and Dana, as well as their attempts to rebrand the *Gazette* are discussed in Robert Sturr's "Civil Unrest and the Rhetoric of the American Revolution: Depiction of Shay's Rebellion in New England Magazines of the 1780s" collected in *Periodical Literature in Eighteenth-Century America*, 179-200.

[32] The *Gazette* was "univocal and strident" (Sturr 183) in support of federalist and proto-federalist positions under Meigs, who showed no sympathy towards those suffering due to the post-war credit crisis, "to the extent that Meigs admitted that economic problems existed, they were defined almost entirely as a matter of greed, extravagance, and licentiousness on the part of debtors themselves" (Sturr 186).

[33] Sturr 184.

modest standards of the day, the *Anarchiad* was widely reprinted in New England and was quickly associated with the constitutional crisis. In addition to the wide second-hand distribution of the *Gazette,* individual numbers of the series appeared in Hartford, Boston, Providence, and New York, as well as in a number of smaller cities.[34] According to Zunder the *Anarchiad* was read by "almost every intelligent citizen of Connecticut" (*Early Days* 138). Understandably, the series was very popular amongst the conservative elite. In spite of this popularity, it was only in 1861 that the installments were collected and bound together in book form.[35] From the beginning, the *Anarchiad* was a creature of the periodicals and while its authors were very proud of their work – Humphreys bragged about it in a letter to Washington, for example – they never imagined it as anything other than a column or two in a magazine or newspaper. Like so much poetry of the period, from the works of the Connecticut Wits in New England to South Carolina's Joseph Brown Ladd, the *Anarchiad* was most at home in the poet's corner of the local periodical.

Because it is periodical verse, the *Anarchiad* is stripped of many of its social resonances when it is collected in a scholarly reprint or anthology. Outside of its original context, the literary qualities of the *Anarchiad* do not jump off the page. Reading the series today, it is difficult to feel that the work is really all there, that there aren't missing

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[34] Beyond appearances in the *Gazette*, individual installments ran in the following periodicals: *The Connecticut Courant*, *The Daily Advertiser* [New York], *The Massachusetts Centinel* [Boston], *The Weekly Monitor and Litchfield Town and Country Reader* [Litchfield, CT], *The American Herald* [Boston], *The New Hampshire Spy* [Portsmouth, NH], *The Salem Mercury*, *The Massachusetts Gazette* [Boston], *The United States Chronicle* [Providence, RI] and the *New York Journal* [New York, NY].

[35] This 1861 edition was published in New Haven by Luther G. Riggs, under the title *The Anarchiad: A New England Poem*. Despite the subtitle, Riggs argued in his introduction that *The Anarchiad* was the perfect antidote to sectionalism and secession, and defended the work as a timely expression of national unity.

installments left somewhere. The series is more enjoyable and comprehensible if the reader simulates the hazy way various readers must have encountered specific numbers over a broad period, perhaps missing certain installments, hearing about others vaguely and reading numbers out of order. The *Anarchiad* is arbitrarily arranged, jumping backwards and forwards across the narrative of the imaginary epic. It is also tonally inconsistent, losing the original satirical mock-heroic premise altogether at the most critical moments, as there is little effort to maintain the inverted order demanded by having Anarch the victor. According to both William Dowling and J.K. Van Dover, the series climaxes with the tenth installment. This entry appeared just as the Constitutional Convention opened on May 24, 1787, and was likely written by Barlow. A speech by Hesper, "his last solemn address to his principal counselors and sages, whom he had convened at Philadelphia" the tenth installment solemnly evokes the war dead, warns against "petty states" being ruled by mobs and demagogues and ends "Ye live United, or Divided Die!" (Humphreys 63). The speech is a rousing defense of federalism, but with a new hero and an abandonment of the mock-heroic tone and original satirical premise, it is also miles away from the original concept of what the *Anarchiad* was supposed to be. Three months later, the series "ended" with two extraneous and unremarkable installments nominally featuring the *Anarchiad*'s descent to the underworld. This ending, with "its obvious irrelevance and the authors' failure to recover their inspiration in the events of their time have the effect of ending the project with a whimper" (Van Dover 244). To read the *Anarchiad* in one sitting is to do it an injustice, inviting a search for a greater coherence than it can deliver.

The *Anarchiad* illustrates the differences between the self-presentation of the eighteenth and nineteenth century author. The series was not only a collaborative effort – the practical repudiation of romantic individual authorship – it was also an extended celebration of playful copying. Allusive, imitative, and derivative, the *Anarchiad* makes a joke out of its lack of originality.[36] In the first installment, the author claims, "this work was well known to the ancients… Perhaps in a future essay I shall attempt to prove that Homer, Virgil, and Milton borrowed many of their capital beauties from it," (Humphreys 5) before adding "the celebrated English poet, Mr. Pope, has proven himself a noted plagiarist, by copying the preceding ideas, and even the couplets almost entire, into his famous poem called 'The Dunciad'" (Humphreys 7). In the eleventh number, the poet descends to the underworld, causing the preface to note, "it is curious to observe how closely he has been followed… by Homer, Virgil, and their successors" (Humphreys 65). In the final number, the joke is repeated, this time referencing Dante (Humphreys 71). Imagining that an epic poem composed in an ancient Ohio could be the lost originator of all epic convention pokes fun not only at the authors, but at the very idea of any original American literature, despite the fact that, politically, the *Anarchiad* is highly patriotic. This is an Augustan or neoclassical aesthetic far removed from even Bryant or Irving, much less the fuller romanticism of Emerson or Whitman. Not surprisingly, this different aesthetic also carried with it a different idea of authorship as it pertained to ownership, naming conventions, and the importance of the individual.

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[36] The allusions and imitations are extensive, "in reading *The Anarchiad*, consequently, one finds lines taken from Pope's *Dunciad, Messiah*, and *Essay on Man*, lines from Addison's *Campaign*, a couplet from Churchill's *Rosciad*, lines and ideas from *Paradise Lost*, and ideas from the *Aeneid* and *Divine Comedia*" (Dowling *Poetry and Ideology* 199).

Circumstances would soon drive Barlow and Humphreys out of Hartford, bringing the days of the Friendly Club and the "wicked wits" to a premature end. Although the *Anarchiad* experience was only a brief episode in their generally long careers, they entered into history as the Connecticut Wits, remembered for their satirical contribution to a satirical literary age.[37] It is likely that these poets – from major figures such as Dwight, Barlow and Trumbull, down to lesser poets such as the younger Dwight, Alsop, and Hopkins – were immortalized as the Connecticut Wits because their turn to satire in the late 1780s was the one truly organic experience any of them had as poets. In a way that their various "prospect" poems, "rising glory" poems, and historical/theological allegories lack, their topical satires appear as natural, almost inevitable responses to topical stimuli. Perhaps more than anything else they did, the *Anarchiad* experience was the purest dramatization of their core ideas about what poets should do/how they should act. They were not innovators, which was convenient because their aesthetic was not one that much valued originality. Instead, "both in their ideas and in their style, the Wits were a survival in an odd environment of the early eighteenth century" (May 187). Augustan to the core, the collaborative, satirical, politically-minded *Anarchiad* was the collective expression of their shared assumptions, assumptions about the place of poetry and their ideas of society. Satire, which allowed the Wits to assume an elevated position of detached wisdom and control, would be their genre of choice in the face of the first hint of social upheaval that their Connecticut lives had ever seen. Significantly, neither Barlow nor Humphreys had responded to the Revolution in this

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[37] As Gilmore puts it, "satire, which assumes a community of values, replaced the personal lyric as the age's preferred form" (591).

way, an affair in which their rightful place was never questioned. Using their classical learning to comment on public affairs in a way they considered to be devastatingly witty *The Anarchiad* was an exercise in wish-fulfillment, an expression of their fantasies of what the Age of Pope must have been like. With their little "Friendly Club" of Hartford they pantomimed the Kit-Cats and the Scriberlians. If history had been different and there had been no Shays in western Massachusetts or paper money in Rhode Island, it is likely that they would have nevertheless found another set of shams and blackguards to criticize.

Barlow's final publication of the decade, 1787's *The Vision of Columbus,* offers further evidence of how the period offered authors a blend of Augustan attitudes and the faint beginnings of something more modern from which to draw. Barlow did secure a copyright for the *Vision*, showing that he did not want the poem to suffer the fate of Trumbull's *M'Fingal*. However, it was in fact the only publication of the decade in which he did so. Since they were emphasized by William Charvat over forty years ago, Barlow's efforts on behalf of copyright have been seen as a landmark in the history of literary publishing.[38] Yet even for Barlow, copyright was only a marginally relevant concern throughout the 1780s. In this regard Barlow mirrors his literary peers, for as James Gilreath has shown, in the 1790s – the first decade of federal protection – the vast

[38] Charvat begins his study of literary authorship with Barlow's petition for copyright. In *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800*-1870, Charvat opens his first chapter "The Beginnings of Professionalism" with a discussion of Barlow's letter to Boudinot and his search for patrons and readers, 5-12.

majority of works copyrighted were practical publications such as textbooks, atlases and manuals.[39]

Even with copyright, the *Vision* would hardly provide a template for future poets. Barlow's preoccupations leading up to the publication of the work were decidedly those of an eighteenth-century man imagining the ways of a Renaissance court poet. Although Barlow had secured the paper for the project in 1783, the *Vision* would not be published until 1787. Despite Barlow's ready publishers at Hudson & Goodwin, the publication of the *Vision* was seriously delayed by Barlow's six year search for patronage. From the beginning, Barlow's plans for the *Vision* are marked by an extremely audacious level of confidence. Like the author Thomas Paine and the publisher Mathew Carey, Barlow exhibited what Loughran outlines as a republican fantasy of diffusion, of universally circulating print.[40] At the same time however, Barlow relied on older forms of publication. What stands out about Barlow, and indeed, about the 1780s as a whole, is the way that his actions demonstrated a strange blend of liberal and aristocratic assumptions about print and authorship. Inspired with enthusiasm for a transatlantic and republican enlightenment, Barlow overestimated the reach and appeal of his long philosophical poem. Barlow hawked the poem to businessmen in Pennsylvania, ministers in Connecticut, and monarchs in Europe. In June of 1785 Barlow sought the assistance of Louis the Sixteenth, sending the monarch his proposal for the poem along with a reminder that, "it is the policy of wise Princes to encourage the liberal arts" (Mulford

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[39] See Gilreath's "American Literature, Public Policy, and the Copyright Laws Before 1800" in *Federal Copyright Records, 1790-1800*.

[40] Loughran 34-5.

"Letters" 353). Continuing, the Connecticut poet flattered Louis by claiming, "as the human race are the object, of your extended administration, they may all in some measure claim the privilege of Subjects, in seeking your literary as well as political protection" (Mulford "Letters" 353).

These efforts at securing patronage were not as comically misguided as they perhaps now seem. Even in a provincial wartime economy, substantial patronage was not an entirely unreasonable goal on Barlow's part, as elements of the dying aristocratic model of publication lingered. In truth, Barlow did better by the aristocratic model than he ever did by the emerging liberal marketplace. In many ways his hope that the *Vision of Columbus* might find bookstalls from Charleston to London was much more delusional than his idea of being a court-poet in Hartford. Barlow's own visions of a world of universally circulating print – a vision he articulated in his own poetry – were dashed repeatedly as he tried to promote the *Vision of Columbus*. Despite the efforts of friends, he had little success finding buyers in relatively nearby Philadelphia, the largest literary market in the country. By June of 1787 Barlow wrote to Webster saying that he had given up on the city.[41] Despite these struggles, Barlow continued to dream the republican dream of print circulation, and in 1786 and 1787 Barlow imagined an even wider reach for the poem, writing to Richard Price in London and David Ramsay in Charleston, South Carolina, enquiring about the possibility of local editions of the *Vision*. These two queries, both of which initially led to polite dismissals, say much about the state of

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[41] Barlow traveled to Philadelphia in 1782 in search of patrons and his letters to Noah Webster indicate that in later years he also had Webster circulate his subscription paper for the poem there. Both efforts were largely failures, and on June 15, 1787, Barlow wrote to Webster, "you speak so discouraging respecting the reception of the first Edition in Phila. that I will not offer subscriptions there for second" (Mulford "Letters" 365).

American publishing in the late 1780s. Barlow's letter to Price, along with a copy of the poem, was delivered by John Adams (who was briefly praised in the poem), then serving as an ambassador in London.[42] From London, Price told Barlow that there was no market for such a poem in London given the work's political content. We know from Lewis Leary's research that Price encountered strongly negative reactions when he discussed the poem, especially from the influential man of letters Thomas Day.[43]

Amidst these difficulties, in the spring of 1787, as the *Anarchiad* series was wrapping up, the *Vision of Columbus* was finally published by longtime Barlow publishers Hudson & Goodwin in Hartford.[44] Zunder lists the *Vision's* publication date as May 14, 1787, but other sources and references suggest an earlier publication, possibly in March. Shortly thereafter, Barlow broke through in London, which must have come as a shock. Barlow appears to have lost interest in finding a British publisher after receiving Price's letter, yet in a stunning reversal the *Vision of Columbus* was published in London in late September or early October of 1787, only five months after Hudson & Goodwin had done so in Hartford.

After a year of circulation in London, the *Vision* had found an unexpected publisher in the form John Stockdale and Charles Dilly, two liberal publishers who were friendly to American writers. In a joint venture, Dilly and Stockdale published the *Vision*,

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[42] Zunder *Early Days* 228-9.

[43] According to Lewis Leary, Price was convinced of Barlow's lack of merit by Thomas Day, who was also critical of Dwight and Humphreys. For more on Barlow's correspondence with Price, see Leary's "Thomas Day on American Poetry: 1786." According to Eric Stockdale's research, Day's dislike for the *Vision* was also communicated to John Stockdale, who nevertheless decided to publish the poem.

[44] The *Vision of Columbus* was printed as an octavo on laid paper measuring $7^{7}/_{8}$ scant x $4^{11}/_{16}$.

advertising the work in the London press in late September and early October 1787.[45] Stockdale, the primary driver of the *Vision's* publication, had also published Adams's *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States* and Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* and was "a first port of call for books relating to America," (Stockdale 5) in London during the 1780s. In addition to delivering the poem to Price, Adams had discussed the *Vision* with Stockdale in April of 1786 and may have played a role in the poem's publication. Nevertheless, it remains unclear as to why Stockdale and Dilly decided to publish the *Vision* in the fall of 1787.[46] However, thanks to the advertisements we do know that the London edition of the *Vision of Columbus* sold for 2 schillings and 6 dollars sewed, or 3 schillings bound. Subsequent advertisements in 1788 suggest that Stockdale was the primary seller of the *Vision* in London.[47]

Meanwhile, despite Barlow's surprising success in finding a London publisher, in South Carolina his hopes were dashed. In April of 1787, Ramsay wrote back to Barlow, "we have few readers here… I mention these things not to discourage you but to keep

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[45] British advertisements for the *Vision*: World *and Fashionable Advertiser* [London] 26 Sept. 1787:4. 01 Oct. 1787: 1. *General Evening Post* [London] 27 Sept. 1787: 4. *Whitehall Evening Post* [London] 27 Sept. 1787:4.

[46] The best scholarly source on John Stockdale is Eric Stockdale's book-length study, *'Tis Treason, My Good Man! – Four Revolutionary Presidents and a Piccadilly Bookshop*. According to Stockdale, Adams discussed *The Vision of Columbus*, Dwight's *Conquest of Canaan*, and Ramsay's *History* with Stockdale on April 19, 1786 (Stockdale 279). Considering Stockdale's friendship with him there is some possibility that it was in fact Adams who persuaded him to publish the *Vision*. Stockdale's study goes somewhat against that expectation however by suggesting that Stockdale was already familiar with the *Vision* when Adams mentioned it to him. See Stockdale, 288-9.

[47] 1788 advertisements for the *Vision*: *London Chronicle* 22 Apr. 1785: 5. *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* 10 May 1788: 4. *The World* [London] 17 May 1788:2. *The Public Advertiser* [London] 10 June 1788: 1. In 1795, Stockdale began advertising the work again. *True Briton* [London] 31 Jul. 1795: 1. 5 Sept. 1795: 1..

you from expecting much from this state" (Ramsay).[48] In May 1788, Barlow made a last volley at finding an audience in Philadelphia, offering Mathew Carey one hundred copies of his poem, which Carey declined.[49] Newspaper records do indicate that some copies of the second edition were sold by Carey, but presumably a much smaller number that Barlow wanted.[50] Locally, around Hartford, Barlow was a man of prominence, but he was also in a limited and isolated position, regardless of how many sparkling federalist *bon mots* emanated from the taverns and coffeehouses around the Connecticut statehouse. Hartford may have been the cultural hub of Connecticut, but it was no Philadelphia, which in turn was no London. In Hartford, Barlow was mostly unable to reach American readers purely through the technology of the press. In the United States Barlow instead needed to rely on his social connections and the established procedures of patronage. Paradoxically, it was only after Barlow left for Europe in 1788, living mostly in the international publishing centers of Paris and London, that the major port cities of the United States opened up to him. Indeed, this was the irony of his situation in 1787, that he had written a patriotic poem guided by a "ruling idea" (Silverman 523) of cosmopolitanism that could not truly find a cosmopolitan audience outside the home it celebrated.[51]

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[48] David Ramsay to Joel Barlow. April 10, 1787. Joel Barlow Papers. Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[49] Zunder *Early Days*, 223-4.

[50] In December of 1788 Carey ran a number of advertisements for the second edition of the *Vision* in *The Federal Gazette*, selling the second edition of the *Vision* for one dollar. *The Federal Gazette* [Philadelphia] 11 Dec. 1788: 4. 16 Dec. 1788: 4. 18 Dec. 1788: 4. 25 Dec. 1788: 4.

[51] Silverman's reading of the poem is sympathetic, pointing out the intellectual restrictions of Barlow's environment, "like the America it defends, Barlow's epic is an impure,

Although it is important to keep in mind Barlow's failures, it is equally critical to our understanding of the shifting print landscape of the period that we note the ways in which he did manage to find success. Thanks to the aristocratic model of authorship, Barlow received a surprising degree of financial support throughout the decade from non-market sources. In 1780, his reputation as a poet had landed him a paid position as an army chaplain where he was asked to do very little except work on his poetry. Similarly, in 1784, the General Association of Connecticut Ministers handed him an almost guaranteed steady-seller and used their own names to help promote his work, allowing him to keep the profits. Despite his persistence and all his Yale and Army connections, Barlow never found a millionaire patron to subsidize *The Vision of Columbus*. What he did eventually find was the next best thing, seven hundred and sixty nine subscribers who agreed to pay for over eleven hundred copies at a dollar and a third apiece. The subscribers list, published in the back of the octavo, revealed that over one fourth of the edition had been paid for by army veterans, led by Washington's twenty copies. Howard writes, "the original list of subscribers included, in addition to Washington and Lafayette, the names of twelve generals, three major generals, thirty-three colonels, seventeen majors, and fifty-two captains… it was their greatest exhibition of patriotism since the siege of Yorktown" (159). Alongside these proud patriotic supporters, stood Louis XVI of France, who had accepted Barlow's 1785 request for patronage. Louis purchased twenty-five copies and earned Barlow's dedication at the front of the book.

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embryonic work, seen most clearly in hindsight" (536). Although he views the poem as synthetic, according to Silverman, "the originality of the *Vision* is undeniable" (521). For Silverman's reading, see pages 520-536.

The pairing of Washington and Louis XVI as sponsors, underscores the odd dynamic of late-eighteenth-century American subscription publishing. Like so much else associated with this moment in American literary history, subscription publishing, essentially group patronage, had flowered during Pope's career, famously allowing him to profitably translate Homer. Though the practice was generally understood to have been on the decline in Britain after the 1750s, in the United States, through around 1800, nearly all literary works, especially long poems and collections, were published by subscription.[52] Subscription publishing enjoyed a brief renaissance in the United States for both practical and political reasons. First, in a primitive and decentralized marketplace without efficient methods of distribution or promotion, subscription lists promised a certain number of sales and helped raise the capital needed by the author to put a work into print. Secondly, despite its patrician origins and distinctly aristocratic tinge, subscription publishing found an odd resonance within a republican culture that enjoyed displays of civic virtue and considered support for morally instructive arts a patriotic duty. In line with the fashion for collaborative and anonymous authorship, with subscription publishing and the printed lists of patrons/subscribers, "typographically, the idea of a unique creator receded" (Gilmore 594).[53] Though republican literary culture was later elided by romantic readings of literary history, from Meredith McGill's work we know that elements of it persisted well into the nineteenth century, especially that matrix of practices which tended to deemphasize the importance of the artist as an individual in favor of communitarian attitudes. According to McGill, these residual

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[52] Charvat 8.

[53] For more on subscription publishing see W.A. Speck's "Politicians, Peers, and Publication by Subscription, 1700-50."

attitudes towards authorship were influential enough to shape the antebellum era's defining publishing characteristic, "the strong half-life of the republican understanding of print as public property sustained the culture of reprinting" (14).

Thanks to his seven hundred and sixty nine subscribers, Barlow's *Vision of Columbus* was a financial success and "in a modest way the first American best seller after the Revolution" (Woodress 85).[54] Tellingly, outside the circulation of Barlow's subscription papers, the *Vision of Columbus* was not heavily advertised around the time of publication. A handful of ads appeared haphazardly and with extreme infrequency in Philadelphia, Providence, Boston, Hartford, and New Haven, in 1786-7.[55] The implication of this relative quiet is that Barlow's publishers, Hudson and Goodwin probably for financial reasons, had not produced any extra *Visions* to sell, at least not initially. Despite the popularity of Barlow's work, even a stable firm like Hudson & Goodwin could not risk a larger exposure to the small and inefficient literary market. Barlow was known as the author of the *Vision of Columbus* long before the poem, as a printed object, actually existed, as evidenced by a 1786 news story that referred to him as

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[54] Barlow netted around $1,500 dollars from the first edition of the *Vision*, although only a very small portion of this sum would have actually been profit. As Charvat writes, "he is said to have 'grossed' $1,500 on the edition, but inasmuch as he paid for manufacture and delivery, and had to give discounts for copies sold by book-sellers, his profit could not have been much. And at any rate, it had taken five years of time and effort to find his subscribers" (9). That Barlow did not lose money on the *Vision* at all is perhaps the greatest sign of his success.

[55] Unlike Barlow's psalm-book, only a few advertisements for the *Vision* occurred pre-publication and the ads for the first edition of the *Vision* lack the blitz-like approach Barlow had used in promoting his psalms. Advertisements for the *Vision*: *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* [Philadelphia] 30 Dec. 1786:4. 06 Jan. 1787: 4. 10 Jan. 1787: 4. 13 Jan. 1787: 4. *United States Chronicle* [Providence] 08 Mar. 1787: 4. 13 Sept. 1787: 3. 18 Oct. 1787: 3. *Massachusetts Gazette* [Boston] 25 May 1787: 3. 01 Jun. 1787: 4. *Connecticut Courant* [Hartford] 14 May 1787: 3. *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine* 3 Mar. 1787: 16. 22 Sept. 1787: 8.

such.[56] Although much of its publicity was generated largely outside of print, the *Vision* achieved a certain cultural notoriety throughout New England – it was read and discussed by the ladies in William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* for example – thanks to Barlow's cozy status with the region's elite.[57] Excerpts from the *Vision* ran in at least five periodicals in 1787-88, including appearances in the major cities of Boston, Philadelphia and New York.[58] Combined with publication in London, this was significant exposure. Yet, at the same time, the spirit of the *Vision's* publication reached back to Barlow's Yale days. With the *Vision* generating much of its recognition pre-publication and outside of print advertising, it might be considered Barlow's last on-demand publication. The shape of the project ended up being highly similar to the little publication runs of his old commencement addresses, works that were little advertised and only set to print after a long existence amongst their audience.

Given Barlow's boundless self-confidence, it is not surprising that he subsequently became convinced that a second edition of the *Vision* could also succeed. Yet, as had been the case with his psalm-book, one edition would prove sufficient to meet the public's demand. Barlow failed to realize that it was the years of promotion by himself and his friends that had created demand for the work, not a larger hungering for

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[56] This story, a missive of Connecticut briefs, appeared in *The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* 28 Sept. 1786: 2.

[57] In Letter XXX of *The Power of Sympathy*, a novel preoccupied with proper reading habits, Mrs. Holmes writes to Myra, "what books do you read, my dear? We are now finishing *Barlow's* Vision of *Columbus*, and shall begin upon *Dwight's* Conquest of *Canaan* in a few days" (Brown 2: 19).

[58] Excerpts from the *Vision of Columbus*: *Massachusetts Centinel* [Boston] 28 Jul. 1787:152. 01 Aug. 1787:1556. *New-Haven Gazette and the Connecticut Magazine* 30 Aug 1787:219. *The United States Chronicle* [Providence] 04 Oct. 1787: 197. *New York Journal* 21 Nov. 1787:4. 19 Apr. 1788:1. *The Columbian Magazine* [Philadelphia] 01 Jan. 1788:47.

long poems such as his. Despite a lower price (one dollar this time) the second edition, published by Hudson & Goodwin on May 26, 1788, found only one hundred and sixty seven new subscribers, dooming it to financial failure. As Charvat notes, the second edition of the *Vision* was a turning point, "when the second edition failed, Barlow gave up the [subscription] system" (9). As such, the *Vision of Columbus*, as a book, is a hinge moment in Barlow's career, it was his highest achievement within the publication methods of his youth. It would also be his last. Though he did not know it in 1787, Barlow would soon leave Connecticut for sixteen years. Surrounded by strangers in Europe, he would have to rely on a more liberal model of authorship.

Remnants such as the subscription list and Barlow's testimonial-heavy, pre-publication advertisements complicate the critical tendency, dominant since Warner's *Letters of the Republic*, to understand republican print ideology as "impersonal." Warner argues that the cultural idea of printedness carried with it a "normally impersonal" understanding of the relationship between the author and reader. Eighteenth century readers engaged the printed text at the level of pure discourse as a member of the public, which is to say they imagined that they approached it exactly as the other members of the public would do.[59] As an example, Warner contrasts the assumptions of the eighteenth-century political pamphlet with that of a personal letter, contending that "the very printedness of that discourse takes on a specially legitimate meaning, because it is categorically differentiated from personal modes of sociability" (39). The author/reader relationship is thus an exchange conceived "not as a relation between themselves as men,

[59] Warner writes, "by 'normally impersonal,' I mean that the reader does not simply imagine him or herself receiving a direct communication or hearing the voice of the author" (xiii).

but rather, as their own mediation by a potentially limitless discourse" (Warner 40). However, what Barlow was attempting to do with print in the 1780s – essentially using the medium to simulate a personal network – contradicts this model. Barlow's example points to wide swaths of print culture, even those within a highly republican context, which never achieved or aspired to impersonality.

Barlow's use of print was not one which evacuated the personal from the page. On the contrary, Barlow's advertising methods represent an attempt to use print to recreate personal bonds between the reader and author, what Warner calls "personal modes of sociability." After all, "personal modes of sociability" had formed the foundation of his literary reputation and success. Furthermore, these bonds were requested and legitimated by Connecticut's most traditional figures of authority, the clergy. Barlow tried to use print to prevent print from reaching his readers in the way in which Warner theorizes it. Before Barlow's public (as he addressed his audience in his first advertisement) could engage his psalms purely at the level of discourse, Barlow used advertising to cut this possibility off, endeavoring to construct an association between his text and his person, between his text and the somber faces of the clergy. Even Barlow's anonymous publication, the *Anarchiad*, based its ethos upon a relentless personalization of the conflict, a reduction of a complicated political crisis into the follies of demonic caricatures of Shays and his allies. Finally, his subscription publication, the *Vision of Columbus* created a personalized version of the reading public. The *Vision* was commissioned as a group project, one that had been sent into print, not on the strength of its merits in impersonal discourse, but, again, on the merits of the author and his friends through the medium of "personal modes of sociability."

How we categorize and theorize Barlow's publications and authorial decisions is not important because of a didactic need for academic score-keeping. Instead, these distinctions – aristocratic or liberal authorship, personal or impersonal publications – matter in terms of making sense of what his actual goals as an author, as a poet, really were. In the 1780s, Barlow turned to print as the new way of shaping his poetic identity, while in many ways retaining his preexisting theoretical model. Technologically, he was modernizing, but Connecticut was too small, too limited, and too conservative to engender a great shift in his approach. Moreover, what Barlow's example demonstrates is that there existed a number of complementary relationships between the various ways of being a poet during this time, between ways essentially grounded in print and those more tied to a poet's voice, or hand, or friendships and acquaintances in polite society. As we have seen, a motivated author such as Barlow could shift between various modes of authorship – from an aristocratic model based in intimate relationships to liberal one based on the market – from year to year and in different stages of promoting the same work. It is this easy complementarity which makes the period fundamentally difficult to generalize. This was, for those that were willing to embrace it, the tenor of the times.

Success came to those poets who remained flexible. For a time, Philip Freneau was one such poet. Although he has been remembered primarily as a heroic republican periodical poet, a poet of the newspaper sanctified by his partisan struggles, this was not the full story. In 1786 Freneau's first collection, *The Poems of Philip Freneau*, was published by Francis Bailey in Philadelphia, selling for a dollar. This work sold well on the market, but the follow-up work, 1788's *The Miscellaneous Works of Philip Freneau*, was brought out by Bailey only after Freneau had used the subscription method to

guarantee at least five hundred buyers.[60] Getting the *Miscellaneous Works* published was a rare success for the perpetually embattled Freneau. This use of the patrician subscription list doesn't fit our scholarly memory of Freneau, but like Barlow he was forced by the realities of a limited market to realize that a number of publication methods with different political valences would have to be used.

With Barlow's example in mind, what stands out about literary authorship in the last decades of the eighteenth century is how the side by side existence of the older aristocratic model of authorship, which had been revived by republicanism, and the growth of the print market, created a remarkable diversity. Over a five year span in the 1780s, Barlow published his poetry in newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and books. This poetry ranged from anonymous to collaborative projects, from free, un-copyrighted offerings in periodicals to relatively expensive books. Barlow's grandiose plan to become America's first professional poet was not only sustained by the market, but by newspaper work and significant patronage from church and state. More dedicated to poetry as a livelihood than nearly all of his peers, Barlow earned his bread as a chaplain, a newspaperman, a shopkeeper and a lawyer. As exemplified by Barlow's newspaper advertisements, these various modes of publication and authorship tended not to compete with one another, but instead hybridized into odd transitional forms.

The end of the Revolutionary War coincided with Barlow's first attempts at a literary career. As manifested by his move from New Haven to Hartford, Barlow attempted to transform himself from a college bard, delivering his rhymes at both social

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[60] For the publication history of these two collections, Freneau's *Poems* and *Miscellaneous Works*, see Lewis Leary's *That Rascal Freneau- A Study in Literary Failure*, pages 146-8 and 154-8, respectively.

and official university functions, to a professional poet, to transform himself from a poet not only for New Haven but for all of Connecticut and all of the United States. By 1784, Barlow stopped orating poems and started printing them in earnest. While the early years of Barlow's literary career were marked by his basic apathy towards print, with him viewing his early pamphlets as ornaments and commemorations of poems already delivered, in the middle years of the 1780s he made a radical turn, for a time rivaling even Freneau as his nation's most ink-stained poet. Nothing highlights this shift more than Barlow's enthusiasm for periodical advertising in 1784-5, a wholly new approach for him. As illustrated by those same advertisements however, Barlow's embrace of print was a particular one and was highly influenced by his both his earlier environment and the limitations and character of his age.

Barlow's primary adjustment was negotiating a new relationship to a much larger audience. As described in chapter one, during the early stages of his career Barlow's readers were familiar with his work pre-publication, and his poems went into print in a post-facto, on-demand fashion, with print the last, mostly commemorative stage in the life of a poem. In Hartford, Barlow did not operate within the security of on-demand publishing, although he did attempt to recreate some of the conditions of this environment using advertising and subscription methods. On the whole, both for Barlow and the rest of the literary market, it was a time when future conditions could be imagined and advocated in theory, while in practice more traditional publishing methods still needed to be employed. Despite his bold letter to the President of Congress arguing that literary property is more the artist's own than anything else, neither Barlow nor his world was quite ready or committed to a liberal model of authorship. As such, his three

major publications from his Hartford days, the revision of Watts, *The Anarchiad* and *The Vision of Columbus* were products of a distinctly mixed literary environment. Given the various modes of authorship, the primitive state of the printing industry, and the continued strength of both manuscript circulation and subscription publishing, the nineteenth century was visible on the horizon, but it had not dawned.

CHAPTER III

FROM WIT TO REVOLUTIONARY: THE POET AS POLITICAL AGENT

In 1788 Barlow sailed for France on what he thought would be a short business trip. Instead, he would remain in Europe until 1805, transforming himself from a modest Hartford celebrity into an international figure. To trace Barlow's career from his beginnings in New Haven to his arrival in Europe in 1788 is to realize just how much his early days as a poet in Connecticut were a kind of playing at being a metropolitan poet in an environment lacking in the necessary conditions for doing so. Barlow and the other Connecticut Wits had styled themselves as poets of the cosmopolitan metropolis in a provincial village of three thousand people. In the taverns of Hartford they imagined a national audience for their work when in reality even readers in New York were hard to reach and any coverage south of Philadelphia almost impossible. When Barlow left this local world for the first time, he responded like a seed moved to richer soil. Barlow published more prolifically in London and Paris in the early 1790s than ever before. In Europe, Barlow finalized the changes in his approach towards authorship that had begun in Hartford. He fully embraced print as his only real way of reaching his readers, dropping the last vestiges of the poet as an oral performer and the poet as the witty favorite of the local tavern. These anachronistic gestures from the days of Queen Anne left his repertoire forever, as Barlow transformed himself from a wit to a revolutionary.

For Barlow scholars, the poet's wave of publications in the early 1790s signal an important turning point which marks a political and social break between Barlow and his Connecticut past. Barlow's development also illustrates the limitations of the American

literary market at the end of the eighteenth century. When we examine the arc of Barlow's career and compare him to his fellow Connecticut Wits, it becomes clear why American literary culture remained so old-fashioned during the late eighteenth century: outside of writing for the embryonic periodical market, there was no other alternative. If one lived in Hartford and wanted to "be a poet" really the only way that identity could be expressed was along the lines of a publication model that had at its foundation an assumption that print opportunities would be limited. To be sure, it was possible to print locally, yet it was also possible to connect with the local audience in a variety of other ways that might be just as effective, if not more so. By 1791 Barlow was writing in London, whose population of roughly one million was nearly double that of all New England. In addition to this new, gigantic, audience in Britain, from London the major cities of the United States opened up to Barlow in a way they never had when he was a Connecticut bard. Ironically, in Europe Barlow became more of a national "American" poet than he had been at home, finding more American readers in a wider variety of places. At the same time, with access to a truly functioning print market Barlow changed how he published and thought about himself as an author. In Europe, Barlow said his final goodbyes to the ceremonial poetry of the commencement address and the subscription list, and hello to the broadside and the pamphlet.

In an intense period from 1792-93 Barlow wrote and published at a greater rate than at any other period of his life. During those two years he published an important new poem, *The Conspiracy of Kings*, two prose works on political theory, a translation of Brissot's *Travels*, an edition of Trumbull's *M'Fingal* and a revision of the *Vision of Columbus*. In 1793, he also completed "The Hasty Pudding," which would be first

published in 1796. This period in his life marked more than Barlow's recognition of a more favorable publishing environment. In both London and Paris, Barlow was exposed to a richer and more sophisticated literary culture that changed his attitudes towards poetry as well as his politics.

In the early 1790s Barlow exchanged the company of Timothy Dwight, David Humphreys, and Lemuel Hopkins for that of Mary Wollstonecraft, Thomas Paine, and William Blake. As I have shown in the previous two chapters, the literary culture of Connecticut was nurturing to poets, but only in a circumscribed, provincial, way. Moreover, Connecticut's literary culture amounted to little more than an echo chamber of the views of the standing order, and an increasingly strident one, thanks to the partisan culture wars then emerging. The limited reading list of a Yale education had made Barlow – clearly by temperament a very different poet and man – nearly indistinguishable from Timothy Dwight during the 1780s, and among the Connecticut Wits intellectual diversity was measured by the extent of one's minute gradations of Calvinist theology. In Europe, Barlow heard new voices, both in person and in print, and his notebooks from this period are filled with endless lists of new books to buy, topics to investigate and authors to study.

Yet London's influence on Barlow, as significant as it was, paled in comparison to that of Paris. Despite his status as a veteran of Washington's army, Barlow's first war, as a poet, was not the American Revolution, but the one that took place in France.[1]

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[1] A curious fact about Barlow's early poetry is that, although his personal life was greatly impacted by the Revolutionary War, he was never really a war poet. Instead, quite from the beginning, in tone and theme, Barlow was a post-war poet. His interest throughout the late 1770s and into the 1780s was not in recording the war in poetry, but in announcing what the world after the war would be like. His first major poem was thus, even in 1778, "The Prospect of Peace" a

Living in Paris at the start of the French Revolution, Barlow was radicalized by the monumental events around him and by the new social climate ushered in by revolution. As Victor Clyde Miller notes, Barlow's "whole life to 1788 had been lived under aristocratic influences" (2). In the 1790s, for the first time, Barlow begins to write like a war poet and like a propagandist, leaving behind the ceremonial and inflated style that characterized the bulk of his work in Connecticut.

Financial pressures pushed Barlow out of Connecticut. Barlow's occupational wandering in the 1780s, from the ministry to publishing to law, left him without any stable sources of income. Apparently uninspired by his prospects as a Connecticut lawyer, Barlow instead decided to become an agent for the Scioto Associates, a company looking to sell land in Ohio.[2] Barlow's financial reasons for taking up with the company are easy enough to understand, but it remains something of a mystery as to why William Duer, the unscrupulous head of the company who would die in prison, thought Barlow would make a good land agent. Unfortunately for Barlow, the Scioto Associates had a number of major problems, and when their plan to anticipate the release of western lands by Congress failed, they were left holding only options to land, rather than titles. As Robert F. Durden puts it, "perhaps Duer realized that it would take abundant poetic license to sell lands to which he held no title" (329). In due time, Duer would be exposed as a fraud, though not before Barlow had sailed for France, on May 25, 1788. The well-

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poem which uttered, quite tellingly in its very opening lines, the *ending* of the war, "The closing scenes of Tyrants' fruitless rage,/ The opening prospects of a golden age" (1-2).

[2] The brief history of the Scioto Associates is a complicated one, and Barlow's own role as a confused novice caught in a land scheme does not make for the easiest entry-point. The best explanation of the company, and Barlow's role in it, is Woodress 92-112. A more concise summary can be found in Ford, 27-28.

intentioned poet turned salesman was instructed to sell shares in the company to European banks, who would then be in charge of dealing with individual buyers.[3]

Barlow's work as a land agent in Paris was one of the most dramatic failures of his life. Although he did eventually learn French, he understood little when he landed in Paris and was fundamentally inexperienced as a businessman. Barlow's time as a newspaperman, trading in rags and poultry, was little preparation for selling shares to large banks. Beyond those difficulties, he was selling a flawed product. Barlow found no buyers with the banks and decided, after the Fall of Bastille in 1789, to sell shares in the company directly to individuals. Unbeknownst to Barlow, the shadowy scheme was collapsing back in the States, and the French settlers at Gallipolis struggled mightily upon reaching Ohio.[4] Barlow's inexperience led him to be duped by Duer, and when he was left holding the bag in Paris, he became a target for criticism. Although investigations into the matter both at the time and years later cleared Barlow of any wrongdoing – Woodress calls him "another pawn in the game" (92) – the Scioto fiasco left Barlow broke and shamed in Paris.[5] That spring he fled to London, where he looked to rebuild his reputation.

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[3] These shares were priced at $1,000 and were worth one thousand acres each.

[4] To Duer's credit, when he learned that settlers were sailing across the Atlantic, he scrambled to actually purchase land along the Ohio. Nevertheless, against the claims of the company, the land was not cleared for farming and was still inhabited by Native Americans. The settlers, as well as the men Duer hired to lead them to the settlement, were entirely unprepared for the swampy marsh land that awaited them, and "when Constantin Volney visited Gallipolis in 1796, he found only about eighty sallow, thin, sickly remnants of the original six hundred French" (Woodress 110).

[5] The Scioto affair was first investigated by Benjamin Walker in 1790, who cleared Barlow of any intentional fault. (Woodress 110) Barlow was certainly a mostly incompetent businessman at this time, but he had little idea that he was defrauding his customers. He had little more information about the true nature of the land he was selling than his clients did, and in

In the view of Barlow's biographers, the Scioto debacle inspired Barlow to return to his pen, to somehow make good on his ideals by recommitting himself to poetry and his increasingly radical political beliefs. In this way, the Scioto affair, rather unintentionally, turned into one of the best things that ever happened to Barlow, ushering forth a tremendous burst of productivity from 1791 through 1793. As Woodress puts it, "for the next two years he worked tirelessly and idealistically for the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity" (Woodress 115). The ridiculous plan to work as a land agent in Paris had delivered Barlow to France on the very eve of revolution, and when he went bust, he was too ashamed to return home to Connecticut. As a consequence, he stayed in Europe, where he continued to absorb new ideas, mix with radical republican intellectuals, and enjoy publishing opportunities in Paris and London that dwarfed anything imaginable in Hartford.

Barlow's time in London, where he settled in 1791, was largely shaped by his relationship with Joseph Johnson (1738-1809), a publisher and bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard. Barlow's membership in Johnson's circle in the early 1790s was one of the truly transformative moments in Barlow's life. According to Johnson biographer Gerald Tyson, Barlow first met the bookseller in 1788, during a brief fall visit to England. When Barlow left France after the collapse of the Scioto Company in 1790, he soon reestablished his friendship with Johnson, whose bookshop was becoming a magnet for liberal thinkers. Their friendship would last for the next decade, and over the years

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keeping with the themes of his poetry, believed that he was peopling a glorious agrarian settlement in the West. Perhaps the best evidence of Barlow's innocence lies in the fact that he left the affair entirely broke.

Johnson treated Barlow and his wife Ruth with patience and sympathy.[6] Johnson published Barlow's three 1792 works, his poem *The Conspiracy of Kings*, along with his two works of political prose, *Advice to the Privileged Orders of Europe* and *A Letter to the National Convention of France*. However, Johnson did not merely publish Barlow's works; he played a key role in inspiring them. Barlow's introduction to Johnson's circle, which included an impressive number of those calling for reform in Britain, seems to have been a major spur to Barlow's prolific 1792.

As the publisher of works by Cowper, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Blake, Johnson was the most prestigious literary publisher of Barlow's career. He was also more prolific, varied in his interests, and willing to take risks than John Stockdale, the man who had published the London edition of *The Vision of Columbus* in 1787. Two factors made Johnson preferable to Stockdale in 1792. First, although Stockdale was pro-American, he was generally moderate. Publishing works by Adams and Jefferson he avoided more radical republican tracts. Second, by this time, Johnson was a more prestigious literary publisher than Stockdale, a fact that was doubtlessly important to Barlow. Over his thirty year career, Johnson published over two thousand works, most of them serving an elite intellectual audience.[7] In addition to these literary works, Johnson published a number of important political works in the 1790s, including Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1791) and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Because of his noteworthy clients (especially Blake), Johnson has emerged, in the

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[6] For Barlow's first meeting with Johnson, see Tyson 119. For Johnson's relationship with the Barlows in later years, including his aid given to Barlow's wife Ruth, during the various times she was separated from her husband, see Tyson's note, page 254.

[7] This figure is from Braithwaite, xiii.

last forty years, as the best known English publisher and bookseller during this period.[8] During this time, Johnson also published the *Analytical Review* (1788-1798) which gave voice to dissenting political and religious (especially Unitarian) views. Barlow's ties to Johnson were the beginning of a long-standing connection between the poet and the radical religious press.

Although he was eventually imprisoned for printing seditious material in 1798, it was in the early 1790s that Johnson was most involved with those who were especially critical of the British government.[9] According to Johnson scholar Helen Braithwaite, "Barlow's political views, in tandem with Paine's, were without doubt the most extreme that Joseph Johnson ever published" (118). As such, it is likely that just as Johnson and his circle encouraged Barlow, so too did Barlow encourage Johnson.

Johnson, a lifelong bachelor, was especially close to his authors during the early 1790s, hosting weekly dinners which greatly contributed to the formation of a Johnson circle. Because so many of Johnson's authors were also interested in political reform in Britain and were excited followers of the French Revolution, the Johnson circle overlapped with a number of liberal societies (such as the Society for Constitutional Information) and correspondence groups. Barlow's dinners with the Johnson circle, and the regular meetings at the Crown and Anchor Tavern that accompanied them, was an intellectual upgrade over his previous socializing with the "wicked wits" in Hartford. As

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[8] See Braithwaite xii.

[9] Johnson was sentenced to six months imprisonment and fined fifty pounds in 1798 for printing a pamphlet by Gilbert Wakefield that was critical of the British government's ongoing war with France. According to Braithwaite, generally the best source on the trial, the Crown was also highly concerned with Johnson's *Analytical Review*, and used the Wakefield pamphlet only as an easy target. For more on the trial, see Braithwaite 155-164.

evidenced by his writings and journals from this period, we can see that in London Barlow was actively learning for the first time since he had been at Yale. Where the Hartford circle had only been about ideological and stylistic reinforcement, Johnson's circle exposed Barlow to challenging thinkers such as Horne Tooke, Joseph Priestley, John Thelwall, Henry Fuseli, Gilbert Imlay, William Godwin, and others. Unlike the old Hartford coterie, Johnson's circle also included female thinkers. In time, the Barlows, especially Ruth, formed a deep kinship with Mary Wollstonecraft. According to Wollstonecraft biographer Janet Todd, Ruth Barlow was Wollstonecraft's "first American friend, a breath of fresh air in the artifice of London" (190). Mary and Ruth frequently traveled together, and Mary, along with Johnson, provided Ruth with companionship during her times left alone by Joel's travels. For a time in 1791-2, the Barlows discussed adopting Mary's teenage brother, Charles, and returning with him to America.[10]

The most fascinating connection to come out of this period, from a literary perspective, is Barlow's relationship with William Blake, a fellow Johnson client and active member of the circle. According to David Erdman, Blake read Barlow's *Vision of Columbus* while working on *America: A Prophecy*, which displays an "obvious" (95) debt to Barlow.[11] Erdman suggests that Barlow may have re-fired Blake's enthusiasm for the American Revolution in the early 1790s, and supplied him with raw material for his

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[10] In Todd's view, "Wollstonecraft did not really *like* Joel Barlow… she distrusted his stand on violence, which he believed necessary in a revolution" (190). In addition to this political objection, Wollstonecraft was frequently disgusted by the extremely affectionate letters sent to Ruth by her husband. Not surprisingly, she found Barlow's letters more calculating than feeling, and viewed his sentiments as degrading. See Todd 190 and Woodress 126.

[11] Erdman charts the connections between Blake and Barlow in "William Blake's Debt to Joel Barlow", *American Literature* 26.1 (1954): 94-98.

own poem. In particular, Blake used Barlow's description of the American Revolution in Book V of the *Vision* for his own work, especially a particularly Barlowian speech by George Washington, "the lines of Barlow's *Vision*," Erdman argues, "have worked the raw material of historical events into available organic matter for the shooting stalk of Blake's *Prophecy*" (95).[12] As for Blake's influence upon Barlow, the most tantalizing possibility is that Blake, or Barlow's exposure to Blake's publications and the various engravings Blake did for Johnson's publications, planted the seed in Barlow's mind for the luxurious book arts revision of the *Vision of Columbus* that Barlow would call the *Columbiad*.

Barlow's exposure to thinkers such as Blake and Wollstonecraft highlights the intellectual and literary upgrade he enjoyed in Europe. Where could Barlow find comparable company in America in the early 1790s? Barlow's decentralized native country lacked an intellectual hub like London, and the small literary circles scattered throughout the continent did little mixing. Barlow's Hartford circle had surprisingly limited contact with writers outside Connecticut, as evidenced by Barlow's near total ignorance of writers such as Freneau or Breckenridge. As such, although he had to travel to London to secure it, his time working with Johnson was the most advantageous relationship with a publisher he ever enjoyed. No American publisher during this time, even Mathew Carey, could match Johnson's ability to publish a wide array of ambitious, politically risky, works while remaining fiscally solvent. In America, the variety and scope of works published by Johnson was sub-divided: the more radical publications

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[12] Erdman outlines the close similarities between lines 507-514 of book 5 of the *Vision* and lines 9-12 of *America* and suggests a wider connection between lines 495-516 of book 5 and 76-85 in Blake's *America*.

likely to appear by small, short-lived, firms (likely to be in a smaller city) which were committed to a cause, while the mainstream works might be brought out by one of the few established firms on the continent like Hudson & Goodwin in Hartford or Mathew Carey in Philadelphia. Likewise, works published by Johnson in London might in a reasonably short time find readers anywhere in the Atlantic world, while in America the more likely scenario involved a scattershot coverage of a state or two and little else. Hudson & Goodwin, the primary publishers of Barlow's Connecticut work and one of the most successful firms in New England, could only reasonably guarantee an audience in New Haven and Hartford. Books and pamphlets might flow into these cities, but only rarely did anything flow out from them. Barlow and other poets in Connecticut had to seek out new publishers in each city in which they wished to expand their readership. Barlow was, at best, only moderately successful in securing these additional publishers.

As an American revolutionary fresh from Paris, Barlow was a "leading figure" (Erdman 95) in the Johnson circle. Barlow's past not only made him socially attractive and gave him the proper political credentials, it made him useful. In Carla Mulford's view, "precisely because Barlow was an American, an outsider… radicals in England and France seem to have seized upon him to promote their cause" ("Masonic Conspiracy" 170). Though he quickly became hated by conservatives (Burke denounced Barlow in Parliament in December of 1792) as an American Barlow was less likely to be prosecuted by the British government and was thought to be an effective shield against the charge of sedition falling upon native British figures.[13] Moreover, Barlow had a number of

[13] For Burke's denunciation of Barlow, whom he mocked on the floor of Parliament as "the prophet Joel" see Mulford "Joel Barlow, Edmund Burke, and Fears of Masonic Conspiracy in 1792" 171.

contacts in France (where he was similarly identified as an outsider) which made him a mediator between revolutionary circles in both countries and a facilitator of contact.[14] For these reasons, Barlow quickly became "part of a propaganda machine" (Mulford "Masonic Conspiracy" 171). Still guilty over his mishandling of the Scioto affair, Barlow jumped at the chance to propagandize in the cause of republican principles. It did not hurt that Barlow had nothing else to occupy his time. In the more cynical view of Victor Clyde Miller, Barlow became an ideological "soldier of fortune" (111).[15] The British print market was large enough that, for a year at least, Barlow even sold enough to support himself. The result was the most prolific period of his career.

Barlow's first poem as an international figure was 1792's "The Conspiracy of Kings." As propaganda, "The Conspiracy of Kings" was of a different order than anything Barlow had written in Connecticut. Published as an attention-seeking pamphlet, "The Conspiracy of Kings" was not meant to be studied over. It was meant to be quickly read by a large audience. Gone was the imperial and measured manner of the old commencement poet. Harsher and more aggressive in tone and diction than Barlow's earlier work, the "Conspiracy" aimed to inflame righteous passion and invite defiant laughter. Barlow's polemic generated its heat by inverting the standard conservative claim of a Jacobin conspiracy. This "parodic inversion," (Mulford "Masonic Conspiracy"

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[14] See Mulford, "Masonic Conspiracy" pages 169-171.

[15] Miller takes a singularly cynical view of Barlow's time as a revolutionist. Miller argues that Barlow's original and perhaps ultimate goal in London was to establish his literary fame, and that he merely used politics to do so. Miller writes, "without so much as even implying that Barlow was insincere in his republicanism, it can be said that he hoped in his own personal interest to establish himself in London, by his radical activities, as a literary person. He was in the position of a soldier of fortune who to his great good luck finds himself in intellectual and moral sympathy with the side on which he is enlisted" (111).

178) was the central conceit of the poem, which mocks and attacks the priests, aristocrats, princes, and kings who have conspired to enslave humanity.[16] The "Conspiracy" begins by informing the "drones" (10) and "crusted souls" (27) of the conservative alliance that their plans to crush France and the French example of republicanism will fail:

> Learn here, ye tyrants, ere ye learn too late,
> Of all your craft th' inevitable fate.
> The hour is come, the word's unclosing eyes
> Discern with rapture where its wisdom lies;
> From western heav'ns th' inverted Orient springs,
> The morn of man, the dreadful night of kings.
> Dim, like the day-struck owl ye grope in light,
> No arm for combat, no reason in flight" (157-164)

These lines, which represent one of Barlow's most inspired and effective extended metaphors, voice the theme that had ran through Barlow's poetry since the late 1770s: the peaceful new epoch of reason and freedom that had been occasioned by the triumph of "western" (i.e. American) political ideas. What stands out about the "Conspiracy of Kings" is how differently Barlow expressed these old ideas. In the poem Barlow broke free from his tendency to use the most inflated and formal diction he knew. Instead, he stepped down from the dais and refers to his enemies, as "harpies," (line 10) "crested reptiles," (14) "forsaken villains," (97) "vampires," (209) and "sycophants at court" (252). He labels Edmund Burke a "degenerate slave" (105) and the King of Austria as "the ape of wisdom and the slave of gold" (80).

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[16] Mulford traces Barlow's source material and occasionally elaborate symbolism in the poem. Barlow flaunted his radicalism in the poem, which included both a number of Masonic and phallocentric ideas, both of which were rooted in pantheism and comparative religion. In this way, Mulford illustrates how Barlow's time in both Paris and London in the early 1790s informs the poem. Mulford's defense of the poem's intellectual sophistication is a corrective to Howard, who is surprisingly dismissive of the poem. According to Howard, "the poem as a whole, with its extravagant epithets, its personification, and its extensive symbolism, was hardly serious in any true sense" (288).

Barlow's worldview was so defined by the political ideals of British and French republicanism that the French Revolution occasioned a stronger emotional response in Barlow's poetry than his own country's rebellion had done. His motivations were more purely ideological than patriotic. As such, Barlow's earlier handling of his British enemies in poems such as "The Prospect of Peace" and the *Vision of Columbus* was much more elevated and abstracted. This was, to be sure, due in part because of the measured conventions of the neoclassicism that structured those earlier works, yet this cannot be the entire story. The moral and political conviction, along with the sense of personal outrage, behind the "Conspiracy of Kings" reveals Barlow's self-identification with the French cause.

In his earlier poems on the American Revolution, Barlow imbues the American victory with extreme importance, although he nevertheless also follows the Homeric tradition of establishing a basic decency and nobility to both sides. In the "Prospect" the Revolutionary War is "a grand conflict" (11) and the closest Barlow can come to demonizing the British is to call them "impious" (18). In the *Vision*, Barlow refuses any opportunity to sneer at either Burgoyne or Cornwallis, instead labeling both British generals "bold."[17] Although Barlow had firsthand experiences as a soldier, the American Revolutionary War, in Barlow's early work, is essentially a symbolic battle between political concepts. In the "Conspiracy of Kings" the matter is more serious, with humanity's natural order and impetus to freedom being undermined by a conspiracy of

[17] In book five Barlow refers to the "bold Burgoyne" in Book V of the *Vision* (line 667) and the "bold Cornwallis" (214).

evil forces. With such admirable enemies, Washington's final victory over Cornwallis in Book VI of the *Vision* is a mostly solemn one:

> Beheld the glorious Leader stand sedate,
> Hosts in his chain, and banners at his feet;
> Nor smile o'er all, nor chide the fallen chief,
> But share with pitying eye his manly grief. (VI. 441-4)

Washington's stately aloofness, (one part stoicism, one part trans-national feeling) has no place in the "Conspiracy." Clearly awash in more radical political ideals, surveying the early years of the French Revolution and the conservative response, Barlow sees a larger threat than anything the British of the 1770s ever represented. Barlow's enemies are too demonic and too malevolent for the current crisis to be a "grand conflict" as the Revolutionary War had been. Driven into new artistic territory by his new political awakening, Barlow speaks with an aggressive bluntness never before seen in his poetry. The poet who loathed the uncouth frontier mob and celebrated order in the *Anarchiad*, now writes:

> 'Tis dark deception, 'tis the glare of state
> Man sunk in titles, lost in Small and Great;
> 'Tis Rank, Distinction, all the hell that springs
> From those prolific monsters, Courts and Kings,
> These are the vampires nurs'd on nature's spoils;
> For these with pangs the starving peasant toils (205-210)

Barlow's development in France was more a sharpening of his political sword than a conversion. As William Dowling has shown, Barlow's radical turn was one grounded in a specific branch of his old Connecticut federalism, a critique of demagoguery.[18] Amazingly, this connection was so elemental that the "Conspiracy of

[18] William C. Dowling's "Joel Barlow and *The Anarchiad*" is the best recent handling of the connection between the *Conspiracy* and passages from the *Anarchiad*, especially no. 10 in the series. Dowling contends that passages from the *Anarchiad* are so similar to the *Conspiracy* that

Kings" features a long passage that had been lifted almost straight from the *Anarchiad*. By the early 1790s, Barlow understood that the common man was not ill-suited for politics by his nature or by God's design, but, as shown in the lines above, because he had been long deceived and abused. This shift was subtle, but ultimately monumental in forming Barlow's thought.

Barlow argues that the monarchies of Europe, along with their state churches and courts, held their power thanks to their ability to inspire an unearned loyalty and devotion. Near the conclusion of the "Conspiracy" Barlow describes an elaborate procession, a royal parade, which represents the emptiness of the old order. Barlow closes the passage, which represents a dystopian nightmare of delusion, with a description of the audience, the "shouting millions" (240) who not only maintain the system, but sadly, find their only happiness in brief moments of fantasy. They are the "millions, whose ceaseless toils the pomp sustain,/ Whose hour of stupid joy repays an age of pain" (241-2).

This is not a fleeting moment of pity, as one might expect in Wordsworth or Goldsmith, nor one without a direct political connotation. Barlow imagines these millions as the new rulers of the world. Barlow celebrates "Man" as his force for good. Man, in a very gendered and sexualized sense, is the world's saving force in the *Conspiracy*. As Mulford terms it, the *Conspiracy* is "a celebration of male power" ("Masonic Conspiracy" 177).[19] The reign of man has an organic vitality and reflects the proper natural order, an order which has been suppressed for centuries by kings, nobles, and

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Barlow's earlier work must be reevaluated as more radical than it is usually given credit for being.

[19] For Barlow's phallocentrism and influences from eighteenth-century sexology, see Mulford "Masonic Conspiracy" 174-77.

priests: the parasitic alliance that Barlow refers to as ‘vampires.” At an early moment in the poem, Barlow informs his enemies of their doom by reminding them that they are not men:

> If on your guards your lingering hopes repose,
> Your guards are men, and men you’ve made your foes; (165-6)

In a dramatic moment in the middle of the poem, Barlow shifts his rhetorical address in the poem from the conservative alliance – “I know your crusted souls” (27) – to “Man”. Barlow brazenly reaches out to “Man” – whose class markers are made plain enough by his reference to low-level military men such as guards – imagining them as at once his heroes, his brothers, and his audience:

> Hail Man, exalted title! first and best,
> On God’s own image by his hand imprest,
> To which at last the reas’ning race is driven,
> And seeks anew was first it gain’d from Heav’n.
> O Man, my brother, how the cordial flame
> Of all endearments kindles at the name!
> In every clime, thy visage greets my eyes.
> In every tongue thy kindred accents rise;
> The thought expanding swells my heart with glee,
> It finds a friend, and loves itself in thee. (177-186)

In “Conspiracy” Barlow’s relationship to his audience was more layered and complicated than anything he had done in Connecticut. Barlow’s early publications had clearly defined audiences based in Barlow’s own peer groups – Yale, Hartford, Congregationalists, Washington’s Army – that were addressed consistently throughout each poem. The *Conspiracy* was a complete break from this model and signaled a new mode of authorship for Barlow. Rhetorically, the poem begins by addressing Barlow’s political enemies, only to shift towards an address to “Man” in the second half of the poem. Both groups are addressed repeatedly in the second-person. In doing so, Barlow

keeps the emotional pitch of the poem high, while simultaneously displaying his supreme confidence as a poet, his ability to stand in the middle of the fray and speak. Of course, in reality, he isn't speaking at all, and this is made plain by the fact that he has spoken directly to his audience before. In the context of Barlow's earlier work, which maintained a pose of oral performance, such a shift would have made little sense. It would have been scarcely possible for Barlow to address "Yalensia" during the first portion of one of his commencement speeches, before shifting to address, say, the ministers of Boston, London merchants, or the people of Redding. More concretely, Barlow's actual audience in this case was similarly bifurcated, aimed at once at the middle-class and elite political classes (upon first publication in London in 1792) in England, but also, at least ideally, at a mass readership throughout Britain and hopefully in the U.S. as well.

This was a significant break from Barlow's model of authorship and publication in America, which had been characterized by his ability to circulate his works amongst peers pre-publication in order to raise funds and gain approval. When Barlow wrote "to thee, O Man, my heart rebounding springs," (line 244) he was referring to a wide group that included, indeed, was dominated by, those below his social rank. As an American intellectual of modest financial standing, Barlow was not himself either an elite radical or a member of the broad laboring class which he characterized as "men." With *The Conspiracy of Kings*, Barlow had no choice but to write blindly, to write knowing that the work would have to stand on its own simply as a print object. This was an important shift in Barlow's attitude towards the promotion and distribution of his work, and one that altered his writing style. From the various rhetorical flourishes of *Conspiracy*, we can see that Barlow embraced writing for print. To reach strangers, Barlow had to abandon the

formal, ceremonial, pose he had taken to so strongly in Connecticut, and replace it with something more vibrant, something capable of grabbing the attention of a wide variety of readers scattered around the Atlantic world. This change in context accounts for the appearance of his two most dynamic and unique poems, *The Conspiracy of Kings* (1792) and *The Hasty-Pudding* (1796), both of which sprang out of his movement within Europe's revolutionary circles in the early 1790s. This is also goes halfway towards explaining why the other Connecticut Wits, despite being roughly equal to Barlow in talent and sharing his intellectual background, never wrote poems like those Barlow produced in Europe.

Barlow published two long prose works and a new poem so quickly in 1792 that it is clear that he had found in London both an overall environment that excited him and a publisher that he was extremely comfortable with, even inspired by. *The Conspiracy of Kings* was published by Joseph Johnson in London, in February of 1792. It appears that Johnson published both the *Conspiracy* and Barlow's political tract *Advice to the Privileged Orders* around the same time, early in February.[20] As part of Johnson's political reform program, he "strove to provide all readers with cheap but serviceable editions," (Tyson xviii) and the *Conspiracy* sold for one shilling sixpence. Johnson sold the poem as a pamphlet (20 pages, quarto) at his shop at no. 72, St. Paul's Churchyard. Printed on laid paper, the *Conspiracy* measured $11^{1}/_{16}$ by 8¾, a considerably larger size than most of his American pamphlets. The first edition sold quickly, and in March Johnson printed an identical second edition, which sold for the same price. Both editions

[20] Exact publication dates are not recorded in this case because most of Johnson's records and notebooks were not preserved.

probably numbered five hundred copies, Johnson's standard run throughout this period. In 1796, a third London edition (12 pages, duodecimo) appeared. Although the imprint does not list a publisher on the title page, Johnson, then hounded by government authorities and trying to keep a low profile, was the likely publisher.

The dissemination of the *Conspiracy of Kings* was not limited to Johnson's London bookshop, however. According to Victor Clyde Miller, the *Conspiracy* was also printed as a broadside and circulated by the Society for Constitutional Information throughout Britain. Dedicated to educating the public on the principles of the French Revolution and calling for English political reform, the Society was a combination of a social organization of radical intellectuals and a propaganda engine. Founded in 1780, the Society for Constitutional Information was at its peak of activity in 1791-2, exactly when Barlow became involved. Unfortunately, considerably less is known of the broadside edition of the *Conspiracy* than of Barlow's other publications of 1792. Miller records that one of these broadside versions was found by a government spy in Manchester.[21] Both Johnson and Barlow – who had been elected that March after being nominated by Horne Tooke – were members of the Society, so it is highly likely that this clandestine broadside could have been directly tied to the more official publication of the poem. Stylistically, as we have seen, the poem would have worked as a broadside, and at 282 lines it was just short enough to fit reasonably on a single sheet. Beyond distributing political literature, in 1792, the Society was also drawn to more pragmatic pursuits, such as raising money for

[21] Miller 22.

new boots for the French infantry. To this modest and pedestrian fundraising campaign, both Barlow and Johnson made personal contributions.[22]

Barlow's time in London was also an important moment in the development of his American audience. Ironically, from a publication standpoint, in London, Barlow was closer to New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, than he had been in Hartford. With the *Conspiracy* for sale at Johnson's store in the heart of the book-district, Barlow enjoyed an easy access to a potential audience which dwarfed anything he had ever achieved in Connecticut. Barlow's publication in London also opened up the port cities of the United States to him like never before. In part, Barlow's almost giddy realization of this possibility seems to account for his prolific output during this period. With astonishing rapidity, the *Conspiracy* began appearing on the American seaboard. First, the poem was reprinted in its entirety in the June 1792 issue of *The New York Magazine, or Literary Repository*.[23] In August, the second half of the poem appeared in three installments of *The Columbian Centinel* in Boston.[24]

Positioned in London, Barlow gained a wider prominence in the United States as more stateside appearances of the *Conspiracy of Kings* followed. In late 1793, sometime after October, Thomas Greenleaf and John Fellows in New York published an edition (eighty seven pages, octavo) featuring *Conspiracy* and Barlow's *A Letter to the National Convention of France on the Defects in the Constitution of 1791*, a prose work first

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[22] Tyson 155.

[23] *The New York Magazine, or Literary Repository* 01 June 1792: 375.

[24] *Columbian Centinel* [Boston] 11 Aug. 1792: 176. 15 Aug. 1792: 180. 18 Aug. 1792: 189. These three installments published lines 129-186, 187-222, 223-289 of the poem, respectively.

published (Johnson, London) late in 1792. Greenleaf and Fellows had not been partners for long in 1793, nor would they remain so. Greenleaf was an established printer and newspaper editor, while Fellows appears to have floated from job to job. Both men would be important distributors of Barlow's work in New York in the 1790s. Like Barlow, Fellows was a friend of Paine, and notably published Paine's *Age of Reason* in 1794. It is likely that Fellows and Barlow established their relationship through Paine, who Barlow had met in London. Fellows's publishing activity was idea-driven, dedicated to religious and political radicalism. In addition to Paine and Barlow, Fellows published works by Priestly, Condorcet, Voltaire, and Volney. Fellows was also an enthusiastic promoter of deist ideas, and had a long association with Elihu Palmer, who would establish numerous deist societies and newspapers in the early nineteenth century. Thomas Greenleaf was of similar sentiments. Greenleaf published the republican-leaning *New York Journal* and *Argus* newspapers in New York in the 1790s, and briefly considered going into business with the Jeffersonian poet and pressman Philip Freneau.[25] In 1795, Greenleaf would reprint an edition of Barlow's *Vision of Columbus*.

The advertising pattern employed by Fellows suggests that the work initially sold sluggishly in 1793, leading to heavy advertising in the New York press in the summer of 1794.[26] In a long-running advertisement in *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, Fellows

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[25] For the proposed Greenleaf & Freneau partnership, see Leary, *That Rascal Freneau*, 269-70.

[26] Ads for Fellows's edition of the *Letter/Conspiracy* appeared eleven times in *The Diary or Loudon's Register* during the summer of 1794. *The Diary or Loudon's Register* [New York] 21 May 1794: 3. 24 May 1794: 3. 31 May 1794:4. 02 Jun. 1794: 4. 03 Jun. 1794: 4. 05 Jun. 1794: 4. 14 Jun. 1794: 4. 25 Jun. 1794: 4. 28 Jun. 1794: 4. 07 Jul. 1794: 4. 16 Jul. 1794: 4. During this period, ads also ran twice in the *Columbian Gazetteer* [New York] 19 Jun. 1794:3. 30 Jun. 1794: 1.

claimed that he had "greatly reduced the price" of the work. Fellows trumpeted Barlow's political ideas, writing in the *Diary* ad that the work "will provide a source of pleasure to the friends of the improvement and happiness of mankind." In the summer of 1795, the work appeared again, this time listed as one of many books available at Greenleaf's bookstore in a long-running ad in *The Argus, & Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser*.[27] Finally, in 1796, Fellows and a number of associates published *The Political Writings of Joel Barlow* in New York, a work (258 pages, duodecimo) which included the *Conspiracy of Kings* and was likely available at Greenleaf's store in New York for a number of years.[28]

Shortly after its first appearance in New York, the *Conspiracy* also found its way to Massachusetts as a standalone publication (30 pages, quarto) by the firm of Robinson & Tucker in Newburyport, in 1794. The Newburyport *Conspiracy* measured $9^{1}/_{8}$ by $5^{5}/_{8}$, considerably smaller than the London edition had been. This portable volume covered wide ground in Massachusetts, as it was most likely this edition that was being advertised Ebenezer Larkin in Boston in July, 1794.[29] Like Fellows & Greenleaf, Robinson & Tucker were a short-lived set of partners, and their publication of Barlow's poem was a part of their brief high point of activity in the 1790s. In 1794, the same year that they published the *Conspiracy of Kings*, Robinson & Tucker launched *The Morning Star*, a

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[27] Advertisements in *The Argus, & Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser* [New York] 16 Jun. 1795: 4. 17 Jun. 1795: 4. 22 Jun. 1795: 4. 07 Jul. 1795: 4. 27 Jul. 1795: 4. 08 Aug. 1795: 4.

[28] *The Political Writings of Joel Barlow*, carried an impressively complicated imprint: "Printed at New-York, by Mott & Lyon, for Fellows & Adam, Thomas Greenleaf, and Naphtali Judah."

[29] Larkin placed two ads in *The Mercury* [Boston] 18 Jul. 1794:4. 29 Jul. 1794: 4.

weekly newspaper in Newburyport. *The Morning Star* ran from April to December, before being sold to the publishers of another Newburyport paper, *The Impartial Herald*, who absorbed the work. Although Howard Robinson would work throughout the decade with a number of partners, Benjamin Tucker, seems only to have been involved in publishing for a few years in the middle of the 1790s, and is remembered in John James Currier's history of Newburyport as a painter and art instructor. Robinson & Tucker ended their partnership in October of 1794.[30] Though Robinson & Tucker was an obscure and short-lived firm, their reprinting of Barlow's *Conspiracy* speaks to Barlow's growing profile in the United States during this time. The Newburyport edition of the *Conspiracy* serves as further evidence of Barlow's growing, geographically de-centered, fame.

Crucially, the Newburyport edition produced by Robinson & Tucker included two new important paratextual elements (both in prose) previously unseen in any standalone publications of the poem. First, the edition included a new four-page preface by Barlow, dated "Paris, 12th July 1793," which notes the poem's prophetic account of the demise of King Leopold of Sweden and comments upon the Treaty of Pilnitz. Second, the edition concludes with a six-page note attacking Edmund Burke. These new elements, both the preface and the note on Burke (effectively an afterward or epilogue) had first appeared in 1793, in the Paris revision of the *Vision of Columbus*, which included Barlow's newly-written *Conspiracy* in the back of the book. This Parisian context, as Mulford points out, informed Barlow's vituperative handling of Burke, who he blamed for starting France's

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[30] See Currier's *History of Newburyport, Massachusetts 1764-1909* Vol. 2, pages 348-9.

war with Britain.[31]This new material sharpened the political fangs of the poem, distinguishing the "Conspiracy" from the body of generic king-hating literature still bouncing around from the war years. Stressing his attack of Burke, Barlow connected the pro-British element in American politics to the international effort to deny the men of the world liberty.

For the purposes of our discussion of Barlow's publication history, what most stands out about the Paris edition of the *Conspiracy* was how quickly it made its way, by unknown means, to Newburyport. The nearly contemporaneous effort of Fellows to promote Barlow's writings in New York appears to have been entirely irrelevant, and presumably unknown to Robinson and Tucker in Newburyport. It is telling that the two printings of the *Conspiracy* in the United States had separate, un-related, European roots, rather than some connection to one another. The episode demonstrates the importance of the major European cities within the nascent, wholly decentralized, American book trade. In the world of the book trade of the 1790s, Massachusetts and New York were each closer to Paris or London than they were to each other.

Barlow's poem is an excellent example of how a politically charged work could be endlessly reborn thanks to the wide number of partisan presses. With these three publications, two in New York and one in Newburyport, the *Conspiracy*, either on its own or paired with Barlow's prose, continued to bounce around the northeastern United

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[31] According to Mulford, Barlow assumed a different class voice as a writer in Paris. Mulford writes, "some readers have been puzzled by the virulence of Barlow's attack on Burke appended to the Paris of 1793 edition of *The Conspiracy of Kings*. Considered in the context of the French non-elite and clandestine writings during the time of the French Revolution, the attack on Burke is much like most attacks in the French underground against the elite culture of the day." ("Masonic Conspiracy" 175)

States for a number of years. The picture is one of a sundry and uneven, yet nevertheless tenacious, longevity. In June of 1794, what appears to be the Newburyport edition was advertised at Benjamin Johnson's store in Philadelphia.[32] In 1797, the *Conspiracy*, as part of the New York *Political Writings of Joel Barlow*, was available in New London, Connecticut, along with a newer Barlow poem, *The Hasty-Pudding*.[33] Both of these advertisements, the 1794 ad in Philadelphia and the 1797 ad in New London, were carried by republican-leaning newspapers. In 1803 and 1804, a "Paris edition" of the poem was advertised in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, selling for one dollar and twenty-five cents at the offices of *The Oracle of Dauphin and Harrisburgh Advertiser*.[34] In 1807, the work was advertised in the *Mount Hope Eagle* in Bristol, Rhode Island.[35] Perhaps the *Conspiracy of Kings* enjoyed a late popularity in Rhode Island. In 1809, with Barlow's beliefs again a matter of controversy, the poem was reviewed in the partisan *Rhode-Island Republican* of Newport.[36] Barlow's poem from London, about France, managed to achieve a measure of enduring resonance in the United States.

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[32] *The General Advertiser* [Philadelphia] 03 Jun. 1794: 2.

[33] *The Bee* [New London]: 14 Jun. 1797: 3. 06 Jul. 1797: 3.

[34] Ads in *The Oracle of Dauphin and Harrisburgh Advertiser* 02 May 1803:4. 26 May 1804: 4. 04 Aug. 1804:4.

[35] Ads in *The Mount Hope Eagle* [Bristol, RI] 28 Mar. 1807: 1. 30 May 1807: 4.

[36] The unsigned review of the poem appeared in the *Rhode Island Republican* on October 18, 1809. The review claimed that political preferences have motivated most opinions of the poem, but that, "laying politicks aside, I have always deemed this the least meritorious work, that I have ever met with, of the Connecticut Bard. Extravagance and spleen seem to cast a shade over the numbers, and to obscure and distort the beauties that otherwise might have forcibly arrested the attention of the reader." The review closes by discussing Barlow's sometimes odd word choices. *Rhode Island Republican* [Newport] 18 Oct 1809:2.

The details of the publication history of *The Conspiracy of Kings* have been left out of the existing accounts of Barlow's career. However, these details are important because they uncover a larger story about Barlow's place in American letters during the period. Barlow's popularity in the United States continued to grow in the 1790s, and gradually emerged as a literary voice of pro-French republicanism during the 1790s. His social ties within Connecticut, which had earlier defined his readership, faded and were replaced by his new role as a spokesman for republican political causes. The random distribution of the *Conspiracy of Kings* reflects the increasingly decentralized state of American publishing. It also shows how Barlow's work spread along political, rather than geographic lines, peppered across the landscape unevenly for years by the republican press. The distribution of the *Conspiracy* would preview the partisan handling of Barlow's later works.

Barlow's behavior indicates that he understood his new role. Compelled by political enthusiasm and his sense of a larger stage, Barlow's desire to find readers and influence minds through print was stronger in the early 1790s than at any other period in his life. Breathing European air, with Paris and London within his reach, Barlow became a full-fledged polemicist. The man who had spent the better part of a decade lining up the publication of the *Vision of Columbus* suddenly emerged as a fast-moving publication engine. Barlow not only began to publish more, he published in new genres, genres which had failed to excite him in Connecticut. In 1792, in addition to the *Conspiracy of Kings*, he published two prose works concerned with political theory, *Advice to the Privileged Orders in the Several States of Europe* and *A Letter to the National*

Convention of France.[37] These two essays would do much to augment Barlow's reputation as a political mind of importance.

James Woodress considers Barlow's *Advice to the Privileged Orders* his "most important and lasting work" (119). As the case had been with the *Conspiracy of Kings*, Barlow cleaned up his style and wrote more naturally and clearly in the *Advice* than he had been prone to do as a Connecticut Wit, which was logical and deliberate, rather than florid. As Ford notes, "in his poetry Barlow felt a need to use a style which seems overly conventionalized and too contrived to a later age. His prose, however, remains just as vital and effective today as it was when it was written" (112). Initially, *Advice* was four chapters in length, with more radical material held off until later publications. In the first two chapters of *Advice*, Barlow attacked the feudal and medieval systems still plaguing Europe, including primogeniture, hereditary government, and state churches. Chapter three cries out against standing armies and locates the cause of war in monarchical vanity, while the fourth chapter argues for legal reform, especially in Britain, where a cumbersome system has made the legal process an enemy of the common man.[38] Although the *Advice* never achieved a circulation on the level of Paine's *Rights of Man*, the work to which it was intended to complement, or Burke's *Reflections*, the work which

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[37] Previously, Barlow's only prose publication had been of a very different sort, published in a much different context. The title alone reveals how *An Oration, Delivered at the North Church in Hartford at the Meeting of the Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati* (Hartford, 1787) was a publication grounded in oral performance, small community ties, and reflected ceremonial, fundamentally conservative spirit. This was the on-demand print culture of his youth that pushed speeches like these into print only as a mild commemorative afterthought, a way of recording an event rather than to create one.

[38] For outlines of the *Advice* in greater detail see Woodress 120-1 and Ford 109-13. For Barlow's sources and influences in the *Advice*, see Howard 276-87.

it attacked, *Advice* was a successful publication for Barlow.[39] Soon he had earned that badge which perhaps carried more weight for a reformer than any other, the belief by the British government that the work was seditious. During the treason trial of Thomas Hardy in 1794, the prosecution attempted to link Hardy to the *Advice* in an effort to show the depth and danger of Hardy's radicalism.[40]

Barlow's second prose work was even more directly inspired by events in France. In September of 1792, Barlow learned that the French government was working towards a new constitution. Barlow's response to this news was his second prose publication of the year, *A Letter to the National Convention of France*. This rapid response work was printed quickly enough to be read in France before the new constitution was finished, and demonstrates how strategically Barlow was using print at this time. A practical, though ambitious, work, Barlow's *Letter* laid out a series of thirteen recommendations for the new French Constitution. Barlow's ideas in the *Letter* covered a spectrum ranging from the fundamental shape of government, to the day to day functioning of the state (low salaries for public office, the elimination of lotteries, for example) and points in between, including penal and election reforms.[41] Leon Howard has identified the writing of the *Letter* as the turning point in Barlow's life. According to Howard, it was at this moment

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[39] Woodress describes how Barlow intended the *Advice* "to round out Paine's work," (120) focusing on those areas, especially legal reform and religion, which were less discussed in *The Rights of Man*. Of the two works, Woodress writes, "Paine, the brilliant journalist who could redeem complex arguments to language any literate butcher could grasp, was the more dangerous fellow. His book, a downright inflammatory document… Barlow, who had enjoyed more education and was more reflective, produced a better reasoned, more philosophical, but less subversive pamphlet" (120).

[40] For more on Barlow and the Hardy trial, see Woodress 119.

[41] For an outline of Barlow's thirteen proposals, see Ford 114-5.

when Barlow began to write with a confidence in himself and his principles that "he had affected but had never really possessed before" (293). *A Letter to the National Convention of France* elevated Barlow's standing in France. Barlow sent the *Letter* to Paine in Paris, and in November Paine presented the work to the National Convention.[42] Shortly thereafter, Henri Gregoire (later to become a staunch critic of Barlow, as discussed in chapter 5) sent the *Letter* to the Constitutional Committee, had the work translated into French, and added to the official minutes of the Convention.[43] Barlow's republican ideas were in line with the Girdonist majority, "and perhaps helped precipitate a few ideas in the deliberations of the Constitutional Committee" (Woodress 130). *A Letter to the National Convention of France* had transformed Barlow from a propagandist to a statesman. Aware of a new social role for him in Paris, Barlow slipped out of London and headed to France. He believed that glory stood waiting for him across the English Channel. On November 24, 1792, Barlow addressed the National Convention and was made a French citizen.

The publication history of these two prose works reinforces the point that the Barlow of the 1790s was definitively a political writer, a social role which would not have been accurate during the previous decade. Like the *Conspiracy of Kings*, both *Advice to the Privileged Orders* and *A Letter to the National Convention* were first published by Joseph Johnson in London. Johnson published three London editions of the *Advice*, two in 1792 (in February and June respectively) and a third in 1793, each with a

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[42] According to Woodress Paine presented the *Letter* to the Convention on November 7, 1792. (129)

[43] Woodress 129.

size of about five hundred copies.[44] Johnson sold each edition for the same price, one shilling sixpence, and the first two editions must have sold well enough to justify the third. Although Johnson was generally comfortable with printing radical material, he only consented to print the first four chapters of Barlow's *Advice*, forestalling the later chapters which dealt primarily with taxation and military policy. These later four chapters were eventually published as *Advice to the Privileged Orders of Europe, Part II*, first in Paris in 1793 by Barrois, then in London in 1795 by Daniel Isaac Eaton.[45] Eaton shared Johnson's political sympathies, and offered copies of Barlow's *Letter* at his shop, selling *Advice, Part II* for two shillings in the summer of 1795.[46] The *Letter to the National Convention*, meanwhile, despite its success in France, was not a popular seller for Johnson in London, who published only one edition, on October 3, 1792, selling it for the same price he had offered the *Conspiracy of Kings* and *Advice*, one shilling sixpence.[47]

As had been the case with the *Conspiracy of Kings*, Barlow's choice publication position in London made it certain that both *Advice to the Privileged Orders* and *Letter to the National Convention* were quickly reprinted in the United States. New York, where the *Conspiracy* had also made its first appearance, quickly became a hotspot of Barlow publications, with Childs and Swine publishing an octavo edition of *Advice* in the city in

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[44] According to Miller, Johnson printed the *Advice* on "rather larger than the usual type, the lines noticeably wide-spaced, the paragraphs separated by twice the usual space" (52).

[45] The Paris edition of *Advice, Part II*, was printed at the John Hurford Stone's English Press on September 27, 1793, and sold by Barrois, who was also involved in the production of the 1793 Paris edition of *The Vision of Columbus*.

[46] Eaton advertised *Advice, Part II* in the *Courier and Evening Gazette* [London] 09 Jul. 1795:1.

[47] The best bibliographic source for Barlow's publications during 1792 is Miller, 51-54.

the summer of 1792. In 1793, John Fellows continued his involvement with Barlow, publishing, as mentioned above, an edition of *Letter* and *Conspiracy* in a single 87-page octavo. *Advice, Part II*, appeared in New York before it had done so in London, when a reprint of the Paris edition was brought out by Fellows and the Francis Childs Company in 1794. Newspaper evidence suggests that additional editions of *Advice* and *Advice, Part II*, may have been printed in New York, Philadelphia, and Hartford. At the very least, both pamphlets were being sold in these places shortly after appearing in New York.[48] Barlow's prose also made its way into a number of American newspapers. Excerpts of *Advice* ran in *The Daily Advertiser* (New York) and *The Independent Gazetteer* (Philadelphia) while being discussed in *The National Gazette* (Philadelphia) and the *Columbian Centinel* (Boston).[49] *Advice, Part II* seems to have made less of a mark, but it was discussed at length in *The Herald: A Gazette for the Country* (New York).[50] Extracts from *A Letter to the National Convention* were published in newspapers in New York, Hartford, and Providence, including two appearances in Barlow's old paper, *The American Mercury*, which was still being edited by Elisha Babcock.[51]

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[48] An edition of *Advice* by Berry & Rogers, James Rivington, Thomas Allen, and Valentine Nutter was advertised in the *Daily Advertiser* for the price of three shillings. *Daily Advertiser* [New York] 23 Jul. 1792:2. In Philadelphia, Thomas Dobson advertised the *Advice* for "Three-Eights of a Dollar" in the *National Gazette* 28 Jul. 1792:3. Hudson & Goodwin, Barlow's old Connecticut allies, sold copies of *Advice* at their shop as well. *Connecticut Courant* [Hartford]13 Aug. 1792: 3.

[49] *The Daily Advertiser* [New York] ran a paragraph of *Advice* dealing with tyranny 21 Jul. 1792:2. *The Independent Gazetteer* [Philadelphia] excerpted nearly a full column (30 May 1795:1) on rule by the people. *Advice* was reviewed in Philadelphia's *National Gazette* (02 Aug. 1792:3) and mentioned briefly in Boston's *Columbian Centinel* (06 Jun. 1792:98).

[50] *The Herald; A Gazette for the Country* [New York] 24 Jul. 1794:3.

[51] *The Diary or Loudon's Register* [New York] ran passages from *Letter* on the evils of limited monarchies and large government salaries. *The Diary or Loudon's Register* [New York]

Barlow's works were part of a number of texts on French affairs that found buyers in the seaboard cities. Barlow's works were often advertised alongside editions of Brissot, Voltaire, and Paine in American papers. Barlow's work, in the early 1790s, was part of the reading list for Americans favorable to the French Revolution and republican politics. Clearly, Barlow benefited from the American public's wave of interest in revolutionary political tracts and commentaries on the French Revolution. In the office of the *General Advertiser* in Philadelphia, the same city which famously celebrated Genet's visit in 1793 with such ardor, Barlow's *Advice, Part II* sold for twenty five cents in the same shop, where Paine's *Age of Reason* could be had for seventy five.[52] What the publication record for Barlow's political works reveals is that he was much more popular in this phase of his career than is usually assumed. *The Conspiracy of Kings*, written and first published in London, easily reached as many American eyes as did the *Vision of Columbus*.

Full of revolutionary ardor, Barlow, the former newspaper editor, bookseller, and publisher, saw further opportunities in the battle for political change beyond his own pen and beyond his own direct inspiration. During his 1792 writing frenzy Barlow also edited two works on American affairs: Brissot de Warville's *New Travels in the United States of America* and a London edition of Trumbull's *M'Fingal*. Barlow's willingness to guide these two very different works to publication as a translator and editor underscores just

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24 Oct. 1793: 2. 19 Nov. 1793:2. In December of 1793, both Hartford's *American Mercury* and Providence's *The United States Chronicle* printed material from *Letter* against public lotteries. *American Mercury* [Hartford] 09 Dec. 1793:4. *United States Chronicle* [Providence] 12 Dec. 1793: 1. In 1796 the *Mercury* featured passages from the *Letter* against imprisonment for debt. *American Mercury* [Hartford] 30 May 1796:3.

[52] *General Advertiser* [Philadelphia] 07 Oct. 1794:4.

how motivated he was to propagate his political ideas and his willingness to use print to do so. This excitement, as we can see, extended beyond Barlow's own self-interest and quest for literary fame. Barlow began the first work, a translation of Brissot's *Travels*, in the late 1780s. Brissot was a prominent figure amongst the Girdonist party with whom Barlow was associated, and one of the influential men who called for Barlow's citizenship in 1792. Brissot, who also founded the Gallo-American Society in Paris, penned one of the more favorable European accounts of the United States with the *Travels*, which praised American society and its political culture. For this reason, Barlow saw an English language version of Brissot's work as a valuable text in encouraging British reform. However, Barlow could not find a publisher in London in 1792. Editions of Barlow's translation appeared in Dublin and New York in 1792 instead, published by Corbet and T. & J. Swords, respectively. With Joseph Johnson hesitant to appear too seditious, the first London edition of the *Travels* was not published until 1794 by J.S. Jordan, another publisher of Paine. Unfortunately, the friendly acquaintance between Brissot and Barlow had a sad end. Although Barlow would survive the purging of the Girdonists in 1793, Brissot would not. On October 31, 1793, Brissot was executed via the guillotine in Paris, with a horrified Barlow among those looking on.[53]

Barlow's desire to propagate a republican and anti-British gospel was so strong that he began to see the light of truth in unlikely sources. Barlow edited a version of Trumbull's *M'Fingal* in 1792, published by the same man who had brought out his

[53] For Barlow's account of Brissot's execution, see Woodress 138-9.

translation of Brissot's *Travels*, J.S. Jordan.[54] Trumbull and Barlow had worked together before, collaborating for both Barlow's revision of Watts and in the *Anarchiad.* This was no such collaboration. A gentle satire of American Tories in the 1770s, Trumbull's poem had gradually been changed by the times into a conservative federalist poem (the party wars of the 1790s spiked the poem's popularity) given his elitist characterizations of popular politics.[55] Barlow however, thought differently and saw a continuing revolutionary potential in the poem. At the very least, he found in it useful anti-British sentiment. Barlow added a number of explanatory notes to the poem, as well as a preface, hoping to properly frame the poem for a British audience. Though Barlow had once argued for copyright at home in Connecticut, he seems to have brought out a new edition of *M'Fingal* without any communication with Trumbull. According to Victor Gimmestad, Barlow's London edition of *M'Fingal* is the only one of the great many editions of the poem known "positively to have drawn a strong negative reaction from its author" ("Joel Barlow's Editing" 97).

Barlow's ventures into prose and editorship are important markers for understanding his development as a thinker and as a propagandist. As Barlow's political motivations became more focused in the 1790s, so did his desire to more properly surround his poetry with paratextual explanations. The easy politics of endless western progress he celebrated at Yale needed little explanation, because little was truly being

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[54] The most in-depth discussion of Barlow's editon of *M'Fingal* is Gimmestad's "Joel Barlow's Editing of John Trumbull's *M'Fingal*." *American Literature* 47.1 (1975): 97-102.

[55] In the words of Vernon Louis Parrington, "the more thoughtfully one reads *M'Fingal* … the more clearly one perceives that John Trumbull was not a rebellious soul, the stuff out of which revolutionaries are made" (lii).

said. Barlow engaged the battle over the French Revolution at a much more detailed level. His increased theoretical sophistication pushed him to produce more complicated literary texts. Barlow's publishing and editing frenzy in the early 1790s evinces a passionate desire to engage the Atlantic world, lest the true meaning of the French Revolution be obscured.

The poem with which Barlow capped this intense period of activity was "The Hasty Pudding." At first glance the poem does not quite fit the characteristics of Barlow in the 1790s – political engagement, cosmopolitanism and internationalism, commitment to print – that have been outlined in this chapter. This is especially problematic because Barlow's poem about corn-meal has been one of his most anthologized works in contemporary collections. The radicalism of the poem, as well as the highly politicized circumstances in which it was written, are lost in these anthologies, and are further elided by Barlow's successful evocation of homespun New England traditions in the poem. Upon further inspection however, "The Hasty Pudding" combines the political energy of *The Conspiracy of Kings* with the religious eclecticism Barlow expressed in *The Columbiad*.

"The Hasty Pudding" was finished in early 1793, while Barlow was campaigning for the French Convention in Savoy. Barlow, representing the Girdonist party in the new department, would lose the election, but his time in Savoy would inspire one of his most lasting poems. Barlow framed the work, a 369-line poem in three cantos, as a spontaneous composition written in January of 1793, though according to Robert Arner, the poem exhibits "evidence of careful craftsmanship," (90) and was likely composed

over a period of weeks in the winter of 1792-3.[56] "The Hasty Pudding," generally regarded by critics as one of Barlow's strongest poems, reflects just how receptive Barlow was to his environment as a poet. Bouncing between revolutionary Paris and reform circles in London, Barlow produced the fiery and aggressive *Conspiracy of Kings*, the closest thing to street poetry he ever wrote. A few months later, in rural Savoy, Barlow produced a relaxed and genial poem bathed in the mood of a golden farmyard sunset. Binding the two poems together was Barlow's increasingly coherent republican vision. Although the "Hasty Pudding" approaches the common man from a different angle than had the *Conspiracy*, it shares with the earlier poem a belief that the happiness and strength of society would be best served by a new political order.

"The Hasty Pudding" is usually described as a mock-heroic poem, thanks to its modest subject of corn-meal mush and the high-toned way in which Barlow wrote about it.[57] Given Barlow's affinity for Augustan modes and his contributions to the *Anarchiad*, which at times employed a mock-heroic tone to deflate the anti-federalists, this is an understandable gloss of the "Hasty Pudding," but finally, not a very accurate one. Typically, a mock-heroic work, such as the *Dunciad* or *The Rape of the Lock*, calls attention to the foibles and pettiness of its subject via the irony of its absurdly grandiose descriptions. While the "Hasty Pudding" is playful and humorous, the joke is not, ultimately, on the pudding or its makers, but rather on those who too easily dismiss the pudding's merits, and by association, the rustic society it represents. Thus, Barlow

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[56] Thanks to its stylistic and rhetorical strengths, Arner calls the poem, "one of the best examples of American neoclassic poetry," (76) and "poetry of a high order" (80).

[57] For an example of this reading of the poem, see Ford 94-102.

reverses the direction of the irony, and labels those who would consider themselves above corn-meal mush “gaudy prigs,” (1. 113) a rebuff with obvious political overtones. For these reasons, instead of being mock-heroic, “The Hasty Pudding” is a mock-mock-heroic poem. Barlow establishes this position early in the poem, addressing in the second stanza those who feel the subject is inappropriate to high poetry:

> Despise it not, ye Bards to terror steel’d,
> Who hurl’d your thunders round the epic field;
> Nor ye who strain your midnight throats to sing
> Joys that the vineyard and the still-house bring;
> Or on some distant fair your notes employ,
> And speak of raptures that you ne’er enjoy. (1. 9-14)

As a mock-mock-heroic poem, “The Hasty Pudding” despises the despisers. The poem legitimately celebrates corn meal. The central drama of the poem is Barlow’s recognition of his New England heritage, and the virtues of that heritage, in the bowl of hasty pudding served to him in Savoy:

> Dear Hasty-Pudding, what unpromis’d joy
> Expands my heart, to meet thee in Savoy! (1. 57-8)

Absent in the “corrupted town” (1. 63) of Paris or in a London “lost in smoke,” (1. 67) the bowl of pudding before evokes a Connecticut georgic of planting and harvest, of seasonal traditions and hearty food. Significantly, the poem is as much about the people who make and eat the pudding as it is about warm bowls and spoons, a vision of fundamentally decent and good rural folk working together and caring for one another. People who first fall in love between rows of corn (3. 1-28) and who later prepare hasty pudding together as husband and wife (3. 29-41). There is little possibility that Barlow might be mocking these New England farmers, because in the first canto, in one of the more moving moments in all of his poetry, Barlow explicitly identifies with them. For the

first time in his poetry, Barlow makes reference to his father, Samuel Barlow, who farmed 170 acres in Connecticut, and who died when Barlow was just nineteen years old. Describing his father and his love of hasty pudding, Barlow writes:

> My father lov'd thee through his length of days:
> For thee his fields were shaded o'er with maize;
> From thee what health, what vigour he possest,
> Ten sturdy freeman sprung from him attest;
> Thy constellation rul'd my natal morn,
> And all my bones were made of Indian corn. (1. 125-130)

Barlow's romantic tribute to his corn-fed roots, was not, as it had been for Timothy Dwight's *Greenfield Hill*, a conservative gesture. In *Greenfield Hill*, Dwight wrote, "My country's youth, I see with pain,/ The customs of their sires disdain," (6. 313-4). Instead, of simply lamenting change, Barlow's "Hasty Pudding" celebrates what is fundamental to human experience. Barlow's reference to the past is more in the vein of Rousseau than Dwight, a revolutionary reclaiming of origins as a way of reforming society. The poem is peppered with radical allusions, and as J.A. Leo Lemay has pointed out, "the radical democracy that Barlow expressed in *Advice to the Privileged Orders* pervades 'The Hasty Pudding'" (7). The fourth line of the poem refers to the "death of kings," and Barlow chose to date the poem's writing as January, 1793, the same month in which Louis XVI was executed. Half-masquerading as a poem about corn-meal, the "Hasty Pudding" thus situates itself alongside the most dramatic historical shift of the French Revolution, and "sets forth a theory of the origin of culture's basic institutions and advances a program whereby a valid, wholesome civilization may replace his present, degenerating one" (Lemay 8). In Lemay's reading, a major goal of the poem is to celebrate the social rituals of rural life, especially those seasonal, agricultural, rituals which Barlow believed were the foundation of human civilization. Drawing upon

Volney, New England folklore reaches back to ancient Egypt (the ultimate origin in Barlow's view) and the worship of the sun which formed the foundation of all religious experience. In the third canto (lines 57-58) Barlow mentions how close he is to returning to the worship of the Egyptian gods, lines which would be excised from the first New Haven edition in 1796. For Barlow, the purpose of these allusions to Egyptian theology is, "to affirm that the normal rituals of life are, or should be, sacred" (Lemay 14).

Although Barlow finished the poem during a period when he was writing and publishing more than at any other point in his life, he did not have the "Hasty Pudding" printed quickly. In fact, Barlow handled the publication of his "Hasty Pudding" more curiously than any other poem he ever wrote. He was uncharacteristically cautious. Ironically, although the poem is usually described as Barlow's most popular work, its publication was delayed longer than any other thing Barlow ever wrote, save the *Vision of Columbus*. Barlow's apparently hesitant attitude towards the poem is puzzling, leading Leon Howard to speculate that Barlow viewed the poem more as a private text, something only intended to circulate in manuscript.[58]

Howard's explanation becomes suspect, however, when viewed in light of Barlow's overall development as a poet. Given Barlow's experience in Connecticut's vibrant manuscript culture, it is unlikely that he would have considered a manuscript as private. Moreover, Barlow hardly kept the poem private. He merely took his time finding a publisher. The reason for Barlow's cautiousness may lie in the poem's subject matter and the uncharacteristically autobiographical reflections offered therein. With so much attention devoted to his New England home, Barlow didn't consider the poem likely to be

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[58] Howard 295.

a successful one in Europe. With no appearances in either Britain or France, the pamphlet of the *Hasty Pudding*, as a publication, was Barlow's most thoroughly American publication in the time between the *Vision of Columbus* and the *Columbiad.*

Barlow, it must be remembered, throughout his career considered his best work to be his two long poems on international themes. While the "Hasty Pudding" did possess an essentially international, even esoteric message, in its romanticism, Barlow was right to fear that it would mostly be seen simply as an American celebration of things homespun. Nevertheless, the "Hasty Pudding" *is* different from the bulk of Barlow's verse and the poet did not seem to know what he had. Barlow came close to finding a new voice in singing the humble food of New England, but it was not, finally, a voice that he fully trusted or understood. In fact, in 1793, Barlow went back to the *Vision of Columbus,* working on another revision. After holding the "Hasty Pudding" for over a year, in September of 1794 Barlow sent the poem to Mathew Carey in Philadelphia. Once again, a Philadelphia readership eluded him, as Carey passed on the work. In a letter dated May 23, 1795, Barlow offered the poem to John Fellows, his increasingly important champion in New York.[59] Barlow's letter to the New Yorker, which was published in the *Connecticut Journal* in 1799, strikes a somewhat indignant tone, "I don't know Mr. Carey, but a man of common civility would at least have answered my letter, which he had not done".[60] We can only guess as to why Carey consistently resisted Barlow's poems, though he may have continued to associate Barlow with his more conservative Connecticut cohorts, men whose politics he did not share. In this specific

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[59] For these early attempts at publication, see Woodress 318.

[60] *Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 28 Sept. 1799: 1.

instance however, Carey's lack of a reply may also simply mean that he never received Barlow's letter containing the poem. In any case, the poem was not published until 1796. When it finally appeared, it immediately burst upon the scene, generating a variety of near spontaneous publications across the northeastern United States.

The poem's popularity has been long stressed by critics, which has led to a misleading understanding of the place of the *Hasty Pudding* in Barlow's career.[61] Instead, the initial popularity of the work (which grew in estimation through the romantic nineteenth century) was on the same scale as that of the *Conspiracy of Kings,* a comparison which is meant to both slightly inflate our estimation of the latter and deflate that of the former. The earliest publication of the *Hasty Pudding* as a pamphlet was likely either the New Haven edition, published by Thomas and Samuel Green in April, or the Fellows & Adam New York edition (precise date unknown) which boasted on the title page that it was "Printed, from the Author's Manuscript." Both firms had ties to earlier Barlow imprints: the Greens had been behind Barlow's first publication, *The Prospect of Peace* back in 1778, while Fellows was behind nearly every New York publication of Barlow in the 1790s. Pamphlets of the poem were also printed in Catskill, New York (T. & M. Croswell) and in Fairhaven, Vermont (J.P. Spooner) in 1796.

By the summer of 1796 the poem was in the newspapers and was printed fully in *The Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester), *The Connecticut Courant* (Hartford) and *The Eastern Herald* (Portland) in 1796.[62] All three newspapers published the poem in three

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[61] For example, Howard claimed that "almost every magazine and literary newspaper in the United States pirated it" (295).

[62] Excerpts of "The Hasty Pudding" printed in: *The Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester] 13 Jul. 1796:4. 20 Jul. 1796: 4. 27 Jul. 1796: 4. *The Connecticut Courant* [Hartford] 25 Jul. 1796:4.

installments, canto by canto, and it is probable that Barlow, remembering his days as a newspaper editor, organized the poem precisely for this purpose. For the next two years, pamphlets of the *Hasty Pudding* continued to be produced in the U.S.[63] Eight of these nine American versions of *The Hasty Pudding* were small duodecimo-sized offerings (the New Haven edition published by the Greens was technically octavo in size), a break from the larger sized pamphlets used by Barlow's London publishers. According to advertisements, the pamphlet sold for one shilling in New York and for six pence in Massachusetts.[64] Some years later, in 1803 and 1807 respectively, pamphlets of the poem were still being advertised in Newburyport, Massachusetts and in Sag Harbor, New York, where later editions may have been printed.[65] Like *The Conspiracy of Kings*, *The Hasty Pudding* found a wide audience in the United States, covering a large geographic footprint.

Barlow's two-year flurry of activity produced one final publication, a revised edition of *The Vision of Columbus*. Back in Paris after his electoral defeat in Savoy, most of Barlow's literary attention in 1793 was directed towards revising the *Vision*, the poem

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01 Aug. 1796: 4. 08 Aug. 1796: 4. *Eastern Herald* [Portland] 03 Sept. 1796:4. 07 Sept. 1796:4. 10 Sept. 1796: 4.

[63] In 1797 the poem was published in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (Rosseter & Willard) and in New London, Connecticut (Charles Holt). In 1798, the last year of regular pamphlet publication of the poem, the *Hasty Pudding* was brought out in Poughkeepsie, New York (N. Power) and in Salem, Massachusetts (Joshua Cushing).

[64] Ads for the *Hasty Pudding* in *The Argus* indicated a price of one shilling and boasted, "The Hasty Pudding… with propriety, may be ranked with Goldsmith's Deserted Village."*The Argus, or Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser* [New York] 07 Jun. 1796:3. 24 Jun. 1796:1. 25 Jun. 1796:1. In 1797, in Stockbridge, Mass., *The Western Star* advertised the work for six pence: 14 Aug. 1797: 4.

[65]Later ads: *Newburyport Herald* 21 Oct. 1803:4. *Suffolk Gazette* [Sag Harbour, NY] 10 Aug. 1807:4. The ad in the *Suffolk Gazette* referred to the poem as "just published."

which had once served as the basis of his literary reputation. By 1793, the poem no longer truly expressed Barlow's beliefs. Barlow felt it needed major alterations as he continued to adjust to his new, more radical, European audience. The Paris edition of the *Vision of Columbus*, reflects the influence of French radicalism, particularly of the Girdonist intellectuals Volney and Brissot. Many of Barlow's revisions also carry the unmistakable touch of academic striving, as Barlow attempted to make the poem acceptable for the salons of Paris and his high-flying acquaintances. On the whole, the Paris edition of the *Vision* stands as a step between the first edition of 1787 and the more heavily revised *Columbiad*, which would appear in 1807.

Barlow's revisions reveal three primary goals for the Paris edition of the *Vision*: to alter the poem's previously glowing treatment of Louis XVI, to de-Christianize the poem, and to increase the sophistication of the poem's diction. Barlow pushed his ideas further with the first two changes, but his attempt at ramping up his poetic diction was a retrograde decision. In an obvious move Barlow removed the dedication to Louis which had adorned the first edition of the *Vision* in 1787. Barlow re-characterized Louis's support for the American Revolution in Book VI of the *Vision* as actually being the work of his handlers and French sages, who were able to dupe the King into action. The more systematic revision, as Ford points out, involved changing the religious tenor of the poem. Barlow removed most references to Christ, especially those in his Christian role as the savior of mankind, and made God a distant observer of human history, not an agent of change.[66] In addition to these thematic changes, Barlow made hundreds of minor changes at the level of diction, all geared at making the work seem more erudite. As

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[66] For Barlow's revisions with regard to religion in the Paris *Vision*, see Ford, 68-72.

Howard notes, Barlow shifted his description of the Chesapeake Bay from "beauteous" to "multifluvian," while stormy weather went from being "inclement" to "brumal."[67] Barlow inserted the word "commingling" (which Howard contends he picked up from Southey) and attempted strange new coinages such as "cosmogyral." There is a something tragic about Barlow's changes in word choice, as he "chose to imitate the least enduring qualities of contemporary verse" (Howard 311). Unable to sense the brewing romantic change with regard to poetic diction, Barlow by his own hand pushed the *Vision of Columbus* towards obsolescence.

The revised *Vision* was published in July 1793 by Barrois & Thomson in Paris, appearing only six months after the beheading of Louis XVI. In addition to Barlow's textual changes to the original poem, the octavo featured a portrait of the author. The Paris edition also included "The Conspiracy of Kings" fully supplemented with Barlow's new preface to the poem, as well as the new footnotes denouncing Burke. In the winter of 1795, Thomas Greenleaf reprinted the Paris edition in New York. As opposed to merely listing the *Vision* as one of many books for sell, Greenleaf gave the new *Vision* its own advertisement. Greenleaf described this *Vision* as an "elegant Parisian edition" and advertised it extensively through 1796. The ad for the *Vision* ran at least 40 times in Greenleaf's paper *The Argus* in 1796, and also appeared a handful of times in Greenleaf's other New York paper, *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register*. It is likely

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[67] See Howard 310-11 for these and similar examples.

that this *Vision* was also being sold in Connecticut around the same time, given the presumably large number of copies Greenleaf had on hand for sale in New York.[68]

The Paris edition of the *Vision of Columbus* effectively ended Barlow's great creative outburst of the early 1790s. Barlow's initial reason for ceasing to write is that it was no longer safe for him to do so. It was becoming increasingly apparent that he needed to get out of Paris. In 1794, with the Terror raging and many of Barlow's old Girdonist allies dead, the Barlows left Paris for Hamburg, Germany. Barlow hoped to facilitate trade between France and Germany, and he seems to have been a successful merchant for a time. After two years in Germany, Barlow was enlisted as a diplomat by the United States government, and sailed for Algiers in 1796.[69] Barlow's international standing as a cultured American with European polish justified his post. (David Humphreys, Barlow's old collaborator on the *Anarchiad*, was serving with moderate success as an American minister in the Mediterranean.) Barlow successfully negotiated the release of American captives in Algiers and brokered the Treaty of Tripoli, one of the first foreign treaties signed by the United States. In this way, Barlow spent much of the middle and late 1790s too harried to write.

As soon as his life settled down, Barlow began thinking about poetry again. By the end of the decade Barlow was seriously planning a new poem which blended scientific, political, and religious themes. In 1787 Barlow met the painter and engineer

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[68] Two bookseller's ads mentioning *Vision* in Norwich and New London are plausibly referring to the revised edition, either imported from Paris or from New York. *The Norwich Packet* 14 Jan. 1794:1. *The Bee* 09 Aug. 1797: 4.

[69] As consul-general to the Barbary States of Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis, Barlow was asked to negotiate a treaty with the Dey of Algiers and to obtain the release of a number of American prisoners being held by the Algerines. Only in late 1797, his return delayed by an outbreak of the plague in North Africa, was Barlow able to return to Paris.

Robert Fulton, who was then experimenting with model submarines in the Seine. The two quickly became friends, and Barlow worked closely with Fulton on the submarine both in Paris and on the Atlantic coast of France. According to Woodress, Barlow also trained Fulton in a number of modern languages, while together they studied mathematics, physics and chemistry.[70] Fulton and Barlow had big plans, and naturally Barlow added poetry to the engineering program. Both men were fascinated by the economic and political potential of canal-building (Fulton was trying to propose a canal-system to the French government) and around 1800 Barlow and Fulton made plans to collaborate on a long poem titled, "The Canal: A Poem on the Application of Physical Science to Political Economy." As with "Conspiracy" and "Hasty Pudding" the poem was filled with radical allusions, with a special emphasis on comparative religion.[71] In fact, the eccentric poem, which blended a worship of science and technology with the primitivist spirit of the "Hasty Pudding," could have been Barlow's most radical poem. Though he never completed "The Canal" – most likely due to Fulton's waning interest in the project – Barlow worked on the poem as late as 1806.[72]

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[70] Woodress 215.

[71] Kenneth R. Ball provides the best reading of the manuscript of the poem in "Joel Barlow's 'Canal' and Natural Religion." According to Ball, Barlow draws heavily from Volney's *Ruins*, especially Volney's argument regarding the zodiac's role as the first religion of man. A screed against organized religion, "adopting the themes and symbols of *The Ruins*, Barlow believes that truth has been lost in history" (Ball 229). As Ball writes, Barlow's analysis of religion tied back to his political program, as the poem, "represents a materialistic philosophy in which every religion is conceived as a development from organic nature, and it advocates the iconoclastic equality, liberty and fraternity of radical republicanism" (225).

[72] Barlow's dedication was not lacking, "he collected similes, examples of poetic diction, and rare or unusual words, especially words with a scientific flavor… no middle-aged man ever set about courting the muses more systematically" (Howard 308).

From 1791 to 1793 Barlow wrote nearly full-time, venturing into both poetry and prose. In examining Barlow's life, the 1790s offer a glimpse of what his literary career might have been like had he been born in London instead of Redding. Barlow's powerful literary ambition, almost an obsession really, was fundamentally limited by his provincial environment. However briefly, Barlow became essentially a professional writer, while men like Humphreys, Dwight, and Trumbull remained, as writers, merely hobbyists. The new environments of Paris and London fashioned Barlow into a new kind of poet. Barlow's relationship to his audience changed, becoming more modern, and in Europe he dropped the old aristocratic and Augustan attitudes and practices that had shaped so much of his literary activity in the 1770s and 1780s. Barlow the political agent, the propagandist, was fully operative within the world of print. Other than those manuscripts he sent to his publishers and occasional verses to his wife, Barlow was completely done with the manuscript as both a "publication" and promotional tool. Likewise, he abandoned poetical oration and the subscription list. Although literary companionship and the exchange of ideas remained vitally important to Barlow in Europe, all notes of the club or coffeehouse, with their inside-jokes and smarmy playfulness, fell out of his poetry in the 1790s. In the past, the bulk of Barlow's audience had been men he knew personally: Yale classmates, fellow Army veterans, tavern friends in Hartford. Writing for the wider Atlantic world in London and Paris Barlow's audience changed drastically. To succeed, Barlow had to rely on print more deeply. During the height of his pamphleteering in 1792, he was nearly a more ink-stained poet than he had been during his days as a newspaperman in Hartford.

The geographic reach of Barlow's poems, along with their steady popularity over a number of years, points to an emergent and underrated literary fame in the United States. In the 1790s Barlow transcended the provincial bounds that had circumscribed his early days in Connecticut. His reputation, his appearances in print, his literary renown, were fueled no longer by his personal connections to the local elite of Connecticut, but rather by his association with the global network of republican activists, writers, and printers that reached across both sides of the Atlantic. We can see this clearly in the case of New York, which became a major hub of Barlow publishing activity in the 1790s. As we have seen, Barlow's ties to John Fellows connected him to New York printer Thomas Greenleaf, which led to the publication of Barlow's prose work, along with *The Conspiracy of Kings* and a new edition of *The Vision of Columbus*. These works were then advertised in the local republican-friendly papers, such as the *Daily Advertiser* and the *Argus*. In this way, the crucial New York audience opened up to Barlow in the 1790s. Through all of this, Barlow remained thousands of miles away, living in Europe. His voice on the printed page, inspired by politics, was his only way of communication with his American audience. The transformation of his poetic identity, which had begun in Hartford in the 1780s, was completed in Europe.

Finally, his transformation in Europe helps us understand why the next stage of Barlow's career took on a shape that has sometimes seemed absurdly arrogant and misinformed. Ironically, writing and living in Europe, Barlow became a truly national figure in the United States for the first time. His two new published poems, "The Conspiracy of Kings" and "The Hasty Pudding," along with his political prose, found wider audiences with Barlow physically absent thanks the literary strength of Paris and

London. Judging by Barlow's productivity during this time, he likely was aware of his larger readership, in both hemispheres. Barlow was certainly aware of the limitations of the literary market and the publishing industry in the United States as he spent more time in Europe. By the end of the 1790s, as he continued to plan the next stage of his literary career, his curiosity regarding the printing press spiked. Crucially, his notebooks from the period, now archived at the Houghton Library, demonstrate a growing interest in the history of printing and the mechanical processes involved. This was a sharp break from his earlier veneration of Augustan wit culture. Not surprisingly, Barlow's next project, the *Columbiad*, was his patriotic attempt to demonstrate that the publishing industry in the United States – from type and paper-making to binding – was fully mature and capable of matching British standards. Thanks to a critical middle stage in Europe as a pamphleteer, the old commencement and coffeehouse poet completed his development from one way of being a poet to another. He would oversee all the material elements of the *Columbiad*'s production, creating an especially republican kind of literary production: a gigantic American book.

CHAPTER IV

BARLOW'S BOOK-ARTS TRIUMPH: THE 1807 COLUMBIAD

When he returned to the United States in 1805, Joel Barlow was an internationally known man of letters and diplomat. Barlow's time in Europe had not simply made him more famous, he was also more serious and more radical. The precocious Yale poet and "Connecticut Wit" that had sailed for Europe in 1789 never returned. As a veteran of what he now saw as a global political conflict, the older Barlow was more ideologically committed and less willing to accept fame in any form than he had been in the 1780s. Barlow remained a friend and ally to President Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, the Secretary of State, and he wanted his poetry to promulgate republican aims. Just as importantly, by the time Barlow returned to his native country, he was over fifty years old. In good health and enjoying semi-retirement in Washington, Barlow wanted to take one final shot at literary immortality. With "The Canal" floundering, Barlow returned to his old idea of a long poem celebrating the United States and the rise of the Americas. Barlow decided to once again heavily revise *The Vision of Columbus*, remaking it into a much different poem called *The Columbiad*. The new poem featured a sharper political edge and was reinvented as an epic. However, the largest change was in the presentation of the poem, as Barlow channeled his hopes for glory into the bibliographic elements of the new publication, producing one of the first luxury books produced in the United States.

This chapter focuses on the first edition of *The Columbiad*, its early critical reception, and the poem's publication and distribution in 1807 and 1808, a period in

which it was nearly universally praised. The poem's later controversy as well as the important 1809 edition of *The Columbiad,* a much cheaper duodecimo in two volumes, is discussed in the next chapter. During an extremely contentious period in the American press – and this lingering enmity would eventually engulf other aspects of the work – everyone was in agreement about one thing: the 1807 *Columbiad* was not a book that could have been made in the United States in 1797. In a project announcing his own poetic maturity, Barlow consciously structured the work to do the same for American publishing.

Work on *The Columbiad* occupied Barlow's time for most of the first decade of the nineteenth century and in many ways represents the culmination of his career. The poem was his grand statement, his great national poem. Importantly, it was also the most physically substantial work Barlow ever printed, and the massive 1807 quarto that Barlow meticulously planned represents the final stage of Barlow's decades-long embrace of print as a key part of his poetic identity. Unlike his earlier American publications, the older approaches to literary publication – manuscript circulation, post-facto printings, subscription lists, etc. – were fully absent from the *Columbiad*. It had no previous existence before the public as a manuscript, no earlier incarnation as a speech, and no years of circulation as a project seeking subscribers. In addition to these changes, the project did not simply end up as an elaborately printed book. The poem's very materiality became an integral part of its message. *The Columbiad* was not only designed to show America that Joel Barlow had arrived as a poet of lasting substance; it was designed, in the words of a review that appeared in *The Mount-Hope Eagle* of Bristol, Rhode Island, "to shew them (in England) what American printers can do" ("Extract" 4).

The Columbiad simultaneously demonstrated and celebrated the skills of the Philadelphia book trade. Moreover, the poetry of the *Columbiad* emphasized the physicality of the press as an impetus towards worldwide progress and unification.

For scholars today, the success of the *Columbiad* – and we must remember that it *was* a success – offers an index of the emerging strengths of the publishing industry in the United States. Barlow knew just how much the capabilities of book-making had expanded since he'd left Connecticut and he knew that his sprawling poem could be beautifully made, complete with enough room for all kinds of useful paratextual devices for the republican reader, tools which he now more fully understood were implicit in the technology of the book. It is no coincidence that it was in Barlow's poem that the word "utilize" was coined. Barlow formatted the *Columbiad* as a kind of hybrid between an epic poem and a reference work, and intended it to be a sourcebook of political theory for American readers.

The composition and publication of the *Columbiad* was a decidedly more complex undertaking than anything Barlow previously attempted. In this change we see both a rise in Barlow's ambitions and in the ability of local artisans to meet them. As he worked on the *Vision of Columbus* in the mid-1780s, Barlow's primary concern had been finding patronage. Aside from an early exploration of paper options, Barlow left everything in the hands of Hudson & Goodwin in Hartford. Throughout the first stage of his literary career, Barlow made the blind choices of a man who knows of no alternatives. In publishing the *Vision,* he settled for Hudson & Goodwin's typefaces, decorative plates, and the skills of whatever printers they had on staff because there was no one better in New England anyway. Looking at Barlow's various publications from this period it is

difficult to discern any noticeable differences between the work of Hudson & Goodwin, the premier firm in Connecticut, and that done by the extremely short-lived Barlow & Babcock.

The defining characteristic of the American publishing industry in the late eighteenth century was its fundamental limitedness. It was, in the words of Trish Loughran, a "splintered and embryonic" (43) industry, a provincial concern. It took quite a long time for American paper mills to develop, and more sophisticated processes related to fine book making remained elusive deep into the eighteenth century. Native efforts at typefaces, plates, and ink were in many instances frankly unacceptable. American printing suffered from a lack of basic supplies along with a real dearth of specialists. At the onset of Barlow's career, skilled specialists were rare in an industry dominated by generalists. Barlow & Babcock, the poet's own firm in the mid-1780s was typical, having only one man on staff, Elisha Babcock, who possessed any technical or artisanal expertise. Because of these limitations, late eighteenth-century American publishing firms remained stylistically cautious and forced to import most of their tools. The great acclaim which greeted the physical appearance of the *Columbiad* in 1807 and 1808 underscores the fact that the technical achievements of the project were understood to be local breakthroughs.

From the beginning of his return to the United States, Barlow chose Philadelphia as the city which would produce the new work. Eventually published in late 1807, the project's Philadelphia character must have been tremendously satisfying to Barlow. As a young poet in the 1780s, Barlow had experienced great difficulty in selling and distributing his works there. By the early nineteenth century, the industry had matured to

the point that Philadelphia was capable of producing the kind of luxurious book that Barlow wanted. Publishing was not yet a fully-formed industry with a national reach – Loughran dates this development around 1830 – but the capabilities of American book-making had certainly expanded. We know much about the various firms behind the 1807 *Columbiad* because they were all early pioneers in the history of fine bookmaking in the United States. Nor did the quality of the work go unnoticed. From the beginning, the physical attributes of the 1807 edition were widely praised. Barlow's contemporaries understood that the 1807 quarto edition of the *Columbiad* was a true landmark in the history of literary publishing and bookmaking in the United States and they took considerable pride in it.

The consistent praise the work received for being an example of fine American bookmaking tells us much about the literary culture of the United States at the time. Noting how poorly the poem's neoclassicism has aged, Barbara Packer writes, "*The Columbiad* has been ridiculed more than often than Horatio Greenough's statue of a half-naked Washington seated in the pose of Phidias' Zeus" (25). However, in Barlow's own time, there was no critique of the poem as unnatural or stylistically odd. Conspicuously absent in contemporary discussions of the poem are any considerations of whether or not the poem is written in an appropriately "American" style. There would eventually be criticisms of the poem (as discussed in the next chapter) but they centered upon different concerns. Even in 1807, neoclassical literature seemed quite natural. Supposed problems with the *Columbiad* on literary-nationalistic grounds were simply not extant until later in the nineteenth century, when romanticism fully usurped neoclassicism as the dominant literary mode. Michael Warner challenges the notion that "Americans of the 1780s and

1790s *wanted* (his emphasis) a distinctively indigenous culture," (119) and argues instead that a desire for economic and political independence did not translate into a taste for specifically "American" literature. The period's nationalism was immature and, "although the nation-state was a product of the eighteenth-century, the national imaginary was a product of the nineteenth" (Warner 120). Even the marketing efforts of literary works themselves often focused on the economic and political aspect of the product and its patriotic consumption, and nationalist rhetoric "could apply to any and all stages of bookmaking" (Warner 121). In Warner's view, the *Columbiad* is an "extreme but indicative case" of the different expectations between Barlow's moment and Irving's, when ideas of literary nationalism first began to influence matters of style and subject matter.

The newspaper record validates Warner's claim. Barlow, an international figure who wrote a thoroughly cosmopolitan poem in what would later be considered a European style, was considered by many to be a proud symbol of American achievement. Two years after its publication, the *Columbiad*, according to the *New-Hampshire Patriot* (Concord) was "the best written poetical work that ever emanated from the head of an American" ("Joel Barlow, Esq."). In addition to the praise given to Barlow's verse, the luxuriant bookmaking displayed by the 1807 edition was repeatedly praised as an American achievement, a sign that American culture and industry had reached a new stage of development. Barlow's *Columbiad* became shorthand for the American ability to produce the kind of fine and delicate materials that only the highest stages of civilization could generate. In an essay entitled "Blessings in Disguise" that appeared in at least four newspapers in 1810, the anonymous author noted that the turmoil caused by the French

Revolution had hurt international trade, which had forced new industrial development in the United States.[1] In addition to producing the basic necessities of life – "of hardware, of domestic utensils, of military arms" – the young country was also manufacturing those goods, "which afford us many of the *elegancies* of life" ("Blessings in Disguise" 2):

> In Philadelphia, which has been justly styled the "*Athens of America,*" the sister arts of printing and engraving, have been brought to as great a degree of perfection, as in any city of the ancient Continent. The elegant edition of Barlow's *Columbiad*, Ree's *Cyclopedia*, & etc. printed in that city with presses, types, paper, ink, engravings, and *every* other articles of American manufacture are not surpassed by any editions from the polished presses of Paris or London. ("Blessings in Disguise" 2)

Barlow only slowly came into the idea of embracing a full luxury edition which celebrated American manufacturing and craftsmanship. Originally, the project to revise the *Vision of Columbus* into the *Columbiad* had been mostly politically motivated, and to that end Barlow had been revising the poem since the early 1790s. In large part, Barlow did not finish revising the *Vision* until 1804. Living in Paris in the first years of the nineteenth century, Barlow made initial plans to publish the *Columbiad* with John Hurford Stone's English Press, the same firm who had published a revised *Vision of Columbus* in Paris in 1793. Barlow may have begun drifting towards a luxury edition of the poem in Paris, for we know that before he left Paris he discussed with Stone paper types and the possibility of a two-tiered publication that included a quarto edition, along

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[1] "Blessings in Disguise": *Independent Chronicle* [Boston] 30 Aug. 1810:2. *American Advocate* [Hallowell, MA] 06 Sept. 1810:4. *New-Hampshire Patriot* [Concord] 11 Sept. 1810:4. *The Pittsfield Sun; or Republican Monitor* 26 Sept. 1810: 1.

with a presumably cheaper duodecimo.[2] Though elements of his initial plan would survive, Barlow's decision to return to the United States ended talk of a Parisian *Columbiad*.

As discussed in chapter three, Barlow had significantly altered the politics of the *Vision of Columbus* in his 1793 Paris edition, removing the original's praise of the French monarchy and significantly de-Christianizing the poem. *The Columbiad* was a continuation of this process. Barlow heavily revised book eight, replacing conservative sentiments from the Scottish Common Sense philosophical school with updated beliefs from the French Enlightenment. In his revisions Barlow stressed the importance of education and the implementation of new ideas over and above the static virtues of man's innate moorings. As Steven Blakemore comments, in the *Columbiad*, "Barlow writes God out of history and replaces providential history with the mythic idea of a progressive republican history that will inevitably create a paradise on Earth" (324). To this book Barlow also added a long passage strongly denouncing slavery (8.190-8.390). Barlow criticized many in the United States for becoming the very tyrants that they believed that they had deposed and evoked Rome in arguing that slavery would cause the downfall of the American republic. In addition to these changes, the *Columbiad* showed a much greater faith in international commerce as a positive political force and as an agent of change. In the end, the *Columbiad* was some 2600 lines longer than the *Vision of Columbus* had been.

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[2] See Bidwell 341-2. According to Bidwell, "Barlow priced paper for *The Columbiad* long before he bought any. As early as 1802 he looked over different grades of French paper" (342).

While critics have tended to favor the more natural verse of the *Vision of Columbus*, the presentation of Barlow's political beliefs may have been clearer in the *Columbiad*. As Leon Howard notes, Barlow tightened the language of the poem's final book and pointed towards more tangible political ideas, hazy lines describing millennial peace which were "almost meaningless" (317) in the *Vision* now had a clear "point and significance" (317) in the *Columbiad*. To give one example, in the *Vision* the nations of the world are in the end "by friendship join'd" (9.55). In the *Columbiad* Barlow is at once more specific and more practical, changing the same line to read "by commerce join'd" (9.93) and inserting a line above describing how in peace they will "unlock their trade" (9.92). The change here is simple, and in both poems, the next line describes how friendship/commerce "binds all human kind" though it is plain what a huge difference the substitution makes.

Barlow also made an interesting change at the level of genre. As evidenced by the poem's new title, *The Columbiad*, Barlow remade the old *Vision of Columbus*, which he had considered a "philosophical poem," into an epic. In keeping with epic convention, Barlow introduced personifications and intervening gods, such as Cruelty in book six, who torments American prisoners held in a British prison ship. Likewise, Barlow replaced the unnamed Angel who spoke to Columbus in the *Vision* with Hesper, referred to as the "the guardian genius of the western continent" by the argument preceding book one. Finally, Barlow expanded his original sections on the American Revolution in books five and six, making sure that the *Columbiad* was appropriately invested in describing warfare. However, despite these changes, the poem takes great pains to establish that it is against war, and indeed against the militarism it sees as inherent in Homeric values.

Thus, Barlow's *Columbiad* was to be what Blakemore calls a "new republican epic" (323), an "ideologically schizophrenic" (19) poem which was formed to a classical model, with an anticlassical agenda. Barlow wanted the literary prestige of the epic badly enough to risk this contradiction.

Overall, Barlow ended up nearly entirely rewriting the *Vision of Columbus* from the inside out. Although Barlow preserved the basic skeleton of the original poem, almost nothing went untouched. Small changes were made to almost every line of the poem. Indeed, it is difficult to find any single lines that have not in some way been altered. New couplets were added. Columbus may be looking at the same thing, at comparable moments in the two poems, yet the lines of each poem, separated by change after change, run away from one another. Small edits run into the thousands. Pronouns were replaced, word order shifted, adjectives exchanged. Neologisms, many inspired by scientific writing, were inserted everywhere. In some instances, it is easy to see how these alterations served the broad goals listed above. However, beyond the new ideology of the poem, it is apparent that Barlow also believed that he was simply a better poet by the early nineteenth century, and his thousands of minute modifications betray an obsessive attention to detail. When considering the place of *The Columbiad* in Barlow's career, it is absolutely vital that Barlow's mania for improvement be remembered. Above all else, Barlow cared deeply about *The Columbiad*.

This passion extended beyond the verse itself, driving Barlow to pour himself (and his money) into all aspects of the project. For Barlow, the poem's political goals were one in the same with the poem's physical appearance. The new republican epic, the new American poem, was to demonstrate the now world-class abilities of the American

artisan. Because Barlow set out to produce a work of the highest quality, it is worth discussing the firms responsible for each component of the *Columbiad* in some detail. Barlow's financial investment in the work was considerable. Although Barlow and his wife eventually settled on Washington as their new home, Barlow continued to work with artisans in Philadelphia. Paper appears to have been one of the first things on his mind. Barlow's publishers, Conrad & Company, initially purchased seventy nine reams of paper for the project. Barlow rejected this paper, however, and the stock had to be resold in piecemeal fashion over the following months. Barlow eventually settled upon a curious plan to use three distinct grades of paper. Given that Barlow was financing most of the project, it is likely that expense was the primary factor. Two fine grades of paper were procured for the majority of the copies. A much cruder paper, labeled "coarse" in Barlow's notes, was also secured for an unclear number of remaining versions, perhaps a tenth of the total run of the edition. All three grades of paper were locally produced, with the two fine grades manufactured by well-known makers.

The most prized of these papers was made by Thomas Amies and was considered by Barlow as the "best fine" paper. The Amies "best fine" paper was truly luxuriant, being noticeably thicker and whiter than the other papers used, textured "with that 'vellum' quality so coveted by nineteenth-century papermakers" (Bidwell 354). While the texture is "faultless" in Bidwell's estimation, the Amies paper also featured an elegant dove watermark with an olive sprig in its mouth. There can be little doubt that editions with Amies paper were presented to Jefferson and Madison. Amies was one of the most well-known papermakers of his day, and was involved in many similar projects of perceived national importance, including an 1819 Declaration of Independence,

numerous commissioned works with the Second Bank of the United States and Wilson's *American Ornithology*. Between 480 and 432 copies of the 1807 *Columbiad* were made using the Amies "best fine" paper (Bidwell 351).

Barlow also used a "second best" paper made by the Levis family. The Levises were a large and prosperous family of papermakers in Philadelphia, with multiple mills and shops. The Levis paper was thicker than the coarse paper and was a solid but unremarkable "unwatermarked royal wove" (Bidwell 345). Though it was not as favored as the Amies paper, the Levis material was certainly comparable to the "best fine" paper, and together these two papers made up the bulk of the editions printed in 1807. In 1811, both Barlow and his publishers reckoned that 384 copies had been printed using the Levis paper. Publicly however, promotional information about the project only referred to the Amies paper.

The third paper Barlow used for the *Columbiad* is the so-called "coarse paper." The mere presence of this lower grade paper within the project remains one of the more puzzling elements of the *Columbiad* story. Some scholars, including Leon Howard, have suggested that Barlow used three grades of paper to create three different price points, thus securing a larger range of potential customers.[3] This theory falls flat against evidence that no "coarse paper" editions of the 1807 *Columbiad* appear to have been advertised or sold. In fact, whatever the grade of paper, there was only one price ever advertised for the 1807 quarto, twenty dollars. Bidwell suggests that there may have been some plan to sell the 96 "coarse paper" *Columbiads* at a price of ten dollars, but that this plan was likely abandoned in favor of simply not selling these editions at all. Bidwell,

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[3] Howard 321.

upon finding a “coarse paper” edition reported that it “looks and feels like wrapping paper. Knots and holes are evident,” and the pressmen “treated it as defective material” (Bidwell 353).

A luxury item printed on such defective paper cries out for some explanation, hence the long-standing claim that there was a plan for a somewhat cheaper sub-edition of the large 1807 *Columbiad*. However, a ten dollar edition would have still been rather expensive, and the shoddy quality of the paper would have shown, literally, on every page. As such, this hypothesis does not give Barlow enough credit. By 1807 Barlow had been working with printers and pressmen for thirty years. He had endeavored to promote himself and his work for just as long. Barlow probably already knew that the easiest way to produce a lower-priced edition would simply be to offer a standard duodecimo edition, which he did in 1809. With that in mind, the coarse paper was likely a failed experiment, potentially an attempt to cut Barlow’s costs or an effort to produce a number of distribution copies for the periodicals and libraries. All that we really know is that the coarse paper was too defective and the editions produced with it were shelved. On the whole, the entire coarse paper episode reveals Barlow’s flexibility and willingness to try new things regarding the publication of his works. If those experiments backfired, he was amenable to simply absorbing the costs of those 96 coarse paper editions, rather than damage the reputation of his project.

A project of this quality deserved a noble typeface. Barlow was closely involved with the selection of an American-made typeface for the *Columbiad*, choosing the well-esteemed Binny & Ronaldson of Philadelphia as his suppliers. Founded in 1796, Binny & Ronaldson had grown into a large enterprise by 1807. Binny & Ronaldson were an

industrial outfit of some size, with enough capital to import the massive amounts of antimony needed to make type and thirty employees.[4] They were also artistically inclined and actively engaged in designing new faces appropriate for the new nation. There is some disagreement as to whether the *Columbiad* truly features a new typeface designed by Binny & Ronaldson or merely a remade one. According to Silver, the edition featured both a new face named appropriately "Columbia" and new type size, a large, roughly 16-point face. While Bidwell is unconvinced that the "Columbia" face appeared for the first time with Barlow's publication, he does state "Binny & Ronaldson's transitional roman could be dubbed the American typeface" (Bidwell 359) as it remained highly popular throughout the first half of the century in the United States.[5]

There was one distinctly European element to the 1807 *Columbiad*, the book's illustrations, which proved difficult to secure. Ironically, in Barlow's original plan for the work, the matter of the illustrations was to be simple, with an easy and obvious American artist on hand to provide them. Throughout the making of the *Columbiad* Barlow had worked closely with the American inventor and painter Robert Fulton, and Fulton, who lived with Barlow and his wife for a number of years was a natural choice to illustrate the work. Unfortunately, Barlow's high regard for Fulton's ability as an artist was not shared by many. When Benjamin West viewed Fulton's preliminary sketches, sketches which Barlow had said brought him to tears, West told Barlow that he must find a new painter. Barlow took West's advice. Before sailing for the United States Barlow commissioned the Englishman Henry Fuseli, and later American John Vanderlyn, as the work's new

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[4] Bidwell 356.

[5] For more on the "Columbia" typeface and its history see Bidwell 358-9.

artists, before finally settling on Robert Smirke. Despite his English nationality, Smirke was an ideologically appropriate choice thanks to his revolutionary politics and pro-French persuasion. Moreover, according to Bidwell his often small canvases were well-suited to transfer as engravings.

The illustrations then, were the only concession to the plan for an entirely American production. The engravings of Smirke's paintings were produced in England and shipped to the U.S. ready for insertion in late 1806. As Bidwell and print historian Daniel Berkeley Updike affirm, in the early years of the nineteenth-century the publishing houses of the United States lacked the expertise to do engravings well, and most local examples were of embarrassingly poor quality.[6] Because fine illustration was not expected, there was hardly a mention of their foreign production in press accounts of the *Columbiad*. In part, American engraving was an underdeveloped niche of the publishing industry because it was extremely expensive. Seeking the finest quality, Barlow had to be ready to spend. According to Steven Blakemore, he spent roughly $10,000 on the illustrations for the *Columbiad* (Blakemore 16).

Barlow had the *Columbiad* printed by Fry & Kammerer, Philadelphia's top firm. Fry & Kammerer worked frequently with Carey and had been used by Binny & Ronaldson to display their finest typefaces. The senior partner, Joseph Kammerer was near the end of his career when he worked on the *Columbiad*, retiring in 1811 or 1812. William Fry, on the other hand, had a long career ahead of him, founding *The National Gazette and Literary Magazine* in 1820, and his work on the *Columbiad* was one of its highlights. As Bidwell writes, "Fry's zeal in overseeing the printing of *The Columbiad*

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[6] See Bidwell 337-40 and Updike 154.

became legendary," (345) with Fry offering a reward of $100 for every error found. "Not only did he examine the type letter by letter, but he also made the ink and sometimes even hand-pressed the printed sheets himself" (Bidwell 345). Fry competed in the bookmaking fairs organized by Mathew Carey and praise for his artisanship reflected back on the glory of the *Columbiad* for many years.

The party responsible for overseeing and collecting the work of these sundry artisans were the *Columbiad's* publishers, C. & A. Conrad & Company of Philadelphia. In 1806, Conrad & Co. was an understandable choice for Barlow, and the poet partnered with them near the peak of their prestige. The attraction between publisher and poet was likely mutual. Conrad & Co. were experienced in bringing out large and expensive works comparable to the *Columbiad*, such as a twelve volume edition of Hume and Smollet's *History of England*, which sold for twenty-seven dollars. While Conrad & Co. were adept at producing prestige publications, they weren't skilled at making money or managing their books. Soon after the publication of the 1807 *Columbiad*, neither Barlow nor the Conrads had any clear idea just what their terms had been or how receipts from sales should be handled. Into the next decade both sides believed they were owed substantial sums of money.[7] In 1810 the Baltimore branch was bought out and by June of 1812 Conrad & Co. were bankrupt. The men providing Barlow with paper, type, engravings, and presswork, were all paid upfront, while Conrad & Co. had evidently agreed upon something different. When the edition failed to sell out, they were left holding part of the bag, or at least so they claimed. As Bidwell writes, "of all those associated with *The*

[7] According to Bidwell, Conrad & Co. sent Barlow a bill for $718, while Barlow believed that he was actually owed $3,995.

Columbiad, the Conrads had the least to show for it" (365). It was a characteristic mistake for a striving but sloppy firm which was ultimately "ruined by its own bookmaking ambitions" (Bidwell 340).

Though so much of the *Columbiad* is now recorded in literary history as a failure the project achieved one of its two major aims with unqualified success. Whatever the merits of its poetry, the book was an achievement. The 1807 quarto edition, published on Christmas Eve, was as sumptuous and elegant as Barlow had hoped. As James Woodress writes, the 1807 *Columbiad* was "the most beautiful book yet manufactured in America" (247). From the work's first reference in American periodicals in the fall of 1807, this was the recurrent description of the *Columbiad*, and though attacks on Barlow's ideas and poetics would eventually emerge, they were often placed alongside an acknowledgement of the *Columbiad*'s physical beauty. The "Athens of America" could produce fine elegancies equal to anything made in Europe.

This positive reception was partly the result of the highly successful marketing campaign waged by Conrad & Company. In January of 1807 the Conrads ran a four-page review, probably written by Barlow, in their own semiannual publication *The American Register*.[8] This early review was dominated by excerpts from the poem, an approach which would be later abandoned. The first true notice of the work, which was again presumably penned by the publishers or Barlow, was analogous to a modern press release in style. Appearing in October of 1807, this notice barely made mention of the poem inside the book, stressing the physical qualities of the quarto. A look at the notice in detail underscores that this emphasis was not subtle:

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[8] *The American Register* [Philadelphia] 01 Jan. 1807: 214.

> There will soon be published in Philadelphia a new and interesting work, entitled "the Columbiad, a poem, in ten books, by Joel Barlow." This work will be ornamented with twelve engravings, which have been done in England by the most eminent artists, and at great expense. They are in the first style of elegance. The typographical part, wholly American, is executed in a manner highly creditable to the several artists employed. The paper by Amies, the type by Binny and Ronaldson, and the printing, with consummate taste and care, by Fry and Kammerer; it will be published by C. and A. Conrad and Co., in one volume, quarto. A work like this, on a great national subject, must excite a high degree of interest. In the present instance, we are confident that the public expectation will not be disappointed; and while the Columbiad will be cited as a monument of American genius, the publishers are determined that this edition shall do equal honor to our arts. ("Literary, Philosophical, Commercial and Agricultural Intelligence" 204-5)

This message would eventually be distributed to every major population center of the United States. Versions of this notice soon appeared in Boston's *Monthly Anthology* and Philadelphia's *Port-Folio*.[9] A particular variation on the notice, which included an extra paragraph featuring an anonymous first-person description of the quarto's engravings in some detail, was especially effective. This variation first appeared in *The Republican Watch-Tower* of New York, Boston's *The Democrat*, and the *True Republican* of New London, Connecticut.[10] As we can see, Barlow's reputation and connections within the broader republican community in the United States, expanded the publicity of the project. Although the *Columbiad* was not viewed in a purely partisan manner at this point, it was, from an early stage, benefitting from the channels of communication created by the republican press.

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[9] *The Port-Folio* [Philadelphia] 31 Oct 1807: 280. *The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review* 01 Nov. 1807:624.

[10] *The Republican Watch-Tower* [New York] 03 Nov. 1807:2. *The Democrat* [Boston] 21 Nov. 1807:2. *The True Republican* 16 Dec. 1807: 4.

The publication of the 1807 edition was one of the most newsworthy events in American literary history to that point. The project's success was widely seen as a watershed moment in America's industrial and cultural progress. What then, were the standards of the time when it came to literary distribution and publication? In how many places was the *Columbiad* sold? How much widely could an American produced work travel? How many papers reviewed the poem or ran excerpts? How consistent was the pricing from market to market, state to state? What does the example of the *Columbiad* suggest to us about the state of literary publishing in 1807? These are aspects of the *Columbiad* story that have been little discussed, but answering these questions can tell us much about the state of the American literary marketplace in the early nineteenth century.

Returning to the example of the early notice produced by the Conrads, we can see a fully functioning press circuit connecting the large American cities was already in place. Information (texts, reviews, notices, etc) flowed relatively quickly along the Washington-Boston corridor, and this is reflected consistently in the distribution history of the *Columbiad* from 1807-1811. The original notice marched north from Philadelphia to New York to Boston in a clear path. The behavior of the more provincial papers and booksellers, serving the smaller cities, can be more puzzling. Staying with our original example, we see that the last place the original notice was republished was the *True Republican* of New London, Connecticut. Was this reprint born out of the New York or the Boston press? Was there a personal connection between the editor of the *True Republican* and Barlow or was it merely a political one? In this case, it almost certainly appears that there was a political connection. Sometimes there are answers to these questions and sometimes there are not. What is important is that we take away from the

example of the *Columbiad* a sense of the character and scope of literary publication and discussion at this time.

It is especially beneficial to investigate the distribution of the *Columbiad* because it was one of the more well-publicized works of the decade. In this way, it provides an example of what the upper bound of distribution was. Unlike other poets, especially those from New England, Barlow was extremely comfortable with self-promotion and advertising. We know from Barlow's handling of his first major publication, his edition of psalms in 1785, that he favored the early promotion of his work. As he had done with his psalm book, Barlow presented his epic as a newsworthy event. While these notices were plainly intended as advertisements of a sort, they were not merely incitements to buy, given that for most readers, the 1807 *Columbiad* was simply too expensive to even consider buying. Barlow and his publishers were aware of this fact, and were planning a cheaper edition of the poem which would be published in 1809. Beyond looking for buyers, clearly the major parties involved viewed the book arts achievement of the project as newsworthy on its own. The *Columbiad* presented itself as a landmark in the development of American publishing. In the final run-up to the publication of the poem, Conrad & Co. added a short description of the project, which they described as "In the Press" to their general ads. In the weeks before the *Columbiad* was published, this ad ran nine times in the Philadelphia newspaper *The United States Gazette*.[11] Overall, the impetus behind these early promotions was to trumpet the uniqueness of the *Columbiad*.

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[11] *The United States Gazette:* 21 Nov. 1807:3. 26 Nov. 1807:2. 28 Nov. 1807:1. 30 Nov. 1807: 1. 01 Dec. 1807:1. 02 Dec. 1807:1. 03 Dec. 1807: 2. 08 Dec. 1807: 1. 09 Dec. 1807: 1.

The first full year in the life of the Christmas-born *Columbiad* was one of respectful praise. Barlow's poem was neither laughed at nor despised. As we will see in the next chapter, negative political responses to the poem germinated slowly and were not widespread until 1809. In 1808, however, pious Americans did not realize that they had been offended. The initial response was positive and *The Columbiad* was not initially received as a controversial work. A few newspaper editors seemed to have read portions of the poem, for in 1808 excerpts of the poem began to appear. Philadelphia's *The Tickler* ran lines 27-78 from book six of the poem which described a British Prison Ship.[12] Later that month, lines 1-28 of book eight, describing universal peace, appeared in the *Suffolk Gazette* (Sag Harbor, New York).[13] This excerpt was then picked up that March by *The Political Observatory* of Walpole, New Hampshire.[14] Later that spring, in May, another chunk of the excerpted Prison Ship material reappeared in a discussion of New York state politics titled "The Funeral Procession" in *The Albany Register*.[15] Across a broad geographic area, The *Columbiad* was slowly making its way into the national consciousness.

Similarly, in 1808 the *Columbiad* received a number of reviews in the American press. Nearly all press mentions of the work in 1807 and 1808 were positive. A pre-publication review from May of 1807 in the *Medical Repository* (New York), titled "Barlow's Columbiad; a National Poem in Honor of our Western Hemisphere" appeared,

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[12] *The Tickler* [Philadelphia] 03 Feb. 1808:2.

[13] *The Suffolk Gazette* [Sag Harbor, NY] 29 Feb. 1808:4.

[14] *The Political Observatory* [Walpole, NH] 21 Mar. 1808:4.

[15] *The Albany Register* 31 May 1808:2.

in part, a year and a half later in Raleigh, North Carolina in the pages of the *The Star*.[16] This review referred to Barlow as a "great poetical genius" and praised the "fine typographical execution" of the *Columbiad*. Once the work had been published, the physical qualities of the work began to attract more attention and became a focal point of advertising. In the early spring of 1808 the *Columbiad* began to make her way outside of Philadelphia. In late February, the *Mount-Hope Eagle* of Bristol, Rhode Island ran what purported to be an extract from a letter sent by a gentleman in Philadelphia to his correspondent in New York. This short entry stressed the composition of the poem, "the printer was ordered to spare no expence in its publication, and good judges affirm, that it will exceed, in point of workmanship, the best executed performances in Europe" ("Extract" 4). The unnamed author of the letter continued, "I understand the author intends forwarding a couple of copies to England, to shew them what American printers can do" ("Extract" 4). In March, *The New-York Evening Post*, ran a multi-paragraph advertisement/review of the poem, which was headed by information on where local buyers could find the work. This "review" again gave heavy emphasis to the material composition of the *Columbiad*, calling it "a specimen of typography hitherto unsurpassed."[17] Three days later, in Charleston, South Carolina, the same notice ran in the *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, with a local seller, Edmund Morford.[18] In April, *The New England Palladium* of Boston ran a similarly formatted review, with a slightly

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16 "Barlow's Columbiad; a National Poem, in Honor of our Western Hemisphere" in *The Medical Repository* [New York] Jul. 1807: 71. In *The Star* [Raleigh] 03 Nov. 1808: 4.

17 *The New-York Evening Post* 26 Mar. 1808:4.

18 *The City Gazette and Daily Advertiser* [Charleston] 29 Mar. 1808: 2.

different text, directing the reader to The Boston Bookstore.[19] This textual variation was then picked up by the *Connecticut Herald* (New Haven), where it appeared four times.[20] Interested buyers in New Haven could purchase the quarto in the shop of Bronson, Walter, & Company.

When it comes to defining just what the *Columbiad* was in 1807 and 1808, we should be careful to not mislead. Although in this chapter I would like to stress the success of the project as a whole, the *Columbiad* was *not* a bestseller. Pure advertisements – the small, one or two line listings that characterize the bulk of mundane, everyday literary advertisements of this period – were initially rare. However, even though the cost of the 1807 *Columbiad* meant that most Americans could not afford it, the work definitely had a public life. Instead, the *Columbiad* was a literary event, a starting point for a wider discussion about the progress of American poetry and American bookmaking. It was an elite or high-brow work that appears to have gained a widespread positive reputation in the mainstream, a pervasive respect. Barlow donated a display copy of the *Columbiad* to Charles Willson Peale's museum in 1808. In some respects it seems that the local sellers of the *Columbiad*, from Boston to Washington, treated the work as Peale did, displaying it in their stores and in their advertisements as a sign of American greatness and wonder. Not many of these copies were likely sold, but in an indirect way they may have nevertheless been beneficial to these stores because the *Columbiad* generated interest. The striking thing about the reception of the *Columbiad* in 1807-8 is

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[19] *The New England Palladium* [Boston] 12 Apr. 1808: 2.

[20] *The Connecticut Herald* [New Haven]*:* 19 Apr. 1808:4. 26 Apr. 1808:4. 03 May 1808:4. 17 May 1808:4.

how it was so nearly uniformly positive. There was very little literary critique and no backlash against its material splendor. The short advertisements for the *Columbiad* which ran in the *National Intelligencer*, the leading republican newspaper of Washington, proudly mentioned that the engravings alone cost Barlow over four thousand dollars.[21] This was thought to increase the appeal of the work. Parties beyond Barlow and his publishers were proud of the book arts achievement of the *Columbiad*, and the work seems to have served as a prestige item for many of the booksellers who had a copy on hand. As Woodress notes, visitors at Peale's museum called for the book so frequently that Peale feared he would soon need a replacement copy.[22] In 1809 Barlow would attempt to capitalize on this positive buzz with a reasonably priced second edition.

Within the timeline of Barlow's career, the 1807 *Columbiad* was a highpoint in one final way. The 1807 *Columbiad* was not just beautifully made; it was also the largest and most complex work Barlow ever published, the final stage of a thirty year poetic career. The *Columbiad* was truly a "book" in a way that even the *Vision of Columbus* had not been. In addition to its thousands of lines of poetry and an enticing number of illustrations for the readers of the period, the quarto carried with it a substantial amount of prose, including a preface and an introduction, as well as a postscript. The entire package was arranged and collected in an especially bookish fashion, complete with endnotes and a topical index. Barlow's *Columbiad* was both a display piece and, as Steven Blakemore has recently pointed out, a kind of instruction manual, "an education

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[21] These ads, for J. March's store in Georgetown, appeared in *The National Intelligencer* [Washington] 22 Feb. 1808:4. 24 Feb. 1808:4. 23 Mar. 1808: 4. 01 Apr. 1808: 4.

[22] Woodress 247.

event for the republican reader" (34). Those bookish elements which Barlow believed would help his readers learn have a specific name in book studies: paratext.[23]

Didacticism colored the design of the *Columbiad*. The paratext inserted by Barlow (the prose preface and introduction, the endnotes, the postscript, and the index) laid out how both editions of the *Columbiad* was supposed to work. With the paratext in mind, we can build from Blakemore's insight that the poem was an "education event" to reconsider the precise genre position of the work. Although Barlow certainly framed the poem as an epic, it was an epic of a very particular character. As Blakemore has shown, the poem actually has a conflicted relationship to the classical epic. Blakemore considers Barlow's work "the quintessential Enlightenment epic" (21). I'd like to introduce a different way of classifying the *Columbiad*, arguing that it is something of a republican sourcebook: a storehouse of ideas, descriptions, allusions and heroes, a strange hybrid of Barlow's idea of high poetry and a reference work. Barlow's particular goal in designing the *Columbiad* Barlow was to ensure that anyone holding the book could become an ideal reader, clearly informed of the epic's goals and understanding of the work's allusions to world history. Barlow's belief in the importance of his project, as well as his anxiety about its reception, pushed him to surround his verse with all manner of prose. This prose, transforms the *Columbiad* into a more curious creature than it is sometimes remembered as being. More than just a lavishly printed poem, the work is a complicated and involved republican sourcebook.

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[23] The term comes from Gerard Genette, who defines the paratext as "a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of transaction" (2). The paratext is that material associated with a work that is not always noted as a part of the text proper, but nevertheless can be seen to influence the overall meaning of it. Genette's *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* is an attempt to theorize this material.

In making the *Columbiad*, Barlow the editor was just as busy as Barlow the compositor and publishing organizer had been. Barlow opened the book with a substantial preface addressing the proper nature of the epic poem in a peaceful and republican society. In spite of his willingness to incorporate a number of classical models, Barlow spends much of his preface criticizing the Homeric legacy, a regular move for many reform-minded eighteenth-century writers. Barlow writes that Homer's "existence has really proved one of the signal misfortunes of mankind" (*Works* 2: 379) because of the *Illiad*'s celebration of military violence, plunder, and conquest. This was not an accident, according to Barlow, as Homer's aim and lasting effect was "to inculcate the pernicious doctrine of the divine right of kings" (*Works* 2: 378-9). The purpose of the *Columbiad*, is altogether different. Barlow's poem aims to:

> inculcate the love of rational liberty, and to discountenance the deleterious passion for violence and war; to show that on the basis of the republican principle all good morals, as well as good government and hopes of permanent peace, must be founded (*Works* 2: 382)

Towards the end of the Preface, Barlow writes, "this is the moment in America to give such a direction to poetry, painting and the other fine arts, that true and useful ideas of glory may be implanted in the minds of men here" (*Works* 2: 381). Barlow's poem positions itself as an expression of truth in harmony with the select voices of history which lead humanity out of error. Dowling describes Barlow's authorial pose well, "like Marx in *Capital*, Barlow in the *Columbiad* will imagine himself as a lonely soul in touch with the laws of objective history in a world still largely mired in irrationality and superstition" (Dowling *Poetry and Ideology* 108). To establish this intellectual authority, Barlow not only made the *Columbiad* a monumental physical object, he went out of his way to demonstrate his learning by giving the poem an intellectual apparatus. Barlow still

had the pamphleteer's goals, but with the *Columbiad* he came out of the street and donned a professor's clothes.

Part of that intellectual apparatus was the poem's prose introduction, which followed the preface. The introduction, taken with some minor changes from the original used in the *Vision of Columbus*, offers a twenty-page summary of the life of Columbus and presents the sailor as ultimately a victim of a King's betrayal. Framed in this way, Columbus is a victim of imperial machinery rather than a symbol of it. As Steven Blakemore puts it, "Barlow's Columbus is the ultimate humanitarian," (25) with little interest in gold and a humane attitude towards the native people he encounters. In leaving the safe waters off the coast behind, Barlow's Columbus was a symbol of intellectual daring and courage, the figure that became "the principal cause of the progressive events that will eventually transform the Old World" (Blakemore 26). Barlow certainly saw in Columbus a figure who reflected his own intellectual values of rationality and cosmopolitanism.

In refashioning *The Vision of Columbus* as *The Columbiad*, Barlow also participated in the use of the noun "Columbia" with its adjective "Columbian" that exploded in the early national period. Things "Columbian" proliferated, appearing in countless periodical titles, names of organizations and societies, universities, as well as newly named cities, districts, and rivers. As noted above, the new typeface used in the *Columbiad* had a name in this vein. "Columbia" was that place or sense that noted everything new about the New World. For Barlow, the new title was not only more epic-sounding, it was an overall improvement because it evoked the wider category of "Columbia" more clearly. The title "Columbiad" meant little about Columbus as an

individual – the details of which the poem uses only as a frame – as much as it did "an epic about the Columbian world."[24] "Columbia" was a buzzword of the period, and Barlow demonstrated throughout his career a susceptibility to be caught up in these very kind of intellectual trends.

From the beginning, the *Columbiad* presents itself as complex project that blends multiple forms of communication, multiple argumentative modes. The profound truths Barlow believed he was sharing did not just come in the form of verse. *The Columbiad* offered prose as well, substantial amounts in fact. Combined, the preface and the introduction totally thirty four pages in length, a sustained prose buildup to the verse of the *Columbiad*. Considering what Barlow was paying per page to have the work printed, there was a real indulgence to this rather leisurely approach to opening the book. Barlow was willing to pay that monetary and stylistic price – he seems to have had little desire to get readers to his verse with any rapidity – if it meant that they might have a proper aesthetic, political, and historical perspective.

The *Columbiad*, as a book, ended the same way. Following the *Columbiad*'s ten books of poetry, Barlow provides the reader with a copious selection of endnotes, which are accompanied by a brief note explaining the author's decision to use endnotes rather than footnotes. The notes are followed by a postscript discussion Barlow's spelling choices, followed by an index. Barlow's multiple explanations reflect his extreme seriousness, a ponderousness that critics would eventually pick up on and lambast. However, just as critically, Barlow's note on the notes also reveals his deep concern for

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[24] For the history of the meaning of Columbus and Columbia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, see Thomas J. Schlereth's "Columbia, Columbus, and Columbianism." *The Journal of American History* 79.3 (1992): 937-968.

the overall appearance of the book. Regarding the notes, Barlow writes, "tho it would be more convenient to the reader to find some of these notes, especially the shorter ones, at the bottom of the pages to which they refer, yet most of them are of such a length as would render that mode of placing them disadvantageous to the symmetry of the pages and the general appearance of the work" (*Works* 2: 782). This sentence sums up the entire aim of the *Columbiad* well: Barlow wanted to be informative, but only in a way that would maintain the "symmetry of the pages."

The adornment of published poetry with informative notes was actually something of a minor fad during the period, though notes were rarely employed with the vigor that Barlow used them in the *Columbiad*. The 1794 edition of Dwight's *Greenfield Hill* carried fifteen pages of endnotes, but most employments of the device were much more limited, Sarah Wentworth Morton's *Beacon Hill* (1790) featured only three pages of notes and Freneau's publications, while consistently annotated, included only brief footnotes. Barlow's endnotes stretch for over sixty pages, slowly building from minor explanations to extended arguments, even essays.[25] As a general rule, the shorter endnotes are useful devices with which Barlow explains obscure place names and the like, while the longer notes are often long digressions of questionable utility. For example, Barlow's unhurried endnote on Benjamin West begins with a standard six-paragraph biography which presumably is enough to explain his reference in the poem.

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[25] As the endnotes begin, through note No.10 Barlow is uniformly brief and no note is longer than two paragraphs. Notes No.11-19, which deal with the Spanish conquest become quite long: note No.13 is four pages long and note No.19, the "Dissertation on the Institutions of Manco Capac" is twelve pages long. From here, for the remaining thirty notes Barlow settles into an average note of about four paragraphs long, including an extended note No.45 on Benjamin West which reaches eight pages and a four-page note No.49 on the relationship between poets and history.

Barlow however then provides an extensive catalog of West's paintings, divided by their current owner, which stretches for six pages. A detailed understanding of West, as well as his patrons, obviously meant something to Barlow. Genette reaches an interesting conclusion regarding the use of notes in fiction, distinguishing between works of "impure" and "pure" literature, "authorial notes are harder to find in texts of 'pure' poetry, poetry without a historical foundation or background" (333). Genette's concept of "pure" literature is obviously problematic, although in an oblique way it does gesture towards what reading the *Columbiad* is like. To thumb through these pages is not a belletristic experience and Barlow did not intend it to be as such. This is poetry in the service of the progress of mankind, poetry with research aides.

Barlow concluded the *Columbiad* with his most bookish gesture yet, an index. The index is comprised mostly of proper names, including those historical and mythical figures listed in the epic, place names, and a few odd quasi-personifications such as "Arab", "Negro", and "Slave." Columbus and Hesper are also indexed, as Barlow attempts to list every time they are mentioned directly by the text. While Barlow took an occasional practice and exploded it to an absurd extent with the endnotes, with his index Barlow is on close to virgin ground. In the estimation of Hans H. Wellisch, "only about a dozen or so indexes to fictional works are known to have been compiled from the mid-eighteenth to the early-twentieth century," (128) and as with endnotes, these have usually been included in historical novels. As a poet, Barlow's editorial choice is even stranger, "poems have virtually never been indexed individually," (Wellisch 308) despite the fact that in the minds of many professional indexers, the tool would help the reader with

longer poems such as *Paradise Lost.*[26] In fact, there is a good chance that Barlow's *Columbiad* is the only poem in American history to be indexed at the time of first publication.

Barlow's use of an index signals his commitment to the codex form, his commitment to the book as a tool. It is a definitive break from both the world of the spoken poem and the hastily made and hastily consumed pamphlets of Barlow's days in Europe. Nobody needed an index to "The Conspiracy of Kings". While books without indexes are possible, indexes without books are not, and Barlow's index is an attempt to help the reader and alter the ways he used the epic. First, the *Columbiad's* index is a list of proper names, replacing the older standard of the subscribers list, while sneakily serving nearly the same function. Thus the *Vision of Columbus* proudly lists the twenty copies ordered by Washington, while the *Columbiad* notes instead the eighteen places that his name appears in the text. The index allows the more egalitarian *Columbiad* to assert its elite status in a more disguised way. Secondly, by employing a decidedly non-fictional device, the index gives the publication a stronger connection to the histories and works of political philosophy which Barlow wished to emulate. Further, as Barlow

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[26] G. Norman Knight's *Indexing, the Art of: A Guide to the Indexing of Books and Periodicals* (London 1979) is a work aimed at a general and professional audience. Knight discusses the development of various concordances and indexes of Shakespeare, as well as indexes compiled by Richardson for his major novels. Hazel K. Bell's *Indexers and Indexes in fact & Fiction* (Toronto 2001) is a light-hearted look at the world of indexing, while also providing a useful history of the idea. Wellisch, Knight and Bell are in uniform agreement on the scarcity of fictional works to have been indexed, although Bell describes the recent phenomena of the humorous meta-fictional index.

explained in the preface, the poet's goal is to create a *true* epic, and the index, with its air of detached, even random, objectivity serves this purpose well.[27]

Ultimately, what the index most clearly provided was a way for readers to jump back into the text of the poem, to use the poem as they might use a reference work. Whatever the merits of Barlow's poetry, the structure and content of Barlow's poem hardly necessitated a linear reading, and the index encourages occasional or referential use. In addition to promulgating his profound ideas about political history, Barlow would have been pleased if the poem had also developed into a warehouse of allusions and local descriptions for future writers needing phrases like "Spreading Baltimore" (5.107), "Aspiring Richmond" (5. 108), "firm Jefferson" (5. 455) or an apt set of couplets describing Franklin's famous experiment with electricity (8. 551-569). Though he does not address Barlow's use of an index and other paratextual devices, Blakemore is one of the first Barlow critics to pick up on this element of the project, "the *Columbiad,*" Blakemore observes, "is a republican primer intended to energize the republican reader into an active participation in and defense of the new Republic" (34). The material luxury and cost of the edition would also encourage special care and marked the 1807 *Columbiad* as a long-term investment. It is likely that Barlow dreamed the work would become a cherished part of every American library.

The 1807 *Columbiad*, both sitting on the table and in the hands of a reader, had a great deal to say. It was, to be sure, a very long poem that was self-consciously grandiose

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[27] In *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, Elizabeth Eisenstein discusses the inter-related rise of alphabetizing, the use of Arabic numerals, and indexing (89-106). Eisenstein suggests that indexing shifted from a moral enterprise (listing references to moral concerns) to something broader and "became neutral and even amoral when applied to all manner of texts by printers who thought in terms of sales appeal," (Eisenstein 100-1).

in its attempt to be about big ideas. Moreover, when we consider both the implicit messages conveyed by the physical beauty and expense of the 1807 *Columbiad,* as well as the complexity and bookishness of the text (including the paratext) an extremely rich expression of a number of ideas and goals emerges. It was important in a nationalistic sense that the work was superficially an epic – still the most prestigious literary genre – although the *Columbiad* only engaged the epic tradition on its own terms. Because of the extent of the paratextual apparatus and the ways that it suggests a specific kind of readerly engagement, the 1807 *Columbiad* is not best understood if we remember it as a lavishly printed long poem. Instead, it was at once a display piece and a reference work, something like a sourcebook. It was a work featuring verse, but also a large amount of prose.

It is difficult to find works similar to the *Columbiad*. Barlow's project is of a broad eighteenth-century Enlightenment character, yet the particular elements of the composition are curious. Barlow knew William Blake, and as mentioned in chapter three, Blake's own work was clearly influenced by Barlow. It is tantalizing to consider that Barlow's luxurious quarto, featuring all original artwork, was in some way influenced by Blake's blending of verse and illustration. Yet we don't know the extent of Barlow's own knowledge of Blake's canon and moreover, the *Columbiad* is not entirely Blakean. There is also the side of the project that echoes the work of Erasmus Darwin, a blending of poetry with a desire to display scientific knowledge. We know from Leon Howard that Darwin was a literary influence on Barlow, and the *Columbiad* shares with Darwin's *The Botanic Garden* (1789-91) a sincere dedication to the explanatory note. Finally, there is something of Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* in the *Columbiad*. The 1802

edition of the *Ballads*, with its argumentative preface, an appendix, and its need to explain itself within the history of poetry, seems an especially evocative predecessor of Barlow's didacticism. Barlow was a synthetic figure, and his originality, which was so distinct as to be puzzling at times, lies in his combining of such disparate trends in poetry and literary bookmaking.

A later criticism of the *Columbiad* was that it was an indulgence of literary vanity. However, I would argue that Barlow was, in all the ways that we have seen, also indulging in the versatility and power of print and the power of books. The project, especially the 1807 quarto, celebrates and demonstrates the many uses of the printed word. With all its physical finery, it is clearly a bibliophile's book. Yet, as is made plain by Barlow's extensive paratextual apparatus, there is an emphasis on utility as well. The entire project glories in the educational power of a well-designed codex. In verse, Barlow expresses the same argument implicitly made by the design of the book itself. Barlow, the invention-lover, marks the printing press as one of history's greatest achievements. In the *Columbiad* the technology of the press connects all knowledge while at the same time connecting the world. In a set of lines which did not appear in the *Vision of Columbus* and have been un-commented upon by previous critics, Barlow venerates the press.

In book nine, Hesper's final argument for the progressive theory of history is the invention of the "prolific Press", the bride of Genius and the mother of Discovery. While Barlow's mind is not a particularly systematic one, often repeating itself and tangling related events in an unclear causal chain, the birth of the press is given singular treatment in the poem:

> One vast creation, lately borne abroad,
> Cheers the young nations like a nurturing god,

> Breathes thro them all the same wide searching soul,
> Forms, feeds, refines and animates the whole (9. 629-632)

The press functions as the unifying agent for the universal library of knowledge, as well as its mother. The materiality of the press is what "breathes thro" all subsequent learning. Coupling with the Press ("his fruitful bride") Genius is able to fill the earth with his offspring. This is because the Press is a kind of mechanical mother, a vast improvement over Genius's previous loves:

> Tis the prolific Press; whose tablet, fraught
> By graphic Genius with his painted thought,
> Flings forth by millions the prodigious birth
> And in a moment stocks the astonisht earth.
> Genius, enamor'd of his fruitful bride,
> Assumes new force and elevates his pride.
> No more, recumbent o'er his finger'd style,
> He plods whole years each copy to compile (9. 637-643)

The press, filling as it does the world with books, is what makes the increased physical contact between the traders of the world valuable, as wisdom can be propagated and exchanged. In Barlow's poem the technology of the press not only provides access to texts, it changes the way they are read as well. Scrutiny, civil order and peace are the products of the new order, as "war and his monsters" (9. 669) will leave "the world to reason and to man" (9. 670).

Barlow appears to have become interested in the printing press during the early years of the nineteenth century, when he was still working on his unfinished poem, "The Canal" and continuing to update the *Columbiad*. In a notebook from around 1802, Barlow recorded information about the invention of printing in the fifteenth century and

left a note to conduct further research on the matter.[28] This research underscores Barlow's turn, late in his career, towards a full embrace of the materiality of the written word. Barlow investigated the history of printing because the press, like other important inventions, stood as evidence of humanity's ability to improve her circumstances. Further improvements within the field of bookmaking, which the 1807 *Columbiad* was intended to demonstrate, were thus not only patriotic demonstrations, but important evidence that, in effect, the Enlightenment as Barlow understood it, was working.

[28] Barlow's notes on the history of printing are found in Notebook 17 in the Joel Barlow Papers at the Houghton Library, Harvard.

CHAPTER V

DOWN FROM THE DAIS: THE FORGOTTEN COLUMBIAD AND BARLOW'S POLITICIZED LITERARY FAME

In its first year after being published, Barlow's *Columbiad* was widely considered a fine display of American craftsmanship and a noteworthy achievement. It was, in effect, an instant museum piece. Thanks to two events in 1809, the *Columbiad* broke out of the display case and entered into the political culture of the United States. First, sometime around February of that year, Conrad & Co. released a two volume duodecimo edition of the poem which sold for two dollars. This second edition of the *Columbiad* was widely available and heavily advertised. Second, in July of 1809, Henri Grégoire's criticism of the poem's anti-religious rhetoric hit the American press, setting off a wave of outrage that lasted two years. Pulled into the partisan vortex that dominated American print culture at the time, Barlow ended his career by reaching a particularly bright kind of literary fame that was scarcely imaginable in the old heyday of Trumbull; he was at once a sage and a scoundrel with a broad audience that stretched across class lines and reached from the Carolinas to New England.

The second edition of the *Columbiad*, published in Philadelphia in 1809 by Conrad & Company, is the forgotten *Columbiad*. Literary history has focused on the 1807 edition, Barlow's twenty dollar behemoth. Neither Barlow's critics nor champions quite know how to place the small second edition, which has never been the focus of even a single article or book chapter. However, the 1809 edition of the *Columbiad* is vitally important because it gives a much fuller portrait of Barlow's audience. It seems

never to have sold for more than $2.50, and while it was not fantastically inexpensive, at around two dollars it was certainly much more reasonably priced than the first edition had been. The second edition was also cheap enough and small enough to access the secondary book market. This edition was portable, easier to carry for both individual owners and booksellers, including itinerant peddlers. It was also a book that could reach library readers in a way that the first edition could not. The first edition, an expensive work with much of its value tied up in its physical condition, was not a work that a small library could afford, or afford to lend.

The lower cost and increased portability of the work – which was furthered by the decision to break the edition up into two volumes – was the primary change in the second edition. Although Barlow continued to make orthographic changes, the verse itself was the same. This duodecimo edition maintained all the paratextual elements of the 1807 quarto, including the notes and index. However, the two-volume format divided the paratext as it did the poem. The preface, introduction, and books 1-6 were in the first volume, books 7-10, with the postscript, endnotes and index in the second. The bookishness of the first edition remained, but in this context it emerged as less showy and more pragmatic. These various aides and instructions to the reader may have been seen as even more critical for the second edition, which was intended to reach a humbler brand of reader. The book looked less like an encyclopedia (a modish and secular concept) and more like the scores of religious books that continued to dominate the market. The 1807 *Columbiad* was an extraordinary work, an outlier in appearance, size, and price. The 1809 duodecimo edition, in a number of ways, was a book that fit more comfortably on the shelves and in the hands of the wider book-buying audience.

Without the physical attractions of the first edition, the 1809 duodecimo relies entirely on the strength of Barlow's verse. The presence and subsequent success of the 1809 *Columbiad*, in turn, speaks to a much greater popularity of Barlow's poetry than is admitted by his critics. The presence of the 1809 edition suggests that the public response to the first edition of the *Columbiad* was positive enough that Barlow and his publishers, who were bickering over money, believed that the poem, as a poem, had an audience waiting. An early advertisement for the second edition included the following notice from the publishers:

> C. & A. Conrad & Co. have it now in their power to put the public in possession of this excellent Poem, at a very moderate price. The author has consented to their publishing a second edition in two volumes duodecimo, which they now offer for sale at two dollars, in concurrence with the large and splendid edition at twenty dollars, a few copies of which remain to be disposed of. ("The Columbiad" 3)

Though smaller and cheaper, the second edition of the *Columbiad* was not a minor affair. Direct evidence shows that the 1809 edition sold from Massachusetts to Virginia, and it is extremely likely that it was also available further south. The advertisements naturally begin in Philadelphia, the earliest dated February 1, 1809, where copies could be bought at the Conrad & Company shop.[1] Early sales may have been strong, given that by May, the price in Philadelphia had risen to $2.25.[2] That summer the second edition steadily made its way north. The 1809 edition was advertised in New York in late April and early May in the *American Citizen* and *Republican Watch-Tower*,

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[1] *Select Reviews, and Spirit of the Foreign Magazines* [Philadelphia] 01 Feb. 1809:138. *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* [Philadelphia] 16 Feb. 1809:2.

[2] *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* [Philadelphia] 25 May 1809:4. 30 May 1809:4.

with both papers running the notice quoted above.[3] By June, the portable *Columbiad* was being sold at A. Shearman Jr.'s store in New Bedford, Massachusetts, freshly brought in from Boston.[4] Copies reached Barlow's home state of Connecticut shortly thereafter, and second editions selling for $2.25 were advertised heavily by Beers, Howe & Co. of New Haven that summer.[5] In total, the 1809 *Columbiad* was advertised at least eleven times during the first year of publication, and another twenty one times in 1810-11.

This level of publicity is not as modest as it might sound to modern readers. In fact, the 1809 *Columbiad* was one of the most frequently advertised works of the period, and was more widely available than most other American-made books of its time. Most works of poetry, including those by historically prominent authors, were scarcely advertised at all. For example, Philip Freneau's *Poems Written and Published During the American Revolution*, also published in Philadelphia in 1809, was nearly invisible in the American press.[6] Washington Allston's *The Sylphs of the Seasons*, published in Boston in 1813, was advertised just seven times between 1813 and 1815, never appearing south

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[3] *American Citizen* [New York] 21 Apr. 1809:3. *Republican Watch-Tower* [New York] 05 May 1809:4.

[4] *New Bedford Mercury* 09 Jun. 1809: 4.

[5] Beers, Howe & Co. four times listed the Columbiad in their advertisements. *Connecticut Herald* [New Haven] 27 Jun. 1809:1. 04 Jul. 1809: 4. *Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 06 Jul. 1809:4. 13 Jul. 1809:4.

[6] For Freneau's work I have found one advertisement, a notice looking for subscribers that was published twice in *The Strength of the People* [Charleston, SC] 11 Aug. 1809: 1. 20 Sept. 1809: 4.

of New York.[7] Reaching back to the previous decade, Timothy Dwight's *Greenfield Hill* (1794) was mentioned in newspaper advertisements perhaps only four times.[8]

Both the 1807 and 1809 editions of the *Columbiad* are closer to the novels of the time in terms of how much bookseller publicity they generated. Even at so early a date, new novels tended to generate higher advertising traffic than poetry. For example, between March and September of 1799, Charles Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn* was advertised somewhere around twelve times, and would remain on the pages of American newspapers for the next two years.[9] The advertising numbers for *Arthur Mervyn* – the third publication of an established novelist connected to Philadelphia's literary scene – offer a solid example of what a moderately popular work might generate. What was the upper limit for an American novel? William Hill Brown's, *The Power of Sympathy*, published in 1789, one of the more notorious literary publications of the early national period seems to represent what a literary frenzy might have looked like. In 1789, the novel appears to have been advertised around thirty times in American newspapers. When considering the popularity of the *Columbiad*, especially the 1809 edition, it is

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[7] Advertisements for *The Sylphs of the Seasons*: *The Boston Gazette* 27 Sept. 1813: 3. 18 Oct. 1813:1. *The Newport Mercury* [Newport, RI] 20 Nov. 1813:1. *The Salem Gazette* 25 Nov. 1813: 4. *The New York Commercial Advertiser* 27 Nov. 1813: 3. 23 Dec. 1813:1. *The Friend of Peace* [Cambridge, MA] 01 Jan. 1815: 43.

[8] Advertisements for *Greenfield Hill*: *The Daily Advertiser* [New York] 14 Oct. 1794:2. 30 Dec. 1794: 3. *The Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 04 Dec. 1794:1. *The Ostego Herald* [Cooperstown, NY] 22 May 1795: 2.

[9] Advertisements for *Arthur Mervyn*: *The Gazette of the United States* [Philadelphia] 12 Mar. 1799:3. 05 May 1799: 1. 06 Jun. 1799:2. 05 Jul. 1799:3. 06 Jul. 1799: 2. *The Commercial Advertiser* [New York] 21 Mar. 1799:2. *The Porcupine's Gazette* [Philadelphia] 26 Mar. 1799:2. *The Massachusetts Mercury* [Boston] 21 May 1799:3. *The Universal Gazette* [Philadelphia] 23 May 1799: 4. *The Federal Gazette* [Baltimore] 14 Jun. 1799:4. *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser* [Philadelphia] 4 Jul. 1799:3. *Jenks' Portland Gazette* 23 Sept. 1799:1.

important to think of it as comparable in sales and distribution to a typical or even popular novel, not as an isolated or commercially irrelevant entity.

The *Columbiad* may have kept selling because Barlow found ways to keep it in the papers. Barlow's great pride in the *Columbiad* was unmistakable, as was his willingness to promote himself and the poem. In July of 1808 Barlow had sent the National Institute of France a gift copy of the 1807 edition, and when he received a laudatory letter from Joachim Le Breton, the Secretary of the Institute, he had copies of both letters printed and mailed to newspapers for publication. Le Breton's reply, which was dated October, 15th, 1808, praised the *Columbiad*'s physical appearance and its service to American literature. To the modern reader's surprise, the Barlow-Le Breton exchange was printed in full in seven papers in five states in the spring of 1809.[10] The reprinting of the Barlow-Le Breton exchange gives further evidence of the poem's status as a news event and certainly contributed to the appeal of the 1809 edition. Readers from Washington to Vermont learned of the fine reception Barlow's project had received in Paris and were encouraged to feel patriotic about it.

Through the summer of 1809, both editions of the *Columbiad* were well-publicized and the project as a whole was received as an unqualified triumph. The 1807 *Columbiad* was a widely acknowledged book arts achievement. The 1809 edition was proving that his poetry and his ideas were appealing on their own merits. The ads for the second edition which appeared in New Haven in July of 1809 mark the final days of a

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[10] *The National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser* 24 Mar. 1809:2. *The American Citizen* [New York] 31 Mar. 1809:2. *The Monthly Anthology* [Boston] 01 Apr. 1809:282. *The Democrat* [Boston] 05 Apr. 1809:1. *The Old Colony Gazette* [New Bedford, MA] 07 Apr. 1809:2. *The American Mercury* [Hartford] 20 Apr. 1809:1. *The Green-Mountain Farmer* [Bennington, VT] 29 May 1809:3.

great string of successes for Barlow. That month, Henri Grégoire's "Critical Observations on the Poem of Mr. Joel Barlow the Columbiad" appeared in Boston's *Monthly Anthology* and the harmony ended.[11] Grégoire uttered an accusation that had few rivals in American society, declaring that Barlow had offended Christianity in *The Columbiad*. Grégoire's accusation damaged Barlow's ability to exist as a public figure and nearly killed the distribution of his work. As Grégoire's criticism made its way around the continent, for a time the advertisements for the second edition stopped. Sellers seem to have hesitated. One finds no advertisements for either edition of the *Columbiad* in the fall of 1809. They would not return until 1810.

Grégoire, the former Bishop of Blois, was an old revolutionary acquaintance of Barlow and had been present when Barlow addressed the French National Convention in 1792. It was Grégoire that presented a copy of the *Columbiad* to the French Institute. Grégoire and Barlow addressed one another as if they were old friends, but as Woodress notes, Grégoire's "assault on Barlow was really intemperate and uncalled for" (270). Grégoire took particular issue with the work's final engraving, "The Final Destruction of Prejudice," which included a cross among a heap of religious objects being discarded. Grégoire wrote, "the attributes of the catholic ministry, and, above all, the standard of Christianity, the cross of Jesus Christ! Are these what you call *prejudices*?" (4). Grégoire's attack mobilized anti-Barlow sentiments that had previously been quiescent. In late August Grégoire's review was republished in *The Balance and New-York State Journal* in Albany.[12] In September the "Critical Observations" ran in six publications in

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[11] *The Monthly Anthology, and Boston Review* 01 Jul. 1809:3.

[12] *The Balance and New-York State Journal* [Albany] 22 Aug. 1809:2.

five states, reaching as far south as *The Star* in Raleigh, North Carolina.[13] In October the reprints continued, as the piece ran another four times, appearing in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Virginia.[14]

Given the baldness of Barlow's gesture, as well as the ease at which it might be seen in one of the poem's celebrated illustrations, it is truly surprising that no one else had attacked the work on similar grounds before. Why had it taken nearly two years for anyone to do so? It seems that the conservative intelligentsia had simply avoided Barlow's work on principle. In so doing, they missed an opportunity to more fully frame the discussion of the poem, instead allowing Barlow to enjoy a significant amount of early acclaim. After Grégoire, their approach would change, as American conservatives battered Barlow until the end of his life.

By the fall of 1809, Barlow must have felt as if his reputation was crumbling on all sides, and in October he scrambled to reply. His effort to defend himself is an interesting example of damage control in the early republic. The same communication networks and attitudes about re-printing that allowed Grégoire's attack to appear in multiple places could also be used to mount a defense. Rather than responding to press criticism as if it was some irrational and inchoate demon that was afflicting him – as many other poets might have done – Barlow understood how the newspapers operated and acted accordingly. After all, he had been promoting himself in the press for decades.

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[13] Reprints of Grégoire: *The American Citizen* [New York] 01 Sept. 1809:2. *The Salem Gazette* 01 Sept. 1809:1. *The Republican Watch-Tower* [New York] 05 Sept. 1809:4. *The New-Jersey Telescope* [Newark] 15 Sept. 1809:1. *The Visitor* [Richmond] 23 Sept. 1809:131. *The Star* [Raleigh] 28 Sept. 1809:192.

[14] Additional reprints: *The Enquirer* [Richmond] 06 Oct. 1809:4. *The Panoplist* [Boston] 09 Oct. 1809:217. *The Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 12 Oct. 1809:1. *The Alexandria Gazette* 21 Oct. 1809:2.

Barlow knew editors were out there looking for copy and he knew that there was an established network of politically-aligned newspapers to call upon. Moreover, the Grégoire-Barlow affair was not just a literary squabble, it was a fully-rounded news story that touched on matters of politics, religion, and the always attractive topic of the legacy of the French Revolution. Finally, as shown in chapter 4, *The Columbiad* had been a news-event in its own right. There were simply too many angles from which his response could entice editors for it to be ignored. Barlow knew he could extend the news cycle (which at that time were extremely long given the slow pace of the news) on this story, twisting the discourse back in his favor.

Barlow had one other reason to be confident. A few months earlier, in the spring of 1809 he had already successfully responded to the first bit of criticism to hit the poem. In January, Joseph Dennie, to the surprise of no one, had published a negative review of the poem in the Federalist-friendly *Port-Folio*.[15] A rejoinder to Dennie, likely written by Barlow or his friend Fulton, was printed by three republican-leaning publications, Boston's *The Democrat*, New York's *American Citizen* and the *Republican Watch-Tower*.[16] The reply, titled "Whipping in for the Editor of the Port Folio" defended the merits of the poem, while claiming that Dennie's political bias against Barlow explained his negative review. The un-named author of "Whipping" called Dennie a "feeble mind" and a "scribbler of meager talents," while arguing that, "political prejudices and opposed dogmas, generally produce illiberality and erroneous judgment. Mr. Denny (sic) is an

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[15] *The Port-Folio* [Philadelphia] 01 Jan. 1809:61.

[16] *The Democrat* [Boston] 15 Apr. 1809:3. *The American Citizen* [New York] 27Apr. 1809:2. *The Republican Watch-Tower* [New York] 28 Apr. 1809: 4.

avowed admirer of aristocracy, and hates every thing tending towards republicanism" ("Whipping" 3).

After "Whipping in for the Editor of the Port Folio" appeared that April, Dennie backtracked. The May edition of *The Port-Folio* featured a retraction from Dennie, who denied authorship of the offending review, claimed to be an admirer of many lines of the poem and a supporter of American literature.[17] Most notably, Dennie also admitted that the January review "has excited not a little clamour against the author, who is again and again rebuked for his fancied prejudice against the Literature of his country" (Dennie 432-3). To make amends, Dennie then reprinted the extremely positive review offered by *London Monthly Magazine* the previous winter. Barlow and his allies were not going to let criticisms they felt were unfair or potentially damaging go unaddressed. In getting Dennie, one of the more influential editors of the period, to back down, Barlow had secured a major victory.

In tackling the Grégoire problem, Barlow's first move was to publish his response in pamphlet form. In Washington, Barlow published *Letter to Henry Gregoire, Bishop, Senator, Compte of the Empire, and Member of the Institute of France, in Reply to His Letter on the Columbiad*. While this pamphlet might do some public relations work on its own its main purpose was to serve in Barlow's press campaign. Barlow's desired audience for *Letter to Henry Gregoire* was not Grégoire or even the general public, but the press. As a preface to his letter, Barlow added this message to the press, "Editors of Public Journals, who have published Gregoire's letter, are requested to insert the following reply as soon as convenient" (*Works* 1: 538). Barlow continued, "it is an act of

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[17] *The Port-Folio* 01 May 1809:432.

justice due to him, and to the character of their Journals, as well as to the Author" (*Works* 1: 538).

Whether it was a sense of personal honor or justice, an interest in the story, or support for Barlow that motivated them, a number of editors did run Barlow's reply to Grégoire. Although, somewhat predictably, Barlow's defense generated less heat than Grégoire's scathing critique, Barlow's letter enjoyed a modest reprinting in the fall of 1809. Four periodicals – *The New Jersey Telescope* (Newark), *The Panoplist* (Boston), *The Connecticut Journal* (New Haven) and *The Alexandria Gazette* – made good on Barlow's request for fair coverage and printed his response.[18] Philadelphia's *Port-Folio*, perhaps still feeling pressure to appease Barlow's supporters, ran Grégoire and Barlow's letters side by side in the November 1809 issue.[19] Three papers, meanwhile – *The Strength of the People* (Charleston), *The American Mercury* (Hartford), and *The National Aegis* (Worcester) – seem to have printed only Barlow's side of the argument.[20] *The Columbian Phenix* of Providence, Rhode Island offered their own defense of Barlow on October, 28, 1809, questioning Grégoire's relevance and explaining that because Barlow is "a warm friend to liberty," he will always be attacked by "the miserable maggots that breed in our body of bloated prosperity" ("Communication" 2).

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[18] *The New Jersey Telescope* [Newark] 06 Oct. 1809:1. 10 Oct. 1809:2. *The Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 19 Oct. 1809:1. *The Panoplist* [Boston] 01 Nov. 1809: 266. *The Alexandria Gazette* 01 Nov. 1809:2.

[19] *The Port-Folio* [Philadelphia] 01 Nov. 1809: 463.

[20] *The Strength of the People* [Charleston] 10 Oct. 1809:2. *The American Mercury* [Hartford] 19 Oct. 1809:2. *The National Aegis* [Worcester] 08 Nov. 1809:4.

These were not results to toss aside, given the severity of Grégoire's accusation. Barlow's ability to place his rebuttal in at least eight locations was a significant victory, one that a more passive poet would not have enjoyed. In 1809, texts didn't always travel so successfully. A telling example from this very controversy is provided by *The Patriot,* in Concord, New Hampshire. *The Patriot* defended Barlow in December of 1809, yet appears to have done so without knowledge of Barlow's own reply to Grégoire, writing "the public will suspend their opinion till Mr. Barlow has opportunity to answer."[21] If Barlow not acted aggressively only the kind of weaker response seen in *The Patriot* would have been available. Clearly, the paper was a friendly voice that attempted to defend Barlow, only the editor of *The Patriot* lacked the proper talking points. In an imperfect world, Barlow disseminated his side of the story as best he could.

Barlow's defense was to appeal to long-standing elements of Protestant sentiment. Barlow equated the discarded cross that so outraged Grégoire with the idolatries of Catholicism, which he half-apologizes for as a vestige of his Puritan upbringing, more evidence of "how much our religious opinions depend on the place of our birth! Had you and I been born in the same place, there is no doubt but we should have been of the same religion" (*Works* 1: 540). In this way, Barlow shifted the discussion from an examination of his beliefs, to an examination of Grégoire's as well. Barlow explains to Grégoire, "I was born in a place where catholic christians are not known but by report; and the discipline of our sect taught us to consider them, not indeed as infidels, but as a species of idolaters" (*Works* 1: 540). Barlow's defense is weakened by the fact that he did not plan the engravings for the *Columbiad* as a young Connecticut youth, but instead as a man

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[21] *The Patriot* [Concord, NH] 05 Dec. 1809:1.

who had long ago left behind nearly all the tenets of Congregationalism. In Leon Howard's estimation, "in his private beliefs he was more nearly an atheist than such notorious men as Ethan Allen and Tom Paine" (324). As such, for Howard it is "a highly ingenious, and not wholly honest, attempt to appear conventionally religious before the public without deceiving those few friends who shared his religious beliefs" (325). After sliding around the question of the discarded cross, Barlow devotes the rest of his answer to denying rumors that he had renounced Christianity in Paris and offering lukewarm praise for the Gospels.

Certainly, Barlow's verse in the *Columbiad* was much more extreme than the generic anti-Catholicism that he claimed. Barlow's concern is not that cruciform idolatry is getting in the way of a purer faith, a belief that many Protestants would have shared. Rather, the thrust of Barlow's argument is that religion of all forms has blinded humanity. The purer faith being obscured by idolatry is not faith at all, but reason. The final book of the poem the poem climaxes in a defiant act of civic un-religion, as the tools of mankind's deception, "the mask of priesthood and the mace of kings" (10. 600) are destroyed in a heap, with each corner of the world unburdening themselves:

> Of some old idol from his native land;
> One flings a pagod on the mingled heap,
> One lays a crescent. one a cross to sleep;
> Swords, sceptres, mitres, crowns and globes and stars.
> Codes of false fame and stimulants to wars
> Sink in the settling mass; since guile began,
> There are the agents of the woes of man. (10. 604-610)

In his exchange with Grégoire Barlow took a more cautious approach because he wanted a broad audience. He was willing to compromise his principles to secure that audience. Barlow chose to hide behind a stalking horse of anti-Catholicism, rather than

truly defending his position on a crucial matter in his poem. As William Dowling shows, Barlow's analysis of religion was at the very core of the *Columbiad*'s argument, "a materialist metaphysics alone is able to put one outside ideology as such, and thus in a position to expose older or competing systems of thought as varieties of false consciousness, projections of specific group or class interests posing as universal truths" (*Poetry and Ideology* 107). Barlow's ideal reader needed to share in his "weary gaze on centuries of superstition and bloodshed" (Dowling *Poetry and Ideology* 107) to fully understand the shape of the new social order proposed by Barlow's secular millennialism. As such, Barlow was bold enough to criticize a Christian worldview, though at the same time he endeavored to maintain the widest possible potential audience for the work. He wanted the *Columbiad* to be a radical poem with mainstream appeal.

Barlow's reply allowed him to keep up his public appearances as a distinguished poet and man of state, but it is unlikely that too many partisan minds were changed. Instead, he had created a plausible explanation for those in the middle. Barlow's response was successful enough that Theodore Dwight felt compelled to intervene. Dwight quickly produced a rebuttal to Barlow's defense, which laid bare all of Barlow's evasions and equivocations, "a man of plain common sense, and honesty, would have answered (if the truth would have permitted) in a more direct and positive manner" (Dwight 2). Dwight noted that Barlow had been viewed throughout the country as an infidel for many years and criticized Barlow's attempts to win an apology from Grégoire by flattering him. Moreover, in the first direct instance of the poetry of the *Columbiad* actually being discussed, Dwight quoted a healthy amount of Barlow's lines and concluded, "we understand this passage to speak the language of downright atheism" (Dwight 2). One

senses that Dwight was rather nearer to the truth than Barlow had been in his reply to Grégoire. Though Dwight, a conservative ideologue like his older brother Timothy, was not by any stretch a disinterested observer of the Grégoire-Barlow spat, his criticisms were far from unfounded. Dwight's analysis was republished at least six times, from Massachusetts to Virginia, and ran from mid-October through early November.[22] As later press reactions to Barlow would reveal, Grégoire's accusations, strengthened by Dwight's rejoinder, would follow Barlow for the rest of his life.

In addition to the Grégoire scandal, the fall of 1809 gave birth to another critical problem for Barlow. In the October 1809 issue of the *Edinburgh Review* the legendarily caustic and unsparing Francis Jeffrey published an extensive review of the *Columbiad*, an event no doubt relished by Barlow's enemies.[23] Jeffrey was a notoriously tough reviewer and the popularity of his biting remarks had done much to create a new style in literary reviews. In fact, this very fashion for devastating critique was alluded to by Joseph Dennie in his apology for the *Port-Folio*'s too negative appraisal of the poem. Barlow's critic, Dennie wrote, "affected the sterner style of the Edinburgh Review, and displayed much of its wit, and all of its severity" (432). The expectation was certainly that the genuine article, especially if there was a generally positive reception of the poem circulating, would be even harsher. The criticism featured in the *Port-Folio* had been a

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[22] *The Connecticut Mirror* [Hartford] 16 Oct. 1809:2. *The New Jersey Telescope* [Newark] 24 Oct. 1809:2. 27 Oct. 1809:2. *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* [Philadelphia] 27 Oct. 1809: 3. *The Alexandria Gazette* 07 Nov. 1809:2. *The Salem Gazette* 07 Nov. 1809:1. *The Port-Folio* [Philadelphia] 01 Nov. 1809: 463.

[23] *The Edinburgh Review* 01 Oct. 1809: 24.

local dispute. Jeffrey's review would be a signal moment for the poem on both sides of the Atlantic.

Surprisingly, Jeffrey's review was measured and not without an occasional compliment; however, it left little doubt as to Barlow's fundamental weaknesses as a poet. Jeffrey's core assessment of Barlow, penned two centuries ago, has not been repudiated by later critics, "Mr. Barlow, we are afraid, will not be the Homer of his country; and will never take his place among the enduring poets either of the old or of the new world" (24). Barlow, Jeffrey wrote, "has evidently none of the higher elements of a poet," and in his "cumbrous and inflated style, he is constantly mistaking hyperbole for grandeur" (25). In addition to Barlow's stylistic faults, Jeffrey attacked the awkward and uninteresting apparatus of the poem, "it is plain, that in a poem constructed upon such a plan, there can be no development of character, -- no unity, or even connexion of action, -- and consequently no interest, and scarcely any coherence or contrivance in the story" (26).

That being said, although there was some condescension in Jeffrey's position, his review was not the brutal lashing that many expected. Jeffrey even closed the essay with a nod to the beauty of the 1807 edition, "we don't know that we have ever seen a handsomer book issue from the press of England; and if this be really and truly the production of American artists, we must say, that the infant republic has already attained to the very summit of perfection in the mechanical part of bookmaking" (40). Barlow and his talents, not the literary strength of America, were at issue, in Jeffrey's review and the evaluation was plain, "as a great national poem, it has enormous – inexpiable – and in some respects, intolerable faults" (40).

Unlike so many other critics, British and American, during this period, Jeffrey downplays Barlow's nationality and resists the opportunity to have Barlow serve as a representative American poet. Instead, Jeffrey begins his review by minimizing the distinction between American and British literature. "The truth however is," Jeffrey writes, "that though the American *government* be new, the *people* is in all respects as old as the people of England" (24). American culture, if such a term was really even applicable, was not some nascent civilization of rustics akin to "the Greeks in the days of Homer," (24) it was, rather, simply provincial English culture, "very much such people, we suppose, as the modern traders of Manchester, Liverpool, or Glasgow" (24). As such Jeffrey argued, "they are just as likely to write epic poems, therefore, as the inhabitants of our trading towns at home; and are entitled to no more admiration when they succeed, and to no more indulgence when they fail, than would be due, on a similar occasion, to any of those industrious persons" (24). Because Jeffrey did not attack Barlow's abilities on the familiar grounds of the British/American rivalry, his criticisms of the poem stood out as more legitimate and were more potentially damaging.

Jeffrey's review was reprinted in the United States the next spring, in the April 1810 edition of *Select Reviews, and Spirit of the Foreign Magazines*.[24] From this appearance, it seems most likely, the review made its way to the offices of *The Boston Gazette*, who reprinted Jeffrey's review on April 30, 1810.[25] The *Gazette* summarized Jeffrey's critique and proudly noted that Barlow "has passed the ordeal of Scotch criticism, with more credit than it was generally suspected the work would receive" ("Mr.

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[24] *Select Reviews, and Spirit of the Foreign Magazines* [Philadelphia] 30 Apr. 1810: 217.

[25] *The Boston Gazette* 30 Apr. 1810:1.

Barlow's Columbiad" 1). A week later, *The Boston Mirror* reprinted the *Gazette*'s assessment.[26] Barlow's escaping a true lashing might have been a hollow achievement, but it was nevertheless more positive press. The *Gazette* and *Mirror* promulgated the message that the *Columbiad* was indeed a patriotic achievement.

The effects were not all positive, however. Looking at later reactions to the poem, it is clear that Jeffrey's review functioned much like Grégoire's attack: it called attention to faults and outrages that had mostly gone unnoticed. This time, those outrages were more specifically stylistic. Prior to 1809, legitimate critical discussion of the *Columbiad*, as a poem, was extremely rare, and negative commentary difficult to find. After 1809, likely inspired in part by Jeffrey's review, a new stock response to the poem emerges, mocking Barlow's pretentious and wooden poetry. This was the case in discussion of poetry published on October 12, 1810 in the *Alexandria Daily Gazette*, which compared Barlow to an anonymous newspaper poet in Philadelphia, noting of the *Columbiad*, "there are not twenty brilliant original specimens of the genuine fire of poetry in the whole work" ("Correctness" 3). The *Gazette* concluded by asserting, "a man might really write two thousand lines of such verses in a day; and if quantity constitutes greatness, he would soon become the greatest poet in the world" ("Correctness" 3). On the same page, two other scattered missives appeared, attacking Barlow's proposed history of the United States, as well as a recent speech he had made in Washington.[27] The *Alexandria Daily Gazette* was especially committed to attacking Barlow and his poetry, reprinting negative reviews whenever they found them. One of these reviews, reprinted from *The Whig* in

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[26] *The Boston Mirror* 05 May 1810: 226.

[27] *Alexandria Daily Gazette* 12 Oct. 1810:3.

1811, decried, with brilliant flourish, "the mechanical rhymes of the Columbiad (which seem to have been made by some patent machine)" ("From the Whig" 2).

That the *Alexandria Daily Gazette* was repeatedly critical of Barlow is not surprising. Alexandria was a Federalist stronghold and the paper's longtime publisher, Samuel Snowden (1776-1831) was, in the words of biographer Carrol H. Quenzel, a "staunch Federalist" (5). Snowden was a community landmark, publishing his newspaper in Alexandria from 1800 until his death in 1831. It was Barlow's ill fortune to have a man of Snowden's predilections and influence so close to his home in Washington.[28] As both a businessman and as an editor, Snowden was ambitious; he courted readers around the region, and employed a correspondent in Washington. Snowden was highly interested in global affairs and in literature, and the rival *Alexandria Herald* criticized the *Daily Gazette* as not being properly dedicated to local affairs. According to Quenzel's research, by 1807 the paper had around six hundred subscribers and was "a highly respected and influential paper" (20). Snowden's paper was strongly aligned against Barlow and his political allies: the *Daily Gazette* mocked Jefferson and Madison, preferred France to Britain as an adversary in the War of 1812, and saw no problem with the Hartford Convention. As the new literary critique of Barlow's poetry reached Federalist-aligned editors, generic attacks on the *Columbiad* multiplied. The *Gazette* viewed bad poetry and bad politics as one in the same. In 1811 Snowden's paper published a "Democratic

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[28] Snowden's son, Edgar, was mayor of Alexandria from 1839-43. Regarding Snowden's esteem in the city, Quenzel writes, "the news of Samuel Snowden's death evoked genuine grief because he was widely respected for his integrity, generous heart, cheerful temper… and for his steadfast refusal to deal in personalities or to besmirch character. Snowden was the antithesis of the tramp printer, and his going was regarded by many as the passing of an Alexandria institution" (24).

Creed" a series of ridiculous statements (to the conservative mind) which ironically lampooned the policies of both Jefferson and Madison.[29] Article seven of the supposed Creed was, "I believe there is more *real* poetry in one page of Joel Barlow's Columbiad than in all the Illiad of Homer" ("Democratic Creed" 3). Later, when news of Barlow's death reached Alexandria in 1813, Snowden wrote that it was "no great calamity" and that we are "rather disposed to regard it, as a divine interposition" (3).

Snowden's paper was not unique in approach. As Carol Sue Humphrey notes in her history of the early national press, "partisanship dominated the era" (xiv). Snowden was a part of the second generation of American publishers who began to control the industry in the post-war era. Their lesson of the Revolutionary War, according to Humphrey, was "the important role of the press in the political arena of the new Republic" (2). This dedicated political partisanship defined the American press from the 1790s through the War of 1812. The political influence of the newspapers as a whole was furthered by the overall increase in their numbers. According to Humphrey, in 1783 there were only 35 newspapers published in the United States. That number grew to 234 in 1800 and reached 329 by 1810 (Humphrey 71). Magazines grew at a similar rate, expanding from just four in 1794 to 40 in 1810 (Humphrey 145). Because the reprinting of material was widespread and the desire to engage in political controversy strong, passionate opinions about Barlow proliferated.

In the months and years after Grégoire's attack, Barlow was subject to endless politically-motivated criticism. A claim that Barlow had written "God Save the

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[29] The "Democratic Creed" was also published in *The Tickler* [Philadelphia] 03 Jul. 1811:4.

Guillotine" circulated, as did a new letter supposedly testifying to Barlow's atheism. Snowden's *Alexandria Gazette* returned to Barlow's 1792 *Advice to the Privileged Orders*, printing a passage highlighting Barlow's unflattering views of Christian government.[30] When President Madison appointed Barlow as a minister to France in February of 1811 the various anti-French, anti-Jeffersonian, voices in both the Senate and in the American press were mobilized. Although Barlow was eventually confirmed, years of bad press made him an easy target for vicious criticism from Federalist voices. An item titled "New Minister to France" which circulated widely in March of 1811, attacked Barlow's religious and political beliefs, as well as his poetry. Only two paragraphs long, "New Minister to France" crystallized conservative opprobrium, deriding Barlow as a deist and a "favorite of the bloody Robespierre" who was "an apostate priest and reviler of the very religion he publicly professed and taught, a phrenzied, bloody-minded jacobin; a modern philosopher and a sycophant of those in power" ("New Minister" 1). The *Columbiad* was dismissed as a book, "nobody will read" ("New Minister" 1). "New Minister to France" was first published in the *New York Herald* on March 6, 1811. In the next week it appeared in six other papers, all in upstate New York or New England.[31]

The *New York Herald* addressed Barlow's appointment in similar terms again on March 16th, intensifying the discussion of Barlow's religious beliefs.[32] This item was

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[30] *Alexandria Daily Gazette* 07 May 1811:3.

[31] "New Minister to France": *New York Herald* 06 Mar. 1811: 1. *Salem Gazette* 12 Mar. 1811:3. *The Hampshire Federalist* [Springfield, MA] 14 Mar. 1811:3. *The Portsmouth Oracle* 16 Mar. 1811:2. *The Cooperstown Federalist* 16 Mar. 1811:2. *The Eagle* [Castine, MA] 19 Mar. 1811:2. *The Independent American* [Ballston Spa, NY] 19 Mar. 1811:2.

[32] *New York Herald* 16 Mar. 1811:3.

reprinted in the *Alexandria Daily Gazette*, Barlow's reliable foe, on March 25, 1811.[33] Over the next week, the *Daily Gazette* would criticize the appointment twice more.[34] The second of these was a letter to the editor in which the author declared his "profound contempt" for the *Columbiad*, claiming that Barlow worshipped Tibetan idols ("To the Editor" 3). Seven days later, *The Constitutionalist* of Exeter, New Hampshire, blended outrage and exasperation in their attempt to discuss Barlow's appointment. In "Joel Barlow – for the last time" the *Constitutionalist* quoted objectionable anti-Christian lines from book nine of the *Columbiad* and called Barlow's appointment "most deplorable" (3).

After nearly two years of bad press, an astute reader of the Federalist newspapers would have been capable of disparaging Barlow in a number of ways. When Barlow sailed from France in the summer of 1811, *The Salem Gazette* jumped on a report which noted that Barlow carried with him sixty five trunks of material. The attack presented Barlow as a vain and money-grubbing infidel, who had been cheating and deceiving since the late 1780s, when he left Hartford to sell shares for the ill-fated Scioto Company:

> What, in the name of wonder can he have collected together to fill them with! Has Mr. Jefferson sent his old friend, Bonaparte, some more cotton seed? Or has the "first American poet" packed up his quarto edition of the Columbiad, to carry over and sell his French fellow-citizens by the help of Bishop Gregoire's criticisms... Whatever his enormous cargo is made up of, it is to be hoped, that the profit of any sales that may be made, may be disposed of for the benefit of a certain old unfortunate partnership, called the "Scioto Company." ("Minister; France" 2)

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[33] *Alexandria Daily Gazette* 25 Mar. 1811:3.

[34] *Alexandria Daily Gazette* 27 Mar. 1811: 3. 02 Apr. 1811:3.

Barlow could not have been stunned that his beliefs would invite strident criticism. He had been a figure of controversy since the early 1790s, after all, and in London and Paris he had put himself in danger thanks to his political positions. However, the extent to which the *Columbiad* was condemned and disparaged in the conservative press was unusual, even extreme. Generally speaking, literary works appear to have existed in a more polite zone, perhaps in part because the success of American literature was important to men of both parties. There still existed an ideal, however frequently it was violated, that the world of letters should be free from partisan conflict. We can see this reflected in Dennie's decision to print a more favorable review of the *Columbiad*. Barlow's camp had labeled him a politically-motivated editor, while Dennie insisted *The Port-Folio* was not "a *party paper*" (Dennie 432). Instead, he argued, "the Port Folio most manifestly is, in all strictness, a Literary Journal" (Dennie 432). The newspapers, however, by 1809, were no longer paying lip-service to these ideals. Moreover, Barlow's work had become too popular and too well-regarded to go un-assailed by conservative comment. In this regard, Barlow was a victim of his own success. The 1807 edition of the poem had generated wide acclaim as an American achievement. As discussed in the previous chapter, there was a genuine interest in the quarto, which would become synonymous with fine and elegant bookmaking. Barlow capitalized on that initial reception with the 1809 edition, which he continued to publicize as best he could. By 1809, the *Columbiad* was transformed from merely being a literary matter into something wider. A full range of political statements and partisan interests came to be associated with the poem and with the poet.

In general, the level of commentary produced by the *Columbiad* during these years is quite high. Literary reviews of much detail were not especially common. I have found one contemporary review of Brown's *Arthur Mervyn* in the American press.[35] Washington Allston's *The Sylphs of the Seasons* likewise appears to have only been reviewed once.[36] Neither of those reviews was reprinted or excerpted elsewhere. This was the state of things for at least the next decade. William Cullen Bryant's *Poems*, one of the landmark collections of the century, produced just two reviews in 1821.[37] Nor can political controversy fully explain Barlow's notoriety. Freneau's 1809 collection of poetry generated a sprinkling of positive note in the Republican-friendly press, but was entirely ignored by the Federalists, who according to Lewis Leary, were "silent on the edition" (*That Rascal* 329). Freneau, like Barlow, had been a politically controversial poet for decades, yet his collection occasioned no outrage. There was little acclaim waiting either. The poet's brother, Peter Freneau, owned one of the most successful papers in South Carolina at this time, *The City Gazette* of Charleston, yet the paper carried no commentary on Freneau's *Poems* of any kind.

The *Columbiad*, on the other hand, was eventually too well-known, too widely-available, and too praised to be ignored. In American periodicals of the time, literary reviews of poetry were rare, critically unsophisticated, generally positive (with the progress of American literature a constant theme), and infrequently reprinted. In fact, the

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[35] Review of *Arthur Mervyn*: *The Philadelphia Gazette* 01 Nov. 1799:2.

[36] Review of *The Sylphs of the Seasons*: *The Analectic Magazine* [Philadelphia] 01 Aug. 1815:151.

[37] Reviews of Bryant's *Poems*: *The North American Review* [Boston] 01 Oct. 1821:380. *The Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics* 06 Oct. 1821:2.

early responses to the *Columbiad*, reflect this kind of coverage, only the noteworthiness of the 1807 edition drove further reprinting of these reviews. The continued success of the work made more negative responses necessary and Federalist editors like Samuel Snowden made sure that Grégoire and Dwight's attacks were given a wide airing.

Partisanship and political controversy could also work in Barlow's favor, however. Despite the number of controversies that bloomed after 1809, Barlow's increased public profile also helped make him more of a republican hero. Though his nomination had been controversial, Barlow had, it is important to stress, actually been confirmed as the Minister to France. Thanks to the 1809 duodecimo edition and his appointment as Minister, Barlow emerged near the end of his life as a poet and politician championed by the pro-republican press and public. As he had done throughout his career, during this period Barlow attempted to use the press to position himself as a leading man of republican letters. Although Barlow's public correspondence with Grégoire, and to a lesser extent with Joachim Le Breton in Paris, were recorded by scholars, the newspaper record reveals a third exchange that has gone unnoticed. In October of 1809, just as the dam of anti-Barlow and anti-*Columbiad* sentiment was about to burst, Barlow received a letter from a man named John Montgomery in North Carolina concerning the *Columbiad*. Montgomery's letter is in many ways the most fascinating literary correspondence of Barlow's career.

Montgomery's letter offers dramatic evidence of how American literary culture was both geographically expanding and democratizing. Montgomery, writing from "the banks of Deep River, Chatham county" apologized to Barlow for writing to a man of "superior rank in life" but hoped that their shared republican principles and "the pressure

on his mind" were sufficient enough justifications for his breach of etiquette ('Character of Paine" 4). Montgomery's concern was Barlow's failure to mention Thomas Paine in the *Columbiad*:

> Sir, this is my case, and the plain fact is, that after reading the grand, poetical and noble description given your Columbiad, of our patriots, statesmen and warriors, during the revolutionary war, your friend was very much disappointed in not finding the name of *Thomas Paine*, mentioned from first to last. A character so conspicuous [and in my mind as worthy] to be totally omitted in the annals of the revolution, I fear, indicates some defect, that shallow politicians as myself cannot see into – unless, dear sir, your tender regards for the feelings of your fellowmen will induce you to favor a '76 whig with some relief from his anxiety. ("Character of Paine" 4)

Barlow had known Paine since 1789, when they met during Barlow's first visit to England, and he is usually counted by scholars as one of Paine's closest friends. Barlow had been instrumental in securing Paine's release from French prison in 1793. Years later, even as Paine approached death he continued to write to Barlow, hoping with some tenderness that Barlow would visit him in New York. Paine's death in June of 1809 may have partially occasioned Montgomery's letter to Barlow. However, his reply to Montgomery indicates that Barlow was nevertheless hesitant to write about Paine given his reputation for drunkenness and the general air of controversy which attended every aspect of Paine's life and writings at the time. As we have seen regarding the Grégoire affair, the Barlow of this period is more tempered than the pamphleteer of London and Paris, and less willing to fully reveal his most radical beliefs to the public.

Barlow's reply to Montgomery is reminiscent of his response to Grégoire, blending good humor with equivocation. In discussing the controversial Paine, Barlow tried to write in a way that would please both sides. Barlow graciously thanks

Montgomery for his "very flattering letter" and admits to "some uneasiness" regarding his omission of Paine ("Character of Paine" 4). Barlow writes:

> I knew him well; and no man has a higher opinion of the merit of his labors in the cause of liberty, in this country and throughout the world – But he was unjust to himself. His private life disgraced his public character. Certain immoralities, and low and vulgar habits, which are apt to follow in the track of almost habitual drunkenness, rendered him a disgusting object for many of the latter years of his life, though his mental faculties retained much of their former luster. ("Character of Paine")

Barlow continues by conceding that, to Paine admirers like Montgomery, these objections mean little. The letter goes on to draw a distinction between those who focus on Paine's public life and those who focus on his private one. Though here and there hinting at his own pro-Paine opinion, Barlow ultimately suggests that writing about Paine is pointless, because everyone's opinion is already set. However, Barlow closes with a touch of candor, perhaps moved to do good by Paine:

> Perhaps these reasons will not be satisfactory to you. They are scarcely so to me. – But in the history of the United States, on which I am at present occupied, he will have his place. It is his most proper place, where strict and ample justice must be done him, as one of the most able and efficient defenders of our rights – one of the surest guides that led us to independency and peace ("Character of Paine" 4)

The Montgomery-Barlow exchange is an important moment in Barlow's career. Given Montgomery's social position, their exchange reached back to Barlow's time as a pamphleteer in Europe, when he had aimed to engage readers who were not his social peers. Outside the mediation of the newspaper or the periodical, this type of interaction had never fully gone off for Barlow in the United States. Montgomery, who lived in the rural South and who called himself "a plain farmer" with little "classical training" was a new kind of reader for Barlow. We can't know for certain if Montgomery was being

honest, but if we assume that the letter is not a hoax, the lack of other known details surrounding his life does suggest that he was of modest or middling standing. No one felt it necessary to record the details of his life.

The entire pose of the letter from Montgomery to Barlow is quite telling and in it we can see changing dynamics in American literary culture at work. The letter presents a scenario in which a simple farmer living in the frontier South feels compelled to respond to the urban poet and diplomat. The letter does assume that it is somewhat novel for Barlow to be receiving a letter from a farmer, but this is in part attributed to the fact that the two men are strangers. There is nothing novel, however, about Montgomery reading the poem. There is no pause in the letter where Montgomery explains how the text came into his hands, no story of a fortuitous meeting with a peddler or of a chance trip to Charleston that led him to find a copy of the book. This detail is unnecessary because the entire situation is presumed to be normal. There is an assumption that there is nothing tremendously noteworthy about Barlow's poem being read in the South. The old gentleman poet of Yale commencements, the Connecticut Wit of Hartford, the London revolutionary, was now being read in backwater North Carolina.

The fact is however, that only a few years before we have every suggestion that this situation would have been very extraordinary. Only two decades before, David Ramsay had discouraged Barlow from worrying about distributing the *Vision of Columbus* in South Carolina – a much more developed, populous, and wealthier state than North Carolina during this time – because "we have few readers here" (Ramsay). The most reasonable inference is that the 1809 duodecimo edition of the *Columbiad* reached Montgomery in North Carolina. This episode serves to remind us how far books

could spread by means not directly recorded by sellers or advertisers, by means likely to be outside the historical archive. It was an impressive achievement for one of Conrad & Company's little duodecimos to reach North Carolina, one that would have been almost unthinkable only a few years before.

The Montgomery-Barlow correspondence also coincided with an overall comeback made by the *Columbiad* in 1810 and 1811. Though Grégoire's attack in the fall of 1809 appeared to initially cast a pall over sales, eventually the ads returned. The duodecimo *Columbiad* weathered the controversy around its author and may have even been revived. It is also possible that the 1809 edition had sold so well that many booksellers had simply run out of copies. Although I have been unable to verify it, there may have in fact been additional copies of the 1809 edition produced by Conrad & Company, an augmenting of the second edition, as it were. Whatever the cause, in 1810 advertisements for the second edition begin appearing in American newspapers again. In 1810-11, the 1809 *Columbiad* was advertised for sale in six cities in Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.[38] The 1809 *Columbiad* regained its momentum, and Barlow was once again looking to keep pushing it along. With so much criticism out there, he was wise to do so.

As he had done with the letter from the French Institute, Barlow viewed his exchange with Montgomery as a way of further advertising himself and his work. In this

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[38] Robert Gray's bookstore advertised the 1809 *Columbiad* at least sixteen times in *The Alexandria Daily Gazette* between March and May of 1810. (Apparently the paper's Federalist editor didn't object.) Other advertisements for the duodecimo include: *The Northern Whig* [Hudson, NY] 22 Jun. 1811:1. *The Connecticut Journal* [New Haven] 06 Sept. 1810:4. *Poulson's American Advertiser* [Philadelphia] 09 Nov. 1810:2. *The Windham Herald* [Windham, CT] 11 Jan. 1811:3. *The Courier* [Norwich, CT] 30 Jan 1811:1.

case, he was also willing to strengthen his association with Paine, which would help connect him to a wide range of republican readers. At the same time, in announcing his old friendship with Paine and in defending Paine's ideas in this manner, Barlow was able to shape his association with the now disgraced and controversial Paine in a way that would benefit his image. He was Paine's old friend, connected to the headier days of the writer's past glories, while being more distant from the troubles of his more recent years. With Paine now conveniently dead, Barlow presented himself as a man ready to help rehabilitate his image and restore his legacy to a proper place.

Publishing his response to Montgomery in the press also served Barlow's image in broader ways. Crucially, Barlow advertised himself as being open to publicly discussing his work with any thoughtful reader, whatever their status. As a poet, Barlow understood himself to be a public figure, a relatively new development in American letters. Within the older aristocratic model of authorship the poet would be stooping mightily to address the criticisms, however respectful, of a "plain farmer." That attitude, that presumed distance between Barlow and men like Montgomery, was fading away. The Montgomery exchange is a demonstration of what might be considered the republican embodiment of the writer's role, with the poet as a friendly and understanding representative of worthy agrarians and their sentiments. Further, the episode once again showed Barlow's attempt to recreate personal bonds and personal audiences through print.

After an initial appearance in *The Raleigh Register* on May 17, 1810, the Montgomery-Barlow exchange appeared in four newspapers scattered across three states

during the next month.[39] How the exchange first appeared in the *Raleigh Register* is a fascinating example of the importance of individual editors during the early nineteenth century. Barlow's connection to *The Raleigh Register* was an old friend, the editor Joseph Gales. Gales began his career in Britain, working as a printer in Sheffield in the 1780s. As the editor and publisher of *The Sheffield Register* Gales became involved in the British reform movements of the time, and like Barlow was a member of the Society for Constitutional Information in the early 1790s. Gales published a number of radical texts, including Paine's *The Rights of Man* during his time in Sheffield, and was eventually forced to flee to Hamburg, Germany in 1794 to escape government prosecution. According to Robert Neal Elliott, in Hamburg Gales met and befriended Barlow, who had fled his own troubles in France. Barlow and Gales bonded over "a common interest in their admiration of Thomas Paine" (Elliott 13) after meeting in a bookstore. In 1795, with Barlow's help, Gales and his wife secured passage to Philadelphia, where Gales hoped to establish a new life.[40]

Gales eventually made his way south from Philadelphia to North Carolina, where he was encouraged to establish a Democratic paper. There was fear that the Federalists were becoming stronger in North Carolina, and Gales's talents were better needed there than in newspaper-heavy Philadelphia. Founded in 1799, *The Raleigh Register* quickly became "the leading advocate of Jeffersonian principles in the state" (Elliott iii). Gales

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[39] *The Raleigh Register* 17 May. 1810:2. *The Enquirer* [Richmond] 01 Jun. 1810:4. *The Columbian* [New York] 06 Jun. 1810:2. *The American Mercury* [Hartford] 14 Jun. 1810:2. *The Republican Messenger* [Shelburne, NY] 26 Jun. 1810:3.

[40] For an account of Gales's early life in Sheffield and the circumstances that led him to meet and befriend Barlow, see Elliott 3-14.

served as the paper's editor and owner until his death in 1833. In Raleigh, Gales remembered Barlow, publishing excerpts from both *Advice to the Privileged Orders* and "The Conspiracy of Kings" in 1801.[41] In 1805, Gales published a note announcing Barlow's arrival in the United States, and in 1809 he ran on the front page of the *Register* a speech Barlow had delivered in Washington.[42] When the Grégoire scandal hit, Gales chose to publish Grégoire's letter, which he followed with a short, paragraph-long note, in defense of Barlow.[43] Gales was an established friend to Barlow in both a political and personal sense. We can reasonably conjecture that Barlow sent him a copy of his correspondence with Montgomery because it also offered a North Carolina connection and because it was likely to be published there.[44] Though it went unannounced on the page, the background of a newspaper item in a North Carolina paper, which concerned a poem published in Philadelphia, had its roots in a chance meeting in a Hamburg bookstore.

What becomes clear is that Barlow's identity as a poet, especially in America, had changed dramatically since the 1780s. To be sure, Barlow's status as a poet still carried with it associations of the gentlemanly class in 1810, as it had from the very beginning of his career. It was not for nothing that Barlow presented both Madison and Jefferson with

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[41] Barlow excerpts in the *Register*: 26 May 1801:2. 24 Nov. 1801:1.

[42] Barlow's arrival mentioned: *The Raleigh Register* 02 Sept. 1805:2. Reprint of Barlow speech: *The Raleigh Register* 20 Jul. 1809:1.

[43] *The Raleigh Register* 05 Jul. 1809:1.

[44] It is also possible that it was Montgomery who initiated the contact with Gales. However, we know nothing about Montgomery, so this seems like too faithful an assumption to make. Regarding Barlow, meanwhile, we know that he frequently contacted newspaper editors, and we know that he had a relationship with Gales.

copies of the 1807 edition of the *Columbiad*. Poetry was a respectable gift, which even Presidents themselves might promote, as Washington had done by subscribing to Barlow's *Vision of Columbus* back in 1787. Still, the second edition of the *Columbiad*, the $2.00 duodecimo of 1809, points to a more populist concept of the poet's place in society. This wasn't merely a conceptual change either: the 1809 duodecimo physically made its way into new homes and new hands, into contact with audiences less wealthy and less powerful than the Connecticut aristocracy that had once boosted Barlow's status. Barlow's interaction with Montgomery is, of course, confined to letter, but it does take place. Barlow did not himself identify with "plain farmers" like Montgomery, but he had no problem discussing his work with them and addressing them in a sincere language of fraternity.

Barlow's poetry gave Montgomery reason to believe that his letter would be warmly accepted. Since the publication of *The Conspiracy of Kings* in 1792, Barlow had stressed the common bonds and universal rights of humanity. Throughout his writing, Barlow makes it clear that his understanding of the brotherhood of man reaches across class lines, national boundaries, and race. In *The Conspiracy of Kings*, Barlow announces that his loyalty is with the King's guards, rather than the King (lines 165-66). As discussed in chapter 3, Barlow rhapsodizes on the worldwide connection between men. The "brothers" (line 181) of the Earth are found "in every clime" (line 183) and speak "in every tongue" (line 184). Barlow continues to stress this universalism in *The Columbiad*, repeatedly evoking tropes such as "the commonwealth of man" (4. 342). In coming to Washington's aid in the Revolutionary War, France, we are told, fights for all, "for man's whole race the sword of France we draw" (7. 79). Importantly, Barlow extends this

rhetoric to the enslaved peoples of Africa in the *Columbiad*. In book 8 Barlow characterizes slavery as a violation of "the rights of man" (8. 224) and argues that slaveholders in the United States should:

> Cast all men equal in her human mold!
> Their fibres, feelings, reasoning powers the same,
> Like wants await them, like desires inflame. (8. 226-8)

Continuing the argument, Barlow later adds, "Equality of Right is nature's plan,/ And following nature is the march of man." (8. 363-64) Barlow asks that slavery be abolished in the United States before it undermines the culture of equality and freedom that had been established. Finally, the *Columbiad* ends, not with the glory of the United States being celebrated, but with all of humanity joined together in peace by global commerce and a confederation of nations. For these reasons, Montgomery had good reason to believe that he would not need a title or a letter of introduction to address Barlow.

Montgomery's letter is also a useful example of how an individual reader, as opposed to a magazine critic or a personal friend or foe, received the poem. Montgomery's enthusiasm for Barlow's work was plainly evident in his letter. As such, he serves as an important example of the *Columbiad*'s ability to reach and inspire readers who shared Barlow's political ideas. Barlow's poem has not generally been remembered as an inspirational work, but as Steven Blakemore points out in his recent reassessment of the poem, the *Columbiad* was intended to be just that. Blakemore writes, "the *Columbiad* is a republican primer intended to energize the republican reader" (34). Montgomery was energized enough to write to Barlow, a man above his station in life, because Paine's place in a work as noteworthy as the *Columbiad* was too important to not be addressed.

The poem, for Montgomery, invited both further thought and further action. Blakemore touches on this element of the *Columbiad*, which he describes as, "an instruction manual, a national and world history, a political geography lesson, and a literary exercise in imaginative intertextuality" (329).

Barlow's didacticism, however, was always tempered by his desire for intimacy with his audience. The Montgomery letter and reply marked the third time since 1808 that Barlow had published his correspondence in the press. Barlow's public correspondence with Le Breton, Grégoire, and Montgomery, was aimed at increasing Barlow's literary fame, while also making sure it took the right form. These letters also serve to remind us of how Barlow was adept and experienced at using print as a personal, as opposed to an impersonal medium. The nurturing environment Barlow experienced as a student at Yale evidently left a lasting mark. We see throughout his career an attempt to reproduce that close contact with his audience, always seeking out further validation and proof of legitimacy. As discussed in chapter two, this sets Barlow against the republican model of print outlined by Warner in *Letters of the Republic*. Barlow continued to frame his print persona not as an impersonal participant in rational discourse, but instead as a specific man interested in specific aims. Barlow was often ostentatiously intellectual in his writing, a quality his critics found pompous, but he did not view the print medium as simply an intellectual space. Print was a way of reaching readers that Barlow always wanted to also think of as friends. These letters – however artificial they may be – go against the dominant historical narrative of how early national authors imagined print as a medium of detached discourse. For Barlow, print was a way of overcoming detachment.

The paper trail generated by the criticisms and defenses of the *Columbiad* between 1809 and 1811 also demonstrates wider shifts in American literary and newspaper culture. Geography, though still not conquered, no longer controlled distribution so fully. In the 1780s, the young Barlow had done very well promote his work outside of his home bases of New Haven and Hartford. Nevertheless, his reach could barely form a 100-mile radius around Hartford. Merely hitting the papers and bookstores of Norwich was an accomplishment. Two decades later, the situation was different. The publishing and newspaper industries (which were essentially one in the same) had expanded. Newspaper editors took on a new, more important, role in shaping the content of their papers. The post-war generation of editors was more partisan and political networks became a major driver of textual traffic. Barlow's example shows how personal and political loyalties could guarantee that a text would be reprinted across a number of geographically random newspapers. Aside from a brief period after the publication of the luxury edition of the *Columbiad*, from the 1790s until the end of his life, Barlow was fundamentally seen as "a republican poet." Barlow's political reputation, combined with his general fame, guaranteed him a recurring place in the self-perpetuating partisan controversies that filled newspapers during the Jeffersonian era.

The Columbiad's paper trail also demonstrates the new vulnerability suffered by American poets in a changing literary climate. The poet, long hidden behind curtains of polite anonymity and respected within the safe bounds of elite coteries, was exposed in the press. While poems had long been in American newspapers, the poet himself had not been. Barlow's career, after all, had essentially begun from the dais, launched by the prestige of the Yale commencements. Although poetry would of course preserve much of

its prestige, the figure of the poet was changing. The old assumption that a poet was likely a figure who, as a person, deserved respect, was fading away. The poet moved down from the dais and into the street. In the examples of Barlow and Freneau, we can see how difficult negotiating the partisan minefield of the period could be. Barlow gained fame in the American press, but he also gained infamy. Barlow tried to maintain a personal connection to his audience through the press, while his enemies used the press to attack Barlow personally. For many Federalist editors and the readers of their papers, Barlow became a notorious figure, a man as dangerous as the most scandalous novelist. When Barlow and his friends had written the *Anarchiad* they had merely winked at being scandalous. Scandal in that context merely meant one's classical allusions were just a bit more pointed, the rhetoric just slightly more charged. There was still the pseudonym protecting the authors, especially once the text got outside the local area. Two decades later, the engagement was different. Barlow's supposed personal beliefs and failings as a man – vanity, greed, religious infidelity, etc. – became fodder for his critics. His name was unabashedly used. *The Columbiad* was not just a cumbersome poem, it became the absurd expression of a grasping and manipulative man bent on destroying the Christian religion and the political order of the United States. The poem was inextricably linked to the man.

However, Barlow also benefited from his new level of personal exposure. The exchange with Montgomery nicely marks how widely Barlow's audience had grown, and how much it had changed since his days as a commencement poet at Yale. The simple geographic expansion of his audience is easy enough to see. However, his audience expanded in other ways as well, as he increasingly reached greater and greater numbers

of the middle and working class. Since the early 1790s, Barlow's name had been on the reading list for those who were interested in left-of-center political theory and materialistic approaches to religion and world history. These were readers who were excited, rather than horrified, by ideas associated with French thought. As described in chapter three, one of Barlow's primary American publishers while he was still abroad was John Fellows, a friend of Paine and a dedicated promoter of deism who also published works by Priestly, Condorcet, Voltaire, and Volney. This wing of Barlow's audience included, but was not limited to, elites and professionals. As Joyce Appleby has shown, republican political culture was not socially uniform or organized around common economic interests. Rather, it was a diverse coalition held together by certain notions of political theory and a vision of society.[45] This class of ideologically motivated readers certainly stretched across the entire spectrum of the American book-buying population.

The widespread association of Barlow's work with radical anticlericalism generated by the Grégoire controversy likely boosted Barlow's popularity amongst deists and free thinkers, another group of broad social composition. Since his days in the Johnson Circle in London, Barlow had maintained close ties with a number of publishers connected with the liberal religious press. This subset of Barlow's audience was naturally undaunted by conservative attacks. In 1810, for example, the *Columbiad* was praised in the pages of *The Theophilanthropist*, a deist newspaper in New York, for inculcating "a

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[45] Appleby writes, "the Jeffersonians coalesced around a set of ideas – radical notions about how society should be reorganized. These ideas were propagated less by a class of men – that is, persons tied together by common economic interests – than by a kind of man – men attracted by certain beliefs" (4). In particular, a specific vision of society, "had the power to hold together otherwise disparate individuals and groups" (Appleby 4).

more sound morality and philosophy, than any other work of the Epic kind ever produced in England or Scotland" ("American Genius" 373). According to Adolf Koch, by the early nineteenth century, those active in the deist movement were largely men from the artisan classes, with a heavy representation from the printing industry, and others from the "lower social stratum" (290). The profile of these free- thinking readers overlapped with those who remained enthusiastic supporters of Paine, a group that was increasingly working-class in composition. Barlow's connection with Paine, which Montgomery's letter announces as pre-existing and Barlow's response attempts to reaffirm, is good evidence that Barlow had a healthy readership amongst politically-engaged middle-class and working-class Americans. Barlow wrote and published frequently enough to keep this side of his audience engaged, and the outrage of conservative editors and critics, of course, also helped maintain and grow Barlow's fame as a republican thinker.

Barlow's connection to Paine and a likely readership amongst radical deists is not the only evidence of a broad audience for his work. As mentioned earlier, the level of publicity generated by the *Columbiad* was comparable to that given to popular novels in the American press. Moreover, the price of the 1809 edition, in most places around two dollars, was also comparable. If the indicators of interest and the cost of the products are similar, how divergent can the buyers be? In her influential *Revolution and the Word*, Cathy Davidson argues that the early American novel was a part of "the democratization of the written word" (vii) during the period, and "the perfect form for this imperfect time" (13). Davidson stresses the novel's ability to educate its audience as they read, as well as the portable form and lower price of most novels facilitating library distribution. The 1809 edition of the *Columbiad* was designed with similar goals in mind. It is unlikely that

considerations for the differences in genre and subject matter are so large that the *Columbiad* should be seen as entirely missing out on the "proto-mass audience" (Davidson 43) enjoyed by the novel. In her study, Davidson minimizes the importance of the Connecticut Wits, contending that they have received undue attention from historians, given that they represented only "a somewhat hypocritical gentry" (257). There is much validity to this argument; however, late-career Barlow and the 1809 *Columbiad* shared little with the work done by the rest of the Connecticut Wits. Looking at the historical record, it is a shorter leap to grant Barlow at least some degree of popular interest and a wide readership, than it is to deny it.

Barlow's works appeared in a variety of locations, and remained tenaciously alive for many years. *The Conspiracy of Kings,* for example, was being advertised in 1807 and was reviewed as late as 1809. Only Barlow's third poem, his 1783 elegy dedicated to Titus Hosmer, was truly an obscure work. If Barlow was not the most famous living American poet, then who else claims the title? The discussion generated by the *Columbiad* was markedly larger than that occasioned by other contemporary literary works, and the second edition of the poem was one of the easier volumes of poetry for an American buyer to purchase. Viewing Barlow's career in retrospect, we see a poet who grew from a local, regional, poet, into one who had a decentralized audience, the core of which spread from northern Virginia to Massachusetts and included cities such as Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston. Finally, it must be noted that Barlow published works across the hierarchy of verse: he published poems that would be considered light verse, he published political poems on contemporary events, and he published two variations on the epic, still the most prestigious poetic mode. In

terms of both geography and genre, Barlow had a greater access to the mainstream of the American poetry audience than any other contemporary poet.

Unlike nearly every other American poet to emerge in the late eighteenth century, Barlow ended his life near the peak of his literary fame. When Barlow was named as an American minister to France by President Madison, his public profile was the highest of his life. From 1807 through 1812 Barlow's *Columbiad* was one of the most talked about poems in the United States. Initially well-received as a noble demonstration of American abilities in the art of fine bookmaking, after 1809 the poem emerged as both a reviled and revered example of American republican thought. After the poem's first publication in late 1807, it took roughly two years for more these politically-oriented reviews to hit the American press. These reviews altered the discussion of Barlow's poem and brought increased attention to his ideas. This effect was mirrored by the second edition of the *Columbiad*, published in 1809. The two volume duodecimo edition widened the audience of the poem and helped move the *Columbiad* out of the display case and into the pockets of American readers. After three decades of courting and solicitation, through print, Barlow transcended the bounds of his youth and his own literary limitations, becoming a national poet.

CONCLUSION

AN UNREPRESENTATIVE FIGURE

The *Columbiad* was the last work Barlow published during his lifetime. On the day after Christmas, 1812, Barlow died in miserable circumstances in Poland. Traveling by carriage with his nephew, the poet succumbed to exposure after weeks of winter travel in Eastern Europe. His assignment, as the U.S. minister to France, had been to meet with Napoleon, whose army was then retreating from Russia.[1] It never happened. As Barlow waited for an opportunity to leave Paris that autumn, he continued to revise the *Columbiad*. Barlow's long poem of ideas which used Columbus as its frame had been his life's work. The young poet had read passages from the poem at his second Yale commencement and the old diplomat was still revising the poem during his final winter. With only occasional lapses, Barlow worked on the project in some fashion from the early 1780s until the last weeks of his life in 1812. Barlow's papers were eventually carried back to Paris and later the United States by his nephew. A slightly revised edition was published in Paris, by F. Schoell, in 1813. This edition was reprinted in the United States, by Joseph Milligan in the District of Columbia in 1825. Meanwhile, Robert Desilver of Philadelphia inherited the unsold copies of the original 1807 edition and continued to sell them, with new illustrations of more recent Presidents tipped in, through the 1820s (Bidwell 373-377).

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[1] The best source regarding Barlow's goals and activities during his diplomatic appointment is Irving Bryant, "Joel Barlow, Madison's Stubborn Minister."

Barlow never stopped writing. During the final days of his life, as he witnessed the devastation and chaos wrought by Napoleon's venture east, Barlow wrote his last poem, "Advice to a Raven in Russia." Barlow's bitter "advice" for the raven is that the corpses he dines on aren't merely in Russia, but stretch across Europe. Leon Howard, who rediscovered the poem in 1938, considers the poem to be the best thing that Barlow, or any other Connecticut Wit, ever wrote (Howard 338). Unfortunately, the manuscript quietly remained in the hands of Barlow's family for years and no attempt was made to publish the poem until 1843, when it appeared in a Pennsylvania newspaper.[2] That publication received little notice. Charles Burr Todd, Barlow's first biographer, knew nothing of the poem, nor did all but a true handful of readers until the twentieth century. Throughout this study I have attempted to locate the distributors and readers of Barlow's poems. Regarding "Advice to a Raven in Russia" we can say that essentially it had no distributors and no readers.

The Columbiad, then, was the work that ended Barlow's publication career. In the two editions of that work we see the completion of Barlow's development as a proto-modern author, his movement from an eighteenth-century literary culture into a nineteenth-century one. The 1807 *Columbiad* celebrated the wonders of book-making and the printing press on a grand and luxurious scale. The 1809 *Columbiad* complemented its predecessor in its ability to find a wider distribution and a larger audience, taking advantage of the print networks then in place. Together the two *Columbiads* reproduce the hybrid nature that had long defined Barlow's methodology.

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[2] Lemuel G. Olmstead, Barlow's grand-nephew rediscovered the poem and had it published in the *Erie Chronicle* on October 10, 1843. A century later Howard republished the poem in his article "Joel Barlow and Napoleon."

The elegant and luxurious 1807 edition was, although quite patriotic, also an individual monument. Barlow certainly wasn't going to publish that work anonymously. The 1809 edition, however, had more communitarian aims. While he continued to defend and promulgate his literary fame, Barlow also wanted a work that could make its way around the continent. The 1809 edition was clearly motivated by the old republican notion that works were meant to be diffused widely, for the benefit of society. Barlow definitely thought that the reading of his work was beneficial.

It had been a long journey from the *Prospect of Peace* to the *Columbiad* for Barlow. Had he secured a faculty position at Yale, as he had originally sought after graduation, he might never have left New Haven, and his career might not have looked much different from Timothy Dwight's. Instead, a lack of money and an unclear place in the New England hierarchy pushed Barlow first to Hartford in 1782 and then on to Europe in 1788. Outside the Yale incubator, Barlow had to change the way he published and promoted his work. Simply being on speaking terms with Ezra Stiles would no longer suffice. In the 1780s Barlow received substantial state patronage both directly and indirectly. He was given a favorable post as an army chaplain then later relied heavily on the support of army officers when he sought subscribers for the *Vision of Columbus*. With both Yale and the army's stamp of approval the Association of Connecticut Ministers picked him to revise Watts's psalms, to Barlow's great benefit. At the same time, Barlow increasingly turned to print to further his literary standing. Eventually, Barlow became familiar with the Atlantic publishing and periodical network, expanding his repertoire to include pamphlets, collaborative periodical verse, and book-length poems.

Although his literary lifespan began in a much more limited publishing world than the one in which it ended, the clear continuity of Barlow's motivations gives his career coherence. There is no stage of Barlow's career marked by a weariness to engage his audience or a disdain for the public. He consistently believed in what he wrote and seemed never to have felt that his poetry was less important than other aspects of his life. He never fully abandoned the literary muse for the ministry, journalism, law, trade, or anything else. Unlike nearly every other American poet of his generation, he never had to return to poetry, because he never left it. Furthermore, there is no moment in Barlow's career where he pursued a means or method of publication because he believed it was proper or more gentlemanly or anything else. Barlow was not driven by theoretical considerations: he just wanted people to read his work. Barlow desired nothing more to be a famous poet, and on the whole he succeeded.

Like a laboratory constant, Barlow's literary motivations were always the same, allowing us to see the changes taking place around him more clearly. In the days when he needed to, Barlow searched for patrons large and small, he published via subscription list, and he embraced coterie literary culture. In Europe, where a pure print existence was not only possible but preferable, Barlow became an extremely prolific pamphleteer. Later, in both Europe and North America he successfully engaged the general literary market. And when he saw that his own work could exemplify the industrial progress of the United States, he published a lavish book that was wildly different from the real, literal, shape his poetry had taken during his youth. In print, Barlow presented himself in a way that was at once thoroughly republican and rational, yet at the same time personal. Barlow's example troubles our notions of republican print culture. There are few writers from the

period that can match the depths of Barlow's republican commitment or emphasis on reason, yet his career was in many respects a continual attempt to recreate, in print, an intimate aristocratic relationship between himself and his audience.

Since the early nineteenth century, Barlow has frustrated readers due to a perceived lack of literary development, a rigidity of style and a lack of romantic flavoring that makes his neoclassicism seem alien. There is some merit to this reaction, yet it only tells part of the story. Although Barlow never became acceptably proto-romantic, he did emerge as a proto-modern poet. The publication details of Barlow's works not only changed frequently, they changed according to a clear pattern that helps us make sense of a mostly lost and generally puzzling time in American literary history. The dynamic arc of Barlow's career highlights the slow emergence of both the periodical press and a rudimentary publishing industry in the United States. Barlow's career also reveals the shift from an aristocratic conception of authorship to a more modern one, as well as a new understanding of a poetry that need not retain any of its older elements.

Over the three decades of his career Barlow's readership consistently grew. He conquered Connecticut, then all of New England in the 1780s. In the next decade, from London and Paris, he began to reach all of the major cities of the United States. By the time of the *Columbiad* Barlow was the most talked about poet in the United States and he found readers across the country. By this time, thanks to his connections to religious radicals and freethinkers, along with his republican credentials, Barlow's audience was not only geographically wide, it was economically diverse. Because of his wide fame and the nature of the political press, unlike nearly every other American poet, Barlow was not defined by a local popularity. His readership was decentralized.

This more popular Barlow forces us to reconsider our assumptions about the literature of the early national period. Looking at the notoriety and successful distribution of the 1809 *Columbiad*, there is good reason to believe that Barlow's audience was quite similar to the broad, proto-mass audience that was reading popular fiction. The popularity of the "Conspiracy of Kings" and the "Hasty Pudding" further evince a large audience for Barlow. Poetry, even in the form of long poems, was not isolated from the main of American society, nor did it occupy an exclusive literary enclave dominated by ministers and merchants. The increasingly broad readership then developing in the United States was not the exclusive domain of the novel and newspaper verse. Poetry, even the heavily allusive neoclassical verse of Barlow, was part of the intellectual life of a large number of Americans. Farmers, like John Montgomery of North Carolina, were reading epic poems. Artisans in New York and ministers in Connecticut were reading epic poems as well. The matter of examining and analyzing the works that people actually read has become increasingly important in literary studies. Rather than being pushed aside, Barlow's work, and his appeal to his audience, needs to be reappraised.

Barlow's humble path to fame was the same one taken by American poets in general from the age of Mather Byles to that of Walt Whitman. It is, in fact, Whitman that one sees, more than any other later figure, when looking at Barlow's career. This comparison is not offered as a means of justifying Barlow, instead it is simply meant to help illuminate him. On the whole, associating Barlow with his own peers, especially the other Connecticut poets, has certainly not furthered our understanding of Barlow's poetry. Barlow shared with Whitman a passion for revision, along with an almost singular mania for engagement with the widest audience possible. That shared desire was

based, for both, on an obvious feeling of profound fraternity with humanity, a belief that the men of the world would inherit the future, enriching it with their innate nobility. Like Whitman, Barlow also had experience as a pressman. From that early familiarity, we can see in both a willingness to experiment and adapt. Finally, there was, without question, a Whitmanian facility for self-promotion displayed by Barlow. Obviously, there are a score of differences between Whitman and Barlow as well. However, Barlow's career allows us to see that the many modern elements of American poetry we see more fully emerging in Whitman were already germinating at the turn of the century.

Barlow's life in print, his near-constant appearances in American newspapers from Maine to South Carolina from the 1780s on, give life to the statistics outlining the growth of the American press between the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. Comparing the reception of *The Vision of Columbus* (1787) and *The Columbiad* (1807), for example, we can see how reviews, news items, correspondence, and squibs, travelled faster, and farther than they had before. For the poet who wished to take advantage of them, there were a variety of publication options becoming available. As Trish Loughran reminds us, it would still be premature to consider the United States to have a truly national print market at this time. This is indeed why the appearance of Barlow's work in North Carolina is noteworthy. When his career began, it had been an accomplishment for Barlow to distribute his works throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts. By 1809, that distribution zone ranged from the Carolinas to New Hampshire. Barlow's example gives us a sense of the possibilities offered by the early national print market. The print network of the new nation was small and fractured, to be sure, but not entirely disconnected either.

Of his contemporaries, the poet that Barlow shared the most in common was Philip Freneau. Barlow and Freneau were part of the small number of American writers (even smaller amongst poets) who fell on the pro-French and Jeffersonian side of the political divide. Both men were university educated, but not initially comfortable members of the ruling elite. Bizarrely, both poets also ended up freezing to death, with Freneau finding Barlow's fate outside his New Jersey home in 1832. Most importantly, like Barlow, Freneau published almost exclusively in his own name and was comfortable using the newspapers to promote his work. By the 1790s, both poets shared common associations in the world of republican letters.

However, these two republicans ended up having two very different careers. Lewis Leary organized his classic study of Freneau around the idea of failure. Freneau, Leary wrote in his book's first sentence, "failed in almost everything he attempted" (ix). Always short of money, Freneau could not parlay his own relationships with the republican elite into anything lasting, and ended up spending most of his life in relative obscurity in rural New Jersey. Freneau was somehow unable to benefit from the same relationships that Barlow had and for that reason, Barlow became a much more read poet. Both men suffered from political attacks, but only Barlow was able to weather them. Of Freneau's career of struggle and strife, Leary concludes, "there was no place in this world for the life Freneau wanted to live" (ix). Barlow shared Freneau's devotion to republican political principles, as well as his dreams of literary fame, and for a period during the 1780s, Barlow had also attempted to make himself a newspaper man. Yet from that period of convergence, Barlow separated himself from Freneau, just as he separated himself from the rest of the Connecticut Wits. Unlike Freneau, in just two short decades

Barlow established himself as a man of ideas in both London and Paris, managed to become rich by speculating in wartime trade, and elevated his literary standing in his native country. In 1807, shuffling between Philadelphia to work on the publication of his epic poem and his large home in Washington, surrounded by his friends in the Jeffersonian establishment, Barlow must have felt that he had, unlike Freneau, found the place in the world for the life he wanted to live.

Barlow's example illuminates because he was an un-representative figure. When Barlow is compared to the poets of his generation, and those of the generation that followed, his authorial and editorial flexibility is what stands out. One must strain to find even two distinct phases in the careers of the other Connecticut Wits, who wrote and published with little change for their entire lives. Poets like Timothy Dwight and John Trumbull were happy reaching their core audience of New England conservatives. Finding readers in Philadelphia or Washington or anywhere else does not appear to have concerned them and they would have likely turned away possible readers from an uncouth and republican place like North Carolina. Similarly static careers unfolded, for different reasons, for female poets like Sarah Wentworth Morton, Ann Eliza Bleecker, and Phillis Wheatley. They wrote and published (whether in manuscript or print) at fifteen as they did at forty. As a young Yale poet, Barlow shared with these women similar subtle restrictions. However, Barlow could escape the culture of literary deference that they could not.

This tendency to accept small horizons continued with the later poets of the first half-romantic literary generation in America. Names such as James Kirk Paulding, James Hillhouse, Fitz-Greene Halleck or John Brainard, all born between 1789 and 1796, do not

evoke images of men who were innovators or particularly adaptable. Barlow, on the other hand, rather easily transformed himself from a college poet working mostly in manuscript to the bookish master of the *Columbiad*. In between, Barlow had remade himself as both a provincial newspaper wit and as a revolutionary pamphleteer in two of the largest cities in the world. He was one of the earliest American authors to be comfortable with literary advertising and was an adept self-promoter. The poet who could never leave the neoclassical mode, was in all the other aspects that go into the making and distribution of poetry extremely amendable to change. This ability to expand his audience is the surprising secret at the heart of Barlow's career. With Barlow's audience before us, we have no choice but to acknowledge the enduring appeal of neoclassical poetry in the early republic.

APPENDIX

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF BARLOW'S POETRY

Date of first publication in parenthesis.

***The Prospect of Peace* (1778)**

Published: New Haven, CT (Thomas & Samuel Green)

Periodical Reprint: Norwich, CT

Anthologized: *American Poems* (Collier & Buel) Litchfield, CT 1793; *The Columbian Muse* (J. Carey) New York, NY 1794

***A Poem, Spoken at the Public Commencement at Yale College in New Haven* (1781)**

Published: Hartford, CT (Hudson & Goodwin)

Anthologized: *American Poems* (Collier & Buel) Litchfield, CT 1793

***An Elegy on the Late Honorable Titus Hosmer* (1782)**

Published: Hartford, CT (Hudson & Goodwin)

***Doctor Watts's Imitation of the Psalms of Davis, Corrected and Enlarged by Joel Barlow* (1785)**

Published: First edition Hartford, CT (Barlow & Babcock); Second edition (1786): Hartford, CT (Hudson & Goodwin)

Sold: Hartford, CT; New Haven, CT; Boston, MA; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA

A Translation of Sundry Psalms Which Were Omitted in Doctor Watts's Version; To Which is Added, A Number of Hymns **(1785)**

Published: Hartford, CT (Barlow & Babcock)

The Anarchiad **(1786-87)**

Installments Published in Periodicals: New Haven, CT; Hartford, CT; Litchfield, CT; New York, NY; Boston, MA; Salem, MA; Portsmouth, NH; Providence, RI

The Vision of Columbus **(1787)**

Published: First U.S. edition Hartford, CT (Hudson & Goodwin) 1787; London (Stockdale & Dilly) 1787; Second U.S. edition Hartford, CT (Hudson & Goodwin) 1788; Paris edition (Barrois & Thomson) 1793; Reprinted Paris edition New York, NY (Thomas Greenleaf) 1795

Sold: Hartford, CT; New Haven, CT; Philadelphia, PA; Providence, RI; Boston, MA; London, Paris; New York, NY

Excerpts Published in Periodicals: Boston, MA; New Haven, CT; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Providence, RI

The Conspiracy of Kings **(1792)**

Published: Three London editions (1792, 1792, 1796) by Joseph Johnson; New York, NY (Greenleaf & Fellows) 1793; Newburyport, MA (Robinson & Tucker) 1794

Sold: London, New York, NY; New London, CT; Boston, MA; Newburyport, MA; Philadelphia, PA; Harrisburg, PA; Bristol, RI

Periodical Reprints: New York, NY; Boston, MA

The Hasty Pudding **(1796)**

Published: Four 1796 editions: New Haven, CT (Thomas & Samuel Green); New York, NY (Fellows & Adam); Catskill, NY (T. & M. Croswell); Fairhaven, VT (J.P. Spooner); Two 1797 editions: Stockbridge, MA (Rosseter & Willard); New London, CT (Charles Holt); Two 1798 editions: Poughkeepsie, NY (N. Power); Salem, MA (Joshua Cushing)

Sold: New Haven, CT; New London, CT; New York, NY; Catskill, NY; Poughkeepsie, NY; Sag Harbor, NY; Stockbridge, MA; Salem, MA; Newburyport, MA; Fairhaven, VT

Periodical Reprints: Worcester, MA; Hartford, CT; Portland, MA; Concord, NH (excerpt); Pittsfield, MA (excerpt)

***The Columbiad* (1807)**

Published: two editions in Philadelphia, PA (Conrad & Co.) 1807 & 1809; London edition (Philips) 1808; Paris edition (F. Schoell) 1813

Sold: 1807 edition: Philadelphia, PA; Baltimore, MD; New York, NY; Charleston, SC; Boston, MA; Washington, DC; New Haven, CT.

Sold: 1809 edition: Philadelphia, PA; Baltimore, MD; New York, NY; Hudson, NY; Boston, MA; New Bedford, MA; New Haven, CT; Windham, CT; Norwich, CT; Alexandria, VA

Excerpted: Trenton, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; Sag Harbor, NY; Walpole, NH; Washington, DC

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