

DISJUNCTIVE NATIONALISMS:
THE CREATION OF THE LITERATURE
OF THE UNITED STATES

by

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the American Republic grew both in population and cultural productions in diverse efforts to answer the nation's questions of self-identity and direction. Poets from across diverse political, gendered, theological, and racial perspectives answered those questions in disjunctive ways by using both the imagined author and the text as an imagined community as the bases for building their respective visions of American national identity. The ability to use texts as the creations of the reading public's imagination became avenues for communicating responses to, and visions for, the nation which became reality with the publication of each new work. The constructions of these poetic visions occurred simultaneously with use of the imagined past, the imagined present, and the imagined future as avenues for exploring and communicating a variety of alternative national paths as each poet sought to prioritize her or his own voice in the cacophony of a developing American literature.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my grandparents:

Billy Ray McManus 1934-2011

Marian Trevillion Folendore McManus 1938-2002

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1. INTRODUCTION: DISJUNCTIVE NATIONALISMS

The topic of nationalism in American literature has been exhaustively discussed and debated since the early days of the republic. Poets such as Joel Barlow, Timothy Dwight, Philip Freneau, John Trumbull, and Phillis Wheatley engaged in this debate through various projects of their own, utilizing various poetic genres from epic to satire. Each poet expressed her or his own vision of what the nation was and what it could be, though each vision was often incongruous with the visions of other contemporary writers.

While scholars have typically sought unified thematic narratives (e.g., the Adamic myth as explored by R.W.B. Lewis or John Shield's discussion of the myth of Aeneas), these narratives tend to monopolize the development of nationalism in American literature through limiting the narrative of the development of nationalism into the constraints of their respective mythos. It is not necessary to challenge the validity of these previously documented narratives, and in fact these understandings weave into the narrative this project seeks to tell: a narrative of creative tensions and disjunctive visions in early American society that found expression through the constantly competing politically, sociologically, and theologically dissonant voices and writings of the major poets of the era. This project will center on telling a part of this story of nationalism in American literature, a story that cannot be encompassed within the confines of any single study or discipline. Any limitations that may arise from this project (e.g., narratives of seemingly limited applicability) are not to be seen as hindrances to this project, but rather as

points of departure for complimentary areas of inquiry. The theoretical scope of this project is like a kaleidoscopic lens. Utilizing Benedict Anderson's concept of the "imagined community" and Michael Warner's "principle of negativity," this project explores competing visions of the early American republic through the varied forms that the imagined community takes in American literature.

Arnold's "imagined community" can be transferred to conceptualizing the nature of literary texts as imagined communities; that is, readers conceive of their role as readers but also as being participants within (or partakers of) texts. For example, by reading Joel Barlow's *The Vision of Columbus* (1787) or Timothy Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan* (1785), literate Americans enacted and consumed an American identity, regardless of their degree of agreement with the aims or values of the authors. Conceiving of the text as an imagined community between author and reader extends to the community of readers of a particular text; that is, there are both the smaller author-individual reader relationship and the author-readers community. This larger community serves as a basis for establishing a sense of nationalism, but also suggests that the early republic possessed no single unified current of nationalism, thereby allowing for the idea of disjunctive nationalisms.

While the development of authorship in the early republic has already been explored by such scholars as Grantland Rice in his *The Transformation of Authorship in America* (1997), wherein he offers a view of the work of historical forces, I will add to that conversation by suggesting that the author also becomes an imagined entity. This concept extends the work of the text as an imagined community, suggesting that the author is never dead as the reader is always aware of an authoring force. This idea of the imagined author explores the way in which, while the reader creates their own sense of meaning from the text independent of the author's

intentions (however indeterminable), the reader is always aware of the existence, living or dead, of an author. This is reinforced by instances of the presence of an author's name on title pages. This presents a sense of meaning to the text: meaning is anchored to the text by the reader's knowledge of an author whose beliefs inform the text, which is reflective of another person's perspective which the reader is entertaining, even without necessarily agreeing with the author. This creates an imagined community between reader and author, even though the author may be little more than an imagined entity to the reader, an abstracted person denoted solely by a name on the title page. This development of the author in America creates a sense of nationalism in that the reader's reading of a text evidences a receptivity to the community that participation in the American print sphere created. This sphere is one both of imagined statuses (reader(s)/author(s)) and of tactile capitalism, both co-evolving into a print marketplace in conjunction with developing, and competing, senses of American nationalism. In one sense, the name of the author participates in both these spheres with their name appearing physically on the page, pressed there by type, but also present in the reader's imagination as an originator of nationalism. The textual presence of a name insists to the reader that the imagined author is a real person, and that this author participates in the same nation as the reader, in addition to participating in the same text with the reader. Creating a unifying effect, the imagined author is an initiator of nationalism, a first citizen in the imagined community.

The construction of an imagined author creates further room for constructions of race and gender, as Phillis Wheatley makes evident. The construction of both Wheatley's race and gender through the title page of *Poems* with its accompanying engraving and attestation of authenticity serve as illustrations ("paradeictic" to borrow a term from Shields, "model used as an argument" (*The American Aeneas* xxvii)) of the way in which constructions of authorship create

an imagined identity. This can also be applied to the typical absence of such markers, as Wheatley's *Poems* was subjected to, in the works of authors who were typically white and male. While this fact emphasizes the obvious racism and sexism of the times, it also underscores the way in which the role of author is imagined through the signals of the title page and its accompaniments. Another way this is explored is the use of "by the author of" statements, wherein Susanna Rowson's works illustrate this. In addition, other title page information can contribute to the readers' imaginings of authors.

Disjunctive nationalisms find expression through various modes such as imagining a past, present, and future, all imagined through the text. Visions of the past are most obvious in Joel Barlow's *The Columbiad* (1807, 1825), wherein Barlow imagines of the Incan past occurring like the rest of the events of this poem, through a vision given to Columbus showing the effects of his endeavors. Unlike Dwight, Barlow draws on a distinctly New World experience that places his newly-formed country squarely within a New World tradition of nation formation, one that ironically implies that the United States is foreshadowed by those who were originally here, which in a sense is true given the creole status of many North American colonists. Barlow uses poetic license in the context of the vision framework to suggest that Columbus's work is the inevitable source of the founding of America. Here Barlow's poem functions on all three of the chronotopic applications, of the imagined past, imagined present, and the imagined future. By linking America's founding to the Incan experience, Barlow constructs a New World ethos for the founding of nations, but by linking America's formation to Columbus through the vision, Barlow also insists on an European cultural heritage that removes the implications of linkage to Native American populations. Barlow's framework insists on the non-European context for the creation of America, but with the removal of cultural and historical responsibility for its

formation from Native Americans, which is then placed squarely on the shoulders of Europeans, more specifically on the discovery of Columbus.

Visions of the past also notably occur in Timothy Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan* (1785), though Dwight positions his past in the time of the Biblical nation of Israel's invasion of Canaan. Using a deeper history than Barlow's use of Incan society reinforces the Adamic mythos in American culture and presents Dwight an avenue for communicating his Christianity. Briefly weaving names of American Revolutionary leaders into this poem syncretizes the developing mythos of the American Revolution with Biblical elements (which almost always dominate *The Conquest*). Reaching into the distant Biblical past also allows Dwight to re-affirm the Puritan errand into the wilderness as also applicable to the new nation. Disturbingly, this leaves Native Americans implicatively as the objects of a divinely-sanctioned genocide. While that may not have been Dwight's overall aim, it appears that *The Conquest* serves as a way of providing a spiritual legitimization of the country's existence, a foundation on which Dwight's later *Greenfield Hill* (1794) would build by providing a blueprint for American society. Both texts work together to communicate a vision for the success of the country, a success that draws heavily on the acknowledgement of a past that draws from Biblical history. The Biblical past is also drawn from in Wheatley's miniature epic "Goliath of Gath," wherein her use of the story of David and Goliath may be seen in light of her proto-nationalism, a concept echoed by other critics, but also must be seen in light of the construction of an American biblical past as a way of maintaining a deep sense of connectivity to common cultural touchstones and a sense of religious identification with Christianity (which was important throughout all of Wheatley's authorial experience, though clearly not a position shared by all Americans) in the young country's striving for cultural and literary independence. In addition, Wheatley's use of classical allusions

reinforces the Sheildsian myth of Aeneas as well as creating a further American literary connection to a pagan (non-Christian) spirituality and mythos that incurs another debt to the past, which seen in light of Wheatley's nationalism, connotes the historical depth which she crafted into her literary projects, including providing a link to both Christian and non-Christian pasts in her creation of an American present. It is, after all, the past by which the present is constructed and to which the present is actively compared.

Efforts to construct a poetic past suggest a dire need for not an either strictly Adamic or Columbian or Aeneas mythos, but rather an American mythos, a place readily filled by Euro-American appropriations of Native American identities. Use of Native Americans as a source of Euro-American identity has been explored by numerous scholars (e.g., Helen Carr) and so depictions of Native Americans as a source for an American past are of interest, such as Freneau's involvement with the "dying Indian" trope. This trope is also frequently discussed by other scholars but may be seen not merely as an act of Native American surrender to an inevitable disappearance (perpetuated through poetry in the 18th century), but rather as a way to build an American past. Rather than seeing the "dying Indian" as a figure whose land and identity can be, post-death, appropriated for immediate and future use, this analysis claims that the dying Indian inherently becomes a source of historical identity through providing a sort of instant past, a past that runs as deep as biblical and classical cultures. Thus Revolutionary-era appropriations of Native American identities (e.g., the Boston Tea partiers dressing as Native Americans) are not just for the sake of a contemporary identity, but are identities that are appropriated for a trans-historical (past, present and future) national identity. Since collective identity is at issue here, no implications are made for issues of personal, individual identities; collective identities, like individual identities, are imagined and can be shifted as deemed

necessary. Appropriating an American past from Native Americans can also take on the idea of succession or inheritance, thus enacting a reversal of the paternal-child relationship analogy common in early views of European-Native American relationships. An example of this would be Freneau's "The Prophecy of King Tammany" in which the dying Native American chief accepts the inevitability of Native American disappearance, in effect ceding his people's lands to the encroaching Europeans. An additional example is Barlow's use of the Incan past in which the Incan government becomes a type of New World precedent for the establishment of the United States, with some disjunctive parallels. For example, the Incans are established as a monarchy which falls to Europeans rather than a representative democracy, though perhaps the parallel is to suggest the continued need for American (New World) resistance to European pressures and European political models. But it is essential to keep in mind that Barlow sets up his extensive discussion of Incan society as a precedent for the establishment of the United States.

Invention of a past precedes the establishment of a definitive present, hence the need to construct an imagined past is essential to construct a history of the American people. This occurred through two avenues, not only through the use of a distinctly North American past (Freneau's Tammany and Barlow's Incans), but also through a European trans-cultural appropriation of the mythos of other times and peoples. The former component of connecting the American reader to the past is explored above, while the use of transcultural appropriation is the use of a historical past generated in another time and place. Here Timothy Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan* and Wheatley's use of Biblical and classical allusions in her epyllia and throughout her oeuvre are the most immediate examples of this phenomenon. Building on John Shields's concept of *translatio cultus* (which is a re-articulation of Old World culture in a New World context *Aeneas* 3-38) this study explores the ways in which utilizing Jewish and classical

stories becomes a way of deepening the American past while also insuring a cultural similarity with that of Britain (an idea which is complicated by Shields's observation on the decline of the classical mode in Britain with a concurrent rise in use in the colonies). This historical past connects America with a deeper past in which America could take cultural root. Rather than seeing early moves toward an independent American literature (with its oft-despised "imitativeness" of European models) as complicated by this transcultural appropriation of stories, and rather than seeing, for example, Dwight's and Wheatley's use of classical and biblical allusions as initially New World retellings of Old World stories, this use creates a historical link between their readers and a deeper Biblical and European (classical) past. American authors position America as a nation of readers in the stream of historical culture. American literature and American re-tellings, then, are not simply American in the sense of being New World versions of Old World stories (*translatio cultus*), but American uses of classical and Biblical stories become American in that they conscientiously utilizes these transcultural stories as a means of participating in a distinctly Old World cultural continuum. America is the next and latest port on the rivers of culture in time. While the American government made stumbling strives to better itself, American culture would initially be within a recognizable continuum with European models, not because of authors who were uneducated and imitative *sans* original creative power, but as an intentional act of cultural stability in an intentional construction of an American cultural past. The break with Britain through the traumatic Revolutionary War created social instability in which American literary efforts to construct a continuum with European and Biblical models were stabilizing forces while also working simultaneously to construct a distinctly American literature, one that was the latest expression of cultural ideals that reached back thousands of years (this can also be seen in

connections to ancient Greece and Rome which the Founding fathers made). America makes itself an inheritor of ancient literary traditions to reaffirm the American cultural endeavor to establish itself independently of Britain; this parallels Shields's use of the Aeneas myth as explored in *The American Aeneas: Classical Origins of the American Self* (2001). Drawing from the past allowed early American poets to creatively connect their contemporary audiences with re-imaginings of ancient pasts, while at the same time forging a link to the present through these excursions. Doing so allowed American authors to extend a conceptualization of American culture to encompass something larger than the immediate colonial past, ties to a larger zeitgeist that transcended the particulars of colonial history. This created a wider cultural expanse, a larger culture for America than that which it inherited from its European mother states. At the same time, reaching into different pasts perpetuates the disjunctive nature of early American nationalisms through the creation of continuously shifting interpretations of this past, and in most cases, this perpetuated the eventual dismissal from cultural memory that many of the early Republic's poets experienced. Though clearly works such as those by Wheatley, Dwight, and Barlow were created in thoughtful response to the cultural currents of their time, their use of European models has long been criticized as being over-reliant on European styles and continues to perpetuate a critical bias that views these works as less than superior to later American poets such as Whitman and Dickinson. While early American poets represent a transitional stage in American poetry, from colonial status to the more unique contributions to poetry of later 19th century poets, the early national endeavors of American poets also represent competing visions in the development of American nationalism through imaginings of ancient pasts (classical and Biblical) that served multiple purposes while also expressing unique and competing visions for

the American present; the imagined past would serve as a foundation of the newly-forming nation.

This present was tumultuous, full of shifting currents of disjunctive nationalisms and the societal effects of the Revolutionary War and an unstable government, as the social elite sought to maintain influence in the political formation of the country. Under the unsteady Articles of Confederation and through the framing of the Constitution, the concept of the American government shifted immensely in the early years of the Republic, and authors of the period contributed reflections of their contemporary times as a means of responding to this unstable period. Reflections on contemporary society allowed early American poets to suggest the immediacy for their disjunctive visions of American nationalisms, as well as to provide an explanation for these disjunctive visions; competing voices and views on the composition of the new republic were reflective of the diversity of views circulating outside of literary circles. Literary texts were produced that reflected shifting currents of nationalisms, but the extent to which these literary texts, poems and novels, were having an actual effect on the world views of the public is questionable in that circulation of those texts is one factor that is not fully measurable. The availability and circulation of texts do not necessarily reflect the size of an actual readership, which could have included individuals listening to a text read aloud, or even people overhearing discussions of texts. All that can be ascertained is that certain views were expressed, though the actual pragmatic impact of those texts is not readily measurable. However, the creation and publication of these texts reflect an important move within the new country, regardless of the measurable results of those works.

Poetic reflections on the American present are found within a flexible time period of the 1760s through the mid-1820s. To imagine a “present” is to construct poetry with relative

verisimilitude to contemporary times. Doing so created a sense of cultural stability necessary during the tumultuous years surrounding 1776. It also allowed for the subtle manipulation of depictions of reality, and consequently evidences the disjunctive nature of the poetic visions by the poets of the era, as well as the ability of poetry to create its own realities. These poetic realities are seen in early American society as evidence of literary independence, and more importantly, as initial productions of an American culture. As such, early poetic productions were welcomed despite their limitations. Because the imagined present in American poetry embraces a culture in flux, the topics of these poems are very broad, almost as broad as the society depicted. For example, John Trumbull's *The Progress of Dullness* and *M'Fingal*, as well as the multi-authored *The Anarchiad* are examples of the imagined present. Trumbull's brilliant satires reflect a thankfully lighter side of early national poetics because the use of satire in the early republic reflects the divisions within society and the need to express alternative views of the direction of the American public (*The Progress of Dullness*) and denigration of Tories (always a welcome topic to true patriots). Joel Barlow's "The Hasty Pudding" also represents an exploration of the present and explores the relationship of American cultural self-definition to the context of European society, a context Barlow was uniquely qualified to discuss. Other ways to view the present can be found in Freneau's "America Independent," which explores the relevancy of the American political scene to the world and its contemporary potential.

Imagining the present allows authors to situate America in its contemporary world while also establishing that presence as relevant, both to the American public through the creation of a material culture (printed matter) and to the rest of the world, if only for the derision of European critics. The imagined present is flexible, malleable by every whim of culture, or at least by those sources of influence that find their way into print. As such, poems which deal with an imagined

American present offer windows into early republic culture and thought that may not be readily available in imaginings of the past or future. The imagined present offers authors the opportunity to reflect on and to shape their contemporary times not just through suggesting a future for America or supposing a deeper national past, but through the active creation of an imagined present through their verse.

Of much concern to the American nation as it was just starting out, both immediately and long term, was the state of its future. While many poets readily drew from their contemporary times, several poets saw the future of America as a greater time, creating poetic Manifest Destinies through the creation of the “Rising Glory of America” genre. Examples of these include Freneau’s early endeavors (initially with Brackenridge) as well as the later sections of Barlow’s magisterial *The Columbiad*. Imagining a future, of the three fields of conception, past, present, and future, is perhaps, the broadest and most potentially creative of the chronotopic (to borrow loosely from Bakhtin) applications of imagined time in literature. Writing on the blank page of the future allows for the most plastic of imagined futures with the broadest, and most bombastic, visions for what direction the country could take. Imagining a future allows poets to build on both their imagined past and present (i.e., Barlow’s *The Columbiad* and Dwight’s *Greenfield Hill*) to direct readers’ attention to the potential for their country, while also providing a blueprint for getting to those suggested futures (i.e., Dwight’s farmer’s advice to the citizens in *Greenfield Hill*) or suggesting the inevitability (i.e., Freneau) for the success of the country. By providing a blueprint, poets such as Dwight use their poems as pulpits for influencing the direction of everyday life; this is accomplished by supposing their words will be heeded while suggesting an imagined future that will be insured by attending to their directions. Dwight’s didactic nationalism contrasts with the future imagined nationalistic successes of Freneau for

whom the imagined future is essentially a poetic prophecy with no guarantee to be fulfilled, except in the imaginations of the readers, whose readings enact a repetition of the visions for the future, but whose pragmatic actions outside of reading would be the only way for that future to become an eventually realized present. The visions of a “future glory” for America, which looking back from the early 21st century seems to have been haltingly fulfilled to some extent, served as a means to provide stability in the imagined present. This was accomplished by auguring a successful national future that would conceivably provide a sense of secular hope for a country struggling to stand on its own feet.

“Rising Glory of America” poems present alternative futures than those that their contemporary public may have wished for, but did not otherwise express; this genre provided crucial pictures of hope for a better future. While undoubtedly exercising limited influence (what frontier settlers brought *The Columbiad* with them on their journeys?) these poems helped create a national cultural environment, foreshadowing Manifest Destiny and laying a cultural groundwork for the implicatively inevitable continental and international expansion of the nation. Doing so allowed these poets to create disjunctive perspectives on nationalisms for the future of the country, despite that poems of this genre shared similarities, such as seeing the future of the country as only successful and not sustaining any overtly negative conceptions of future nationhood. By virtue of their different composition dates and varying content, “Rising Glory of America” poems allowed for competing, albeit inherently positive, views that suggested different means of interpreting the future, a future that had no basis except for the imagined community of readers and their descendants who would be responsible for the fulfillment of those predictions. The imagined future also presents challenges to readers, who must accept and enact these visions to validate them. While most early Americans would have had no trouble

readily accepting predictions of greatness, these were still just words on a page, words that would be put back on the shelf to collect dust as the country moved forward apart from the visions of its earliest nationalistic poets, their dreams relegated to being mostly forgotten in place of other poets considered more talented. These imagined futures thus became forgotten suggestions, unneeded to encourage the country toward self-perceived greatness. And yet despite their current literary status (Freneau and Wheatley are the only two poets studied here who remain actively and widely studied in undergraduate courses today), the groundwork which poets such as Barlow, Dwight, Freneau, Trumbull, and Wheatley, among others, laid was essential for the later 19th century blossoming of American poetry, all of the poets undoubtedly contained in the expansiveness of Whitman's corpus and in the microcosms of Dickinson's expertise. These imagined futures of the earlier poets were fulfilled through the drive to the west and poetically, through the accomplishments of those who eventually obscured most of their works into the pages of literary forgetfulness.

Disjunctive nationalisms are evident through understanding an expansion of Benedict Anderson's idea of the imagined community. Authors and texts are imagined as each reader creates the idea of a text and its author each new time a text is read, whether privately or through being read out loud to a listening group. This creates two imagined communities, one between the reader/listener and the author, as well as a sense of community with the text, that is, the readers are participants or observers of the text. Reading also creates an imagined community of readers, of people who have allowed themselves to be influenced by the worldviews contained within that which they read. Participating in this imagined community of readers, a community existing on a pragmatic plane as the United States but imaginatively through the shared experience of reading specific texts, the past, present, and future of the nation then become

avenues of exploration for this imagined community as various authors provide differing and ultimately disjunctive nationalistic visions for the United States of America. Imagining a past in which American themes are situated allowed authors such as Dwight to draw from ancient Hebrew history while Wheatley's use of classical allusions also reflects a similar, but secular, move. Imagining a present allowed poets to draw from more immediately accessible themes such as the recent events of American independence. Imagining a future glory for the country allowed authors to speculate and prophesy better times for the nation as it struggled to build a distinct sense of nationalistic identity, while also foreshadowing Manifest Destiny. Authors as varied as Joel Barlow, Timothy Dwight, Philip Freneau, John Trumbull, and Phillis Wheatley, along with others, built poetic visions for the young country, with many of the poets keenly aware of the potential contained within the borders of the country and its Constitution, a potential they readily celebrated and encouraged. Despite the relative academic obscurity (the very worst of obscurities one suspects) of the majority of the work of these poets, their disparate and disjunctive visions offered competing voices that disallowed the creation of any sort of unifying and distinctly American sense of nationalism in the literature of the early republic, complicating the ability of later literary scholars to discover a clear development of nationalism in the literature of the times.

2. THE TEXT AS AN IMAGINED COMMUNITY AND THE IMAGINED AUTHOR

For the early American reading public, collectively reading specific texts created imaginary communities of literary experience. This creation of a literary experience inculcated the reading public with the ideas of the national authors whom the reading community consumed, thus providing individuals with shared experiences of imagined worlds in the newly formed, one might say newly imagined, United States. One should add, however, an important distinction between audience and community. Poets of the early republic sought to convince audiences of the merits of their textual productions through the creation of reading communities. Yet not all reading audiences became reading communities. There would have been individuals who read the works of these poets and then dismissed their work on the basis of ideological or aesthetic beliefs. Then, as now, reading audiences can be defined as those who read (or listen to) a text or texts, whereas a reading community can be defined as a collective of individuals who consider themselves as participants in a particular text, either through literary appreciation of the aesthetics of a particular text (i.e., they read and enjoyed the text) and/or through subscribing to the ideology of a text or author (either through sharing similar views with the author prior to reading the text or through having been convinced of a particular view through the consumption of a particular text). Textual audiences may be defined further as those individuals who encountered a text either through reading or listening to a specific text, or even those who encountered the text through advertisements for it (i.e., a targeted audience at its most base level: readers with disposable income). Textual communities, which like textual audiences are also

imagined communities, includes those who were aesthetically and/or ideologically influenced by a text: a community of readers who form an imagined community on the basis of their shared experience(s) with a text. This level of influence of a text on a reader's views could range from the stoking of a fervent patriotism to a more moderate affect in the sense of a greater appreciation for the creative literary merits of their fellow Americans.

One of the ways in which texts created not only audiences, but also built literary communities was through the use of book subscription lists which were often published in the works that were funded through subscription sales. Subscriptions for a promised future volume would be sold by publishers and booksellers, the money raised would then be applied to the production costs of the book, and thus authors and publishers had a way to decrease the risk of financial loss on publications while at the same time potentially creating an early profit from a text prior to its initial publication. Selling subscriptions also acted as a control on initial piracy by insuring that a volume would only be provided through approved channels, the printer from whom a buyer purchased a subscription would then be that book buyer's source for the desired text, not another printer who simply reprinted unauthorized copies. More importantly, published subscription lists allowed other readers, either other subscribers or potential buyers viewing a copy for sale at a shop, to recognize the reach of the community of a particular text. Which of the potential readers' neighbors or members of high society were also participating in a specific text? Who else was supporting the artistic vision of the author? Who else was buying this cultural production and who else was presumably (by virtue of their subscription) also reading this particular text? Subscription lists served multiple purposes: from promoting a list of individuals whose pre-publication subscriptions served as an endorsement of their faith in a project (or their gullibility to marketing), advertised the popularity of a text to potential buyers, and created a

sense of literary solidarity with the development of the literature of the early American republic. It is this sense of social unity associated with subscriber lists in the publication of a book, in this case poetry, that demonstrates the existence of imagined literary communities. While clearly each name on a subscription list represented an individual person, each name also potentially represented an entire household, with all of its literate or listening members, male or female, enslaved or free. Reading a subscription list may seem a rather dull task, as it is indeed at times, but recognizing the resonances of an imagined literary community that echo from the impressed type on antique paper also represents interestingly a preservation of those names in a literary context, often separated from the biographical facts of the lives of those listed, and certainly divorced of the lived lives of the rest of the households represented by the subscribers' names. Nonetheless, subscribers' names also demonstrate the reach of literature in the early republic.

Whether non-authorial names appeared either on a list of subscribers printed and bound with the book which the subscriber supported, or as a testifier to the authenticity of the origins of a text as in the unique case of Phillis Wheatley, these individuals not only participated in an imagined textual community, a community centered around the consumption of a particular text, they also contributed to the text itself as an imagined community. Not only was there an imagined textual community centered on the text as a consumable literary object, its readers shared a common experience and exposure to particular aesthetic choices by the author (e.g., the Adamic and Aeneas myths, or others), but the appearance of non-authorial names in printed editions of texts also contributed to the idea that the text itself, the physical printed paper and binding, were also sites of imagined communities. These communities were bound up within the physical parameters of a volume, resting on bookshelves of private libraries and changing hands as neighbors potentially borrowed books from each other, thereby maintaining the circulation of

the texts on a limited scale. This portable community could be transferred between readers and a subscriber could conceivably find some sense of personal satisfaction in the loaning or giving of copies of the books in which their name appeared. The text itself is an imagined community; the printed volume serves as a physical metonymic manifestation of part of the imagined literary community, inclusive of author, printer, bookseller, and subscribers.

From the printer's shop to the hands of subscribers, a printed volume passed between multiple hands over the course of its corporeal existence, from reader to reader, carrying with it the names of some of those involved in its production. American literary identity was not only shaped by the productions of poets such as Freneau and Dwight, and novelists such as Charles Brockden Brown and Susanna Rowson, but also by the lives of those who subscribed to book publications. By attaching their names, and monies, to the production of native literary texts, American citizens not only promoted nationalistic culture, but became participants in that culture themselves. Subscribers are producers of that culture in the sense that their subscription money contributed to the initial publication costs associated with a volume, meaning that rather than merely being consumers of published materials, subscribers were also inherently responsible not only for the promotion of native literary productions, but also for its incarnation into printed volumes. This dual participation in the production and consumption of printed texts is unique to the role of the subscribers, a role not replicated by any other person(s) associated with a text. This duality is made more complex when subscriber lists were printed with a text, thus conflating in the same binding the names of those who helped produce and who then consumed the text with the text itself, creating the published volume as a representation of the literary community associated with that text. Associating with a text through subscription, then, perpetuated not just a nationalist literature, it also promoted nationalism through the strengthening of societal and

economic identification with a particular text, which itself may have promoted nationalism (e.g., Barlow's *The Vision of Columbus*), by associating individuals with literary nationalism in both specific instances and more broadly by generic association. This promoted the identification of specifically named individuals with the idea of a nationalism perpetuated narrowly by a particular text and nationalism in a larger, nation-wide sense. Subscriber lists not only promoted the popularity of texts, but also individual subscribers as members of a segment of society who not only promoted American literature, but also whose participation signaled to other readers the broader scope that participation in the American literary environs would and could produce, namely citizens aware of the nascent and developing national desire for a distinctly American literature. Reading subscriber lists made non-subscriber readers aware of the larger literary community in which they were participating by the consumption of a particular text, as well as promoting the perception of the patriotism of subscribers.

Participation in literary and textual communities through subscribing to books also not only allowed for the social promotion of subscribers, but also for the development of the American literature. The patriotic landscape was not merely inhabited by a few authors scribbling away by the light of disappearing candles, nor were the only voices calling for a distinctly American literature those of cultural critics, but rather also the voices of the reading public who spoke with their subscriptions to new books that celebrated American authors and literature. Subscribers empowered both the American publishing industry and authors, as well as demonstrated a cultural and economic demand for home-grown authors. The continued publication of American works was dependent on the continued demand for American texts. While this statement seems obvious, it entails a greater social complexity than the elementary economic concept of supply and demand. Not only is a system of social self-promotion enacted

through participation in subscriber lists (i.e., finding increased self-perception of social status by virtue of participation in the consumptive aspects of the early American literary world), but also the promotion of literary nationalism occurs, that is, the creation of a literature that reflects ideas of nationalism, while also serving as a way for individuals to actively engage in American culture more broadly. Appearing in print bound alongside new demonstrations of American cultural independence effectively conflated the subscribers' names with the ideas of American culture and its subsidiary of American literature, as well as American nationalism. Subscription lists also empowered individuals to participate in a world of letters in ways that the majority of individuals at the time never experienced, their name could be replicated hundreds of times and spread out over the body of literate America, one volume at a time. Subscription lists, then, played an important role in not just creating financial feasibility for publications, but also enacted a wider, broader social movement of social self-promotion as well, and more importantly for this study, the perpetuation of and demonstration of American nationalism in a time when the country was still finding its way politically and socially. Subscriber lists promoted not just publications, but also social prestige as evidence of economic status.

While no direct evidence of a subscriber's pride in their name appearing may readily appear available in personal letters or journals, it is not uncommon to encounter names appearing with a particular number of volumes purchased, as is the case in Joel Barlow's *The Vision of Columbus* (1787) in which several subscribers have the quantity of the volumes they purchased listed next to their names. The purchasing of multiple copies implies the desire of the reading public to distribute a literature that promoted the nascent American literary culture while also developing and further cultivating both the literary community and the textual community (i.e., the text as a site of community). Both of these communities concurrently contributed to the

development of American nationalism by providing avenues of opportunity to craft imagined communities that would then in-turn self-perpetuate, e.g., a reader would presumably read a patriotic text and then be inspired to enact the poet's vision for the American people (i.e., Dwight's *Greenfield Hill*).

Lists of names published in books were not always exclusively those of subscribers, but as in the case of Phillis Wheatley, a list of prominent Boston citizens appeared affixed to a letter attesting to the authenticity of the author's poems, that the poems contained in the volume were indeed by an African-British-American lady enslaved in the city. The printing of this letter and list, and even the perception of a necessity for its inclusion, remarks on the well-discussed racism and sexism of the times which Wheatley faced as she pursued her literary and artistic endeavors. But the list also speaks to the community which Wheatley's poetry created, though from the included list of witnesses that community was apparently white and male, it was a literary community nonetheless. This literary community demonstrates the reach of literature in the late American colonies as they moved toward nationhood. The list of witnesses also demonstrates the trust placed in print, that the claims of the letter were true. Wheatley's contemporary reading public would otherwise potentially dismiss Wheatley's immense talents and relegate her artistic and aesthetic contributions to late 18th century colonial American culture as meaningless primarily because of her race and gender. But the list itself also represents an extension of the literary work, one thought necessary to validate to contemporary culture the authenticity of Wheatley's genius. Rather than participants in the book's production like a subscriber's list, the names attesting Wheatley's talents become part of the text not simply for artistic verification but also as reflective of the witnesses' literary tastes, not only attesting authenticity but also serving as literary endorsements with a distinctly sexist and racist subtext. Wheatley's poetry, their

names indicate, is her own, but also very much worth reading for those of social standing as the list included individuals whose names would be recognized by other Bostonians as upstanding citizens. This is said with the acknowledgement that the signed letter troubles notions of authorship by suggesting that an author's works need to be supported at all, demonstrating the lack of faith contemporaries had in the intellectual productions of African Americans at the time. Rather than left to its own artistic and literary merit, the list of names becomes a means of control in *Poems On Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, placing parameters of approval on Wheatley's creativity and relegating her genius to a sphere of censorship, in this case an approval by means of censoring the authenticity of the poems. The names listed then reflect an aspect of social control in a slave-owning society, an exercise in control over the very words which Wheatley could and could not say. While no doubt Wheatley exercised artistic control over her poems, the presence of verification by Euro-Americans represents an intrusion and may have motivated Wheatley self-censoring her work to not blatantly address the evils of slavery in a more direct fashion than if she had not faced censorship.

As participants in the text, the names on this list signal to late 18th century American society that African American literary productions are suspect and subject to verification, that they are not automatically subjected to cultural judgment based exclusively on their aesthetic and literary merits. By passing judgment on Wheatley's poems, the list also reflects the increased need on Wheatley's part for enacting a subversive poetics to insure her poetry's literary acceptance. In addition, the attestation attests to the view of Euro-Americans at the time of a recognition of the potential for a need to control the writings of enslaved persons, most of whom were either forbidden or otherwise prevented from ever acquiring a basic literacy. Wheatley's achievements, then, appeared under the approval of a censoring group of culturally prominent

Euro-Americans, who were also bound with Wheatley's poems much as a list of subscribers would be with other volumes. While subscribers would have appeared in a text at an expense with the manifold results already discussed, in Wheatley's case, the list of names functions in a similar way. The list shows readers not only those citizens of Boston of whom readers would have accepted their word, but it also positions the signers of the letter as men as somehow responsible for, or at the very least capable of, exercising literary judgment about what text(s) merit the attention of the wider reading public.

Protonationalism is one theme of Wheatley's poetry that has already been noted by scholars such as Vincent Carretta (67, 155). The attestation signers also represent the move toward cultural independence that the American colonies experienced shortly before the Revolutionary War, the long development of American colonial culture could not only produce poets, but also literary citizens who were capable of performing colonial self-censorship. The trans-Atlantic nature of the publication of Wheatley's *Poems* in London, and its dedication to Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon, adds to the importance of this consideration. Appearing in a global marketplace, Wheatley's volume found refuge in a more tolerant and celebratory environment after no Bostonian publishers were willing to publish Wheatley. Whether or not the letter of authenticity with its attached names was the product of this hostile and racist American publishing environment, or whether the letter and list of witnesses were required by the British publisher, is unknown. But the inclusion seems to have been to appease the American, more specifically the Boston, literary marketplace. Most, if not all, of the names signed would have meant very little to readers outside of Boston, many of whom there would have known the signees or their reputation. The list then functions as a means of declaring to local readers and those abroad that Wheatley's poems required verification of her literary

productions because she was both African and female. Another function is to demonstrate the developing literary aesthetic of the late American colonies, as well as the ability of the colonies to produce men of culture who would be presented (via the list) as capable of passing literary judgment on texts. In addition, the list effectively links each signee with the collection of poems as a whole; they are, whether Wheatley wanted them or not, and most likely not, part of *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, their own sort of censorious poem, announcing to the world the doubts that Euro-Americans and Europeans held concerning the validity of cultural productions of Africans and African Americans.

Lists operate on several levels within texts, extending the primary text, promoting the social status of those included, and most importantly, as means of creating and maintaining the imagined literary community that texts were themselves, both metaphysically joining readers through shared experiences, and creating a physical community of names printed and bound together as pages included with literary texts. In a sense these lists are extensions of the primary texts, whether subscriber lists or as witnesses as in the case of Wheatley. The names appearing within volumes function pragmatically through assisting the initial publication costs or culturally through the promotion of literate and literary cultures within broad cultural matrices that reached across the ocean. Subscriber lists also represent the popularity of particular authors whose previously published works could be utilized in the promotion of promised future volumes, and in Wheatley's case, the list of names functions as a form of people who credited Wheatley's reputation on a global scale, a reputation which Wheatley was already competently building on her own without their help to begin with. Lists then served both necessary (as early crowd funding efforts) and unnecessary (e.g., Wheatley) roles both for and within texts.

The author functions herself as an imagined entity who enacts not only the creation of the text, but also provides one of the bases for a literary community. Authors' texts provide a locus for literary community by existing as an imagined entity for readers, a dually present and absent force whose creativity functions as, to borrow from R.W.B. Lewis, an American literary Adam. The author is always present via his or her name published on the title page of the text, and in some cases, made visual through illustrations of the author as a front piece. This present absence, the author's name and depiction, when included with the text, demonstrate to the reader the author's continuing presence in the text despite a physical absence at the reading experience that the reader has. This absence allows for the reader to interact with the text freely, engaging, accepting, dismissing, being entertained, being bored, happy, or angry with the contents of texts. At the same time the reader is conscious of the originator of the text, being reminded of that presence every time the title page is passed over. While the reader is accepting or refusing the ideas contained in the text, either on an aesthetic or ideological plane, the reader's acknowledgement of the author takes place when the reader experiences a reaction to the text, a reaction that then is potentially transferred to the author. This transferal then allows a reader to consider participating in future texts by the same author, or not if the work was found particularly disagreeable. For example, on the title page of Joel Barlow's *The Conspiracy of Kings* (London, 1792) there appears, under Barlow's name, the notation that he is the "[a]uthor of "Advice to the Privileged Orders," and of "The Vision of Columbus." Informing the reader of the author's connection to his other texts allows the reader to associate any previous experiences reading this author's texts with the possible effects to be encountered with reading a new text by the same author, while also advertising other related texts to the reader if this is their first time reading a particular author. Including the author's name functions both on the level of creating a

literary community around an individual text, while also linking other texts together with the one that readers are holding in their hands, thereby expanding textual community.

By linking texts together through the author's name on the title page, or in later printer's practice by including a list of other works by the same author on a separate page, the literary community that exists around a particular text or author can grow through promoting additional texts to readers. This not only promotes book sales, it also advertises additional products of American culture, thereby promoting and furthering the physical expansion of an American literature and consequently selling American literary productions. It also reflects on the author, demonstrating an ability of a particular author to produce more than a one-hit wonder, that is, the author is versatile in his or her written productions, capable of writing beyond a single volume. The author then is posited as a creative force capable of producing a body of work which is a manifestation of American culture, an inchoate American cannon in progress, with the author as the central figure in the development of that cannon. The author then serves as a metonym for this developing cannon of works held to be distinctly American, if only by virtue of their authors' nationality. A reader's understanding of an author's nationality, whether by birth or immigration, forced or otherwise as the examples of Phillis Wheatley and Susanna Rowson demonstrate respectively, contributes to readers' perception of national identity associated with a particular work. This is true even today when a text by an American citizen is automatically considered American in some literary sense, e.g., T.S. Eliot and Richard Wright's expatriated writings. Associating an author's national identity (understood loosely in the context of the early national period through legal or geographical association with a particular country in the case of those authors who never held the full benefits and rights of citizenship in their lifetimes, such as African Americans, Native Americans, and female authors) transferred to the text. For example,

Susanna Rowson, though originally from Britain and her family very much associated with Tories, is the author of what is considered America's first best-seller, *Charlotte: A Tale of Truth*. In this novel the eponymous character flees Britain under the burden of being an unwed mother, fleeing to wait for her lover who never arrives and finally ending in forlorn death to justify the morally salacious nature of the tale. As the story goes, there was a sequel following Charlotte's daughter under the uninspiring title of *Lucy Temple*, the daughter's name, in which the daughter as a child more than makes up for her mother's immorality by doing good deeds for the poor. While both works are entertaining for the reader with a penchant for sentimental fiction, the moral of this story in the context of this study is that these texts very much created a textual community, with Charlotte's success necessitating, via popularity, a continuation of the story in a sequel. In addition, as it is well known, someone planted a gravestone for the fictional Charlotte Temple which apparently drew grieving, or morbidly curious as the case may be, readers on pilgrimages to the bodiless gravestone. All of this occurred under the inspiration and association of Susanna Rowson, whose name also appeared on other literary productions of the period, from textbooks to *Reuben and Rachel*, a multi-generational novel centered around New World experiences.

Textual community could also be both created and encouraged by an author, as is the case with Charles Brockden Brown in his "To the Public" preface to *Edgar Huntly* (1799). In this well-known note, Brown remarks, "that the field of investigation, opened to us by our own country, should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe, may be readily conceived" (3). While not only stirring up the patriotism of his readers by announcing his view of the ability of the American landscape to inspire literary achievements, Brown also speaks to his readers in a note specifically addressed "to the public," encompassing now not just his readership but all

citizens of the country as well. Brown takes the encompassing idea of textual community and then expands it to include all of American society beyond his audience of readers. Working to bring in not just his readers, Brown begins by effectively including his readers as participants in his nationalistic vision by using the collective pronouns “us” and “our.” The “field of investigation” is not just for the author, it is for “us,” the author and reader, and all American citizens, citizens of “our own country,” the country in which Brown supposes all are participants. To borrow from another implication of Brown’s word choice, this is a country in which he and his textual community of “the public” are not only citizens, but “own”-ers of the country. This preface provides the author with a means for positing a textual community that extends beyond those involved with the text and that calls attention to the nationalistic work in which he endeavors, namely to craft a novel in which “[i]t is the purpose of this work to profit by some of these [American] sources; to exhibit a series of adventures, growing out of the condition of our country, and connected with one of the most common and most wonderful diseases or affections of the human frame” (3). Using sources based in the “condition of our country” allows Brown to intentionally craft a story based off of what he perceived as distinctly American sources, which he cited in the final paragraph of the note as “incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western wilderness” (3). To draw from these types of sources allows for the creation of an American literature, one which this note draws the public into recognizing as part of their country. Brown then re-affirms public participation in “our country” while also recognizing the socio-political transcendence that literature offers when he points out that his work, inclusive of his nationalistic goals, also reaches toward the “most wonderful diseases or affections of the human frame.” Brown declares that there is “[o]ne merit the writer may at least claim; that of calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathy of the reader” (3), recognizing his role as

an author in “engaging ...the reader(s)” and other members of the public in the nationalistic and literary causes of *Edgar Huntly*. Recognizing his role as author, Brown expresses not only his goals for the novel in “To the Public,” but he also lays out how he will accomplish this: by drawing from the American environment, and as the novel demonstrates, the history of the American people and their troubled and troubling interactions with Native Americans. This note demonstrates the ability of authors to use their texts as sites of textual community that extend to their entire country, not just the text’s readers. It also demonstrates authorial recognition of the ability of texts to create community and to reinforce already existent communities, then the text becomes part of the reinforcing cultural matrix that holds those communities together. That is, the nationalistic endeavors of texts such as *Edgar Huntly* become part of imagined national communities through textual communities that make up that national community by way of cultural participation that reinforces self-perceived participatory status by members of an imagined community. Thus texts not only create but also reify imagined communities, both national and textual, with textual communities often working as factors of the culture of nationalistic communities. Engaging readers through a text positions the author as a source of this cultural community that then builds nationalism, engagements in which Charles Brockden Brown knowingly participates.

Textual communities took many forms and existed around works from a variety of genres from poetic epics to novels. The imagined textual community created an avenue for readers from disparate parts of the nation to engage in common reading activities, with books being carried by the post or traveling friend. The distribution of texts via personal relationships is illustrated by Fred Lewis Pattee in his lengthy introduction to his 3 volume edition of Philip Freneau’s poetry by relating a letter from Freneau to James Madison, the poet’s college mate, who sent Madison

collections of his poetry via an acquaintance who was visiting the region of Madison's estate and who would stop by to drop books off to Madison. Madison previously subscribed to Freneau's 1809 edition and the poet had gone through some effort to insure that the president received those copies, but for a later edition he appears to have sent Madison a copy gratis, in part to help Madison recuperate the drastic losses incurred with the destruction wrought by the British in their failed attempts to subdue the United States a second time (Pattee lxxxvii-xc). The book was then moved across the country by way of a personal connection which Freneau had in order to deliver a collection of his poems to an old friend, with whom his main communications at this time was through letters, not all of which survive. As a supplement to a recently destroyed library, apparently the British soldiers also had no respect for Freneau's poems, the sent volumes also represent a rebuilding of American culture, a literary resistance to British oppression and an act of American cultural defiance that served as, at least via Freneau's actions, a textual rejoinder to the destructive forces of Madison's library. By moving between author and reader via another individual on personal travel, as opposed to being sent by post, the transmission of Freneau's works to Madison demonstrate the human side of the textual community, that texts were transmitted not simply by nameless mail couriers or merchants but also by personal relationships, human interactions that further the expanse of textual communities beyond readers and reviewers. In addition, the transfer of the text also signifies the role of published volumes within the context of personal relationships; the 1809 copies were subscribed for by Madison, and payment presumably sent, but the 1815 editions represented Freneau's gift to his friend, with those specific copies functioning not just as gifts but also as metonyms for the expansion and distribution of American literary culture. As gifts, these copies represent the transcendence of textual community beyond connections between individuals exclusively through the market of

the text (i.e., publisher and subscriber), demonstrating the depth of American literary culture beyond simply a supply and demand cultural economic system. Textual community can also be deeply personal, representing not just the mediated textual community between author and reader, but also relationships and community experienced outside of, prior to, because of, and beyond, connections that center around the text. Freneau's sending of volumes by way of an acquaintance to an old friend and confidant, then president, demonstrates the value of texts apart from being economic and cultural artifacts. Not only are texts part of an imagined community surrounding the printed versions of texts, the texts also function as part of the complex interactions of human relationships apart from simply being printed material. Books can be part of relational connections outside of the literary sphere, as participants in the community as much as people participate. This paradoxical interaction merits study as part of humanistic intellectual efforts, while within the context of early American literature this merits attention for the ways in which these non-textual uses of printed matter create and/ reinforce human relationships on a basic relational plane, books as gifts demonstrate the reach and importance of textual community to human culture and in this case, of American culture at the time. As items meant to replace volumes lost to war, Freneau's gifts also serve not solely as symbols of a long-lasting friendship, but also as a means of providing material comfort in the face of drastic loss suffered at the hands of the British, under whom Freneau had also suffered during the Revolutionary War.

The author as an imagined entity may seem to serve only a minimal function in the development of American literary community, but their role is crucial and not just from an obvious place as generators of texts. Authors also become purveyors and symbols of the ability of the American republic to gain cultural independence from the traditions of Europe, traditions whose dominant influence in early American literature has often resulted in denigrations of

derivativeness for these early authors. It would be impossible to deny the influence of Old World traditions, but as scholars such as John Shields have shown, through his idea of *translatio cultus* (the re-articulation of Old World ideas in the New World), American texts that are influenced by the Old World still demonstrate a new orientation in their New World expressions. Authors, then, take part not only in original literary writings, they also act as agents producing texts that re-express Old World visions for New World audiences, thus demonstrating to American readers the ability of native authors to fully embrace trans-Atlantic culture and rewrite it for American audiences. American authors demonstrated that they were fully capable of producing and reproducing literature for their audiences, who now no longer needed to go to Old World authors to encounter Old World culture along with that of the new; American authors could provide these reading experiences as well. There was no need to look overseas, American authors could provide texts that their fellow citizens and readers could demand as readers, and purchasers.

In addition, conceptualizing the role of the author within the context of Michael Warner's "principle of negativity" is important for an understanding of the cultural role of the author in the early American republic. Warner describes this principle as "the negation of persons in public discourse ... [which] is a ground rule of argument in a public discourse that defines its norms as abstract and universal, but it is also a political resource available only in this discourse, and available only to those participants whose social role allows such self-negation (that is, to persons identified by whiteness, maleness, and capital)" (42). Warner continues by stating that "although the negativity of persons in the public sphere appears in the form of a positive trait - virtue- it is at this point in the republican tradition that virtue comes to be defined by the negation of other traits of personhood, in particular as rational and disinterested concern for the public good" (42). This study agrees with Warner on the presence of this principle of negativity insofar

as it is enacted in the print sphere, though with limiting its applicability to being exclusively a “political resource” and relegated exclusively to “persons identified by whiteness, maleness, and capital.” While these categories represent the dominant parameters of authorship in early America, they do not tell the whole story, as Phillis Wheatley’s publication presence makes clear. In addition, what constitutes “public discourse” can be construed more broadly than political writings, as Warner suggests, to include the entire print sphere of the day. Novels and poetry collections also constitute forms of public discourse, working on levels of communication that go beyond direct political discussions by politicizing literary aesthetics and responding to the cultural mores of the period as ways to subvert the dominant paradigm of authorship of wealthy Euro-American males. The principle of negativity can be applied to our understanding of authorship to suggest a state of “rational and disinterested concern for the public good” (Warner 42), a form of “depersonalization” (Warner 43) that disconnects the author from the text on a conceptual level. In this re-positioning of the principle of negativity, the author maintains her personal identity but limits, or “depersonalizes,” their personal presence within the text; that is, the role of the author in relation to the text is that of creator, but is not a constant presence on every page of a volume. This appears true when considering the printing of an author’s name on the title page; here the name is effectively limited from the body of the text itself. Readers who read a text may not conceive of the text as being in the author’s voice, considering the poem or novel as being narrated by fictional characters who exist only in the world of the novel. But as demonstrated later, the author’s presence is found when the text is considered as an imagined textual community and readers experience reactions to the author and text in the act of reading. A key distinction must be made here, between the terms disinterested and the idea of depersonalizing. Disinterested can be construed as an author’s approaching his or her writings

with an interest for a greater public good, expressed through Warner's principle of negativity and expansive enough to include non-political writings. The principle of negativity can be viewed within the context of early national literature in the sense that authors have literary goals that transcend their personal literary fame in the pursuit of a distinctly American literature, as demonstrated by Charles Brockden Brown in his note to the public and Joel Barlow attempting the American epic, twice. It is impossible to assert that an author is ever entirely disinterested in the life of their authored texts, there is always at least the hope that the text will be read and potentially influential. Pseudonymous and anonymous texts also carry some degree of authorial interestedness, especially in terms of political debates. While it may be asserted that such texts are completely disinterested because they engage in work on the level of pure abstraction, the real-world applications of those abstractions, that is the pragmatic manifestations of theoretical political science or debates on ideologies, carry some degree of interest by authors who seek "only" to engage ideas on the level of ideas alone. This interestedness can vary from the author and/or his or her associates receiving economic benefits to more appropriately abstract benefits such as the satisfaction of seeing promoted ideas accepted by others, i.e., the converting of others to political, theological, or philosophical views expressed by the author.

Of course, an author can never be completely "disinterested" in a text. The depersonalization of a text also merits analysis. Depersonalization, which Warner suggests is an effect of disinterestedness (combined, these make up the principle of negativity), on the other hand can refer to the removal of the author of his or her self from the text. This can be done through minimizing personal references and, presumably, by removing indications of interestedness on the part of the author, such as the removal of ideas that represent personal interests of the author, all under the principle of producing a text that is disinterested and

depersonalized. And yet no text can ever be fully written and published in a disinterested or depersonalized manner, in that while the author may choose to minimize indications of their self-interestedness through a text, there can never be a complete removal of authorial interest in a text. The very act of having a text printed, presuming that an author approves of the printing of their text, indicates a level of interest in seeing their words reproduced for others to read and indicates a desire to influence, and to be an influencer. This suggests a level of interestedness that necessitates a negation of the potential for being completely disinterested. While an author may write as detached and with no immediate perceptible benefits from the text, their very act of writing with the intention of communicating their writing, either in printing as just mentioned, or through the circulation of a manuscript version of the text, demonstrates a baseline level of interestedness that can evoke either personal satisfaction from seeing one's words circulated among other readers, to seeing the content of a text become influential in any degree. By minimizing self-interestedness an author may project the textual appearance of not actively engaging the reader in an interested manner. However, the reader will engage with the text on some level, ranging from dismissal to full acceptance of the content, providing a reaction to the text that consequently is a reaction to the author's productions, which is a reaction, positive or negative, to the author through her or his work.

In the same way, while an author may choose to depersonalize a text by minimizing personal presence in a text, or have it done for them through editorial interference, a text can never be fully free of the author's presence. While an author may minimize, or even erase self-references within the text, such as avoiding the first person or other means like avoiding providing self-identifying details in the text, their presence on the title page maintains a constant presence in relationship to the text of a work. By identifying the author on the title page,

depersonalization is effectively limited to those self-imposed limitations placed by the author, or editor as discussed below, in an effort to appear disinterested. But this is only an appearance as already discussed, for a text can never be completely disinterested, or fully depersonalized. Self-imposed limitations on self-referential presence within a text represent authorial effort to engage Warner's principle of negativity with the motive of appearing effectively disinterested and therefore unbiased and capable of providing fair and balanced perspectives on the text's topic. Engaging the principle of negativity with this motive in actuality undoes the potential for this to fully take place; that is, if an author engages the principle of negativity with the purpose of appearing disinterested, the author is doing so with the motive of gaining the reading public's trust by appearing disinterested with the goal of influencing the public. In short, by appearing disinterested and depersonalizing a text to reinforce that desired perception of disinterestedness, the motive is to influence readers, a distinctly self-interested motive. Thus engaging the principle of negativity serves to undo, or to prevent, the complete enactment of that principle; writing by its very nature is communicative and influential whether in a positive or negative sense (that is, the reader either accepts or rejects in some degree the substance of the text), and therefore can never be a medium for the enactment of the principle of negativity as a completely disinterested and/or depersonalized medium. Self-imposed disinterestedness, that is the appearance of such, is effective in providing the allusion of disinterestedness if not the substance of such, and is therefore useful to an author who wishes to engage the reading public in an influential manner, especially when engaging readers who may be at odds with or otherwise not fully convinced of the author's perspective(s). Editors and publishers may also implement limits on authorial self-references, imposed as a means to either better the reading of the text (i.e., making the text readable in the first place) or to produce the appearance of disinterestedness in order to promote

the viewpoints of the editor or publisher over authorial viewpoints expressed through the text. Another reason to limit self-referentiality could be to produce a text that might be considered as more marketable with fewer self-referential remarks, either based on market conditions of demand for such texts, or under the perception of such demand. Depersonalizing a text by way of an editor or publisher complicates the notion of authorship as it relates to understanding a text as the product of one or more authors, but also adds a new layer to the principle of negativity. If an editor or publisher have influence on a text, then any ability for a text to be completely disinterested vanishes entirely, as the text then not only has the self-interested presence of the author, but that of the editor and/or publisher as well. This is true even if that editorial presence, ironically, attempts to depersonalize or establish disinterestedness, the editor's influence is then present in the text, though in the form of a completely depersonalized presence, but a presence nonetheless, reflected in the transitions and non-authorial changes in a text from authorial manuscript to printed text. Depersonalization, for an editor or publisher, is possible then only on the level of a reader's perception of such depersonalization, but even this is unlikely to happen especially since publisher information frequently appears on the bottom of title pages.

Thus the principle of negativity can be engaged but never fully enacted by an author, editor, or publisher. Attempting to accommodate authorial disinterestedness and depersonalization are possible but never completely achievable; rather the appearance of these traits serves to potentially multiply the influence of the text, and consequently of the author, through appearing to be unbiased and disinterested, and thereby more trustworthy and accurate due to a lack of presumed self-interest, presumed by the reading public, on the part of the author. Warner's principle of negativity still has applicability to understanding textual community because the attempt to depersonalize authorship or otherwise effect a state of authorial

disinterestedness, here the viability of the two actions are conflated, includes the implementation of these principles even if never completely enacted. Both actions represent authorial, editorial, and publisher recognition of the presence of communities of readers whose reading preferences reflect a demand for such authorial relationship to a text. The reader may wish for a disinterested perspective in a political or religious tract, despite the inevitability that such a perspective cannot be found due to the influence of authorial biases and their unerasability from texts, though in literary texts (i.e., poetry, novels, and drama) readers may desire the text to be depersonalized so as to be able to more fully focus their attention on the aesthetic of the text itself, apart from authorial presence, though again that can never be fully erased if only in a purely practical sense due to an inability to fully purge or remove authorial presence from any text. Though minimizable, disinterestedness and depersonalization are never fully implementable within texts, but their presence in a state of incomplete enactment serves to make texts more independent of authorial presence, disconnecting the reader from the author and setting up the text to stand seemingly on its own. While this may seem counter-intuitive to the creation of imagined textual community, it in fact works to promote textual community. While working to disconnect authorial presence and influence from a text, the intentional use of these techniques, that is the attempt to implement Warner's principle of negativity, constitutes an authorial or editorial attempt to engage a perceived desire of the reading public through the use of depersonalization and disinterestedness. On a practical level, then, the main reason for using these policies is to respond positively to readers who want these traits: use of disinterestedness and depersonalization are attempts to satisfy the reading public's demand for them. Authorial attempt to implement these principles, however much it is impossible to fully implement them, constitutes authorial connection with reader demand. That is, the author or editor engages these

principles in an effort to solidify textual community within the reading public, to satisfy perceived demands within his or her textual audience in order to satisfy reader expectations and encourage further reader engagement with the text, consequently building reader and textual community as the increase in satisfaction in reader demands creates satisfaction with a text. Currying to perceived reader demands with use of the principle of negativity may have been primarily regulated to political and religious tracts, but could also have been used with the creation of texts specifically designed to craft a distinctly national American literature.

The principle of negativity can be applied to those texts whose work is to establish a distinctly American literature in the sense that an author can promote nationalism while creating depersonalized and disinterested purely aesthetic, or moralizing, literary experiences for the reader. This would allow for a nationalism unhindered by parochial claims to importance and other forms of partisan expression, an idealized democratic literature that prioritized the national literary scene and promoted inter-state nationalistic cultural unity with the goal of building a stronger country. Such would be the work of a national literature, not just serving as a cultural crown to the newly established country which also sought to be an example to other countries of the late 18th and early 19th centuries that were struggling with overthrowing oppressive regimes. Maintaining authorial focus on the larger nationalistic aims that were expected of the nascent literature, authors would need to operate on a level of literary creativity above that of parochialism, a trend that never took off but that found inchoate expression in such texts as Timothy Dwight's *Greenfield Hill* (1794), where the applicability of the text was that the local focus of the poem could be read as metonymical for the rest of the country, a poetic blueprint after which the new Americans could pattern their lives. Joel Barlow's *The Vision of Columbus* (1787) comes close to providing a seemingly disinterested overview (literally) of the new

country over the course of its length. Recreating a narrative of the origins of the country from ancient America, Barlow built a story of and for the new nation that stood apart from himself, despite the appearance of his name at the beginning of the volume. While this may seem insignificant, Barlow failed to be totally disinterested as the author sought a literary reputation that influenced his fictionalized historical narrative, replacing history with a poetic production that had the flair, flair for the time that is, of a theatrical production. His later career demonstrated, however, that he was certainly a patriotic servant to his country on the diplomatic plane and even died in Europe on service to his country. But his poetic efforts cannot be viewed in relation to Warner's principle of negativity without considering his overall political and social ambitions, which were not lacking as his biographers demonstrate in recounting the events and accomplishments of his life.

While authors can never be disinterested completely in their own works, since there are monies and reputations and influence to be had through authoring texts, even with anonymous texts such as political pamphlets a degree of depersonalization can be achieved, or enforced as the case of Wheatley demonstrates. With Wheatley's work, the "supporting" documents that were included with the text detracted from her authorial presence by mediating her presence through John Wheatley's letter to the publisher and the "To the Publick" note on the authenticity of Wheatley's work. In both cases, these documents tend to "depersonalize" the author's presence and relationship to the text; to the reader her work is her work only because it has been declared so by Euro-American males of means, those within Warner's prerequisites for authors who enact the principle of negativity. But here Warner's principle is critiqued, not voided by any means, nuanced with Wheatley existing and surviving; her name is now more famous than any of the others mentioned in the note or letter, her authorial presence is felt throughout the poems,

mediated and at times disinterested. Her authorship is mediated through the note and letter while her presence is limited not only by these factors but by her own authorial authority within the text. Whether through recognition of the challenges of the publishing and reading cultures for non-white authors or through a desire to further emphasize her aesthetic genius to depersonalize her text, Wheatley's presence is felt at times, but not directly, in every poem.

In this connection, Roland Barthes' death of the author is applicable here insofar as the author is recognized, by the reader, as not being actively physically present in the text, while the reader is inherently cognizant of the presence of the author through the text by virtue of his or her name printed on the title page, generally below the title of the book, bound together like subscriber lists and often on the same page as the publisher's information. By opening a volume and reading an author's name, the reader immediately is aware of the presence of a creative force behind a text, especially in cases of novels or poetry where the reader would recognize the necessity for reading a text as a fiction despite being "a tale of truth" as Rowson claimed for her novel about Charlotte Temple. Readers encountering a text with a recognition of its creative substance necessitates viewing the author as both the creative force behind the text as well as recognizing the material nature of the author, which is to say, believing that the author has some degree of presence and continuing influence in, on, and through the text rather than being inherently absent. Understanding the author's influence in and on a text also necessitates recognizing that the author in the text is not expressed solely in and through the text. While the text is a metaphorical extension of the author as mentioned earlier, it is not the exclusive substance of the author. The reader must then recognize the present absence of the author; he or she is not dead per the Nietzsche-like dismissal of Barthes, but always present, both on the title page and through the text. There are exceptions to consider. The title page of the first edition of

Brown's *Edgar Huntly*, for example, does not list the author's name, instead informing the reader that this work is "[b]y the author of Arthur Mervyn, Weiland, -Ormond, &c.," naming Brown's other works. It is only after his "To the Public" preface that his initials appear as "C.B.B.," the titles of other works serving to explicate those initials. With this example the reader is not left wondering who the author is, they can refer to the other works mentioned on the title page, thereby engaging this title page trope of solely referring to the author by virtue of their other works as a marketing ploy. This associative reference to the author without using the author's name enacts not a death of the author but rather an impetus on the part of the reader to discover who the author is, whether as a marketing ploy or way of communicating authorship as important only in the holistic context of an author's oeuvre. Other works may not even have this reference, with the first edition of *Charlotte Temple* (London, 1791, reproduced in Rust 93) having neither the author's name nor reference to any other identifying biographical references such as other works or occupation. In the first American edition of the text, in 1794, the title page lists the author as "By Mrs. Rowson, of the New Theatre, Philadelphia; Author of *Victoria, The Inquisitor, Fille De Chambre...*" (Rust 3, italics original) informing not only the reader of Rowson's occupation but also her other published works, reinforcing the drive to promote additional sales of other titles by the same author. By including her occupation as well as other titles, the printer demonstrates the extension of textual community and of the social role of the author as an actor of sorts, in this case literally but also metaphorically for readers in the early American republic. The text, despite its claim to truth, enacts a performance by a professional actor, not reducing but rather magnifying the reader's understanding of the text as performative in nature with the author the actor and the novel the play. This restructuring of the author as not merely an author of other novels but also an actor and playwright also demonstrates the

necessary occupational versatility for women trying to support themselves in this era, while also recommending to the reader that the author is indeed a very human entity, she is not just a name on a title page, she is also a person whose life outside of the text is accessible. As Cathy Davidson remarks concerning the notation of Rowson as actress, “by alluding to Rowson’s theatrical career, Carey [Matthew Carey, the book’s seller] cleverly “target marketed” (to use contemporary advertising jargon) the book for an audience that could afford it. Rowson was a popular character actress and playwright ... [c]itizens with enough disposable income to spend on culture and entertainment were potential book buyers, something the author-actress, an exceptionally astute businesswoman, also understood” (251). Carey’s remarking on Rowson’s career, Davidson suggests, serves a nationalistic purpose, but for the purposes of this discussion it is sufficient to remark on the work of the occupational reference in creating the author as an imagined entity for the reader. By enabling the reader to be aware of where he or she can go to watch the author act out other stories, Carey, and Rowson, reinforce the idea of the author as a present absence, present in the pages and theater though absent from the experiential act of reading. Davidson also notes, “upper-class and upper-middle-class Americans ... paid as much for a night at the New Theatre as they might pay for a copy of Rowson’s novel” (251), promoting the cultural and economic exchange of customers that Davison referred to as “target market[ing],” in order to move theater attendees to buy Rowson’s books while also promoting attending the theater to Rowson’s readers. Not only does the actor reference serve economic purposes similar to the listing of other titles by Rowson, it also promotes the ability for readers to see the author in person, not simply to promote the theater business, but also to provide readers with an ability to physically see or encounter the author of the novel they just read. The author is not merely to be conceived of by way of her name printed on the title page or through reading

her other works; Rowson's creativity can be witnessed firsthand. This ability to witness the author provides a means of validating a reader's imaging of the author apart from the presence of an illustration or engraving of the author's likeness that accompanied some contemporary volumes. Finally, Rowson's description as author extends the textual community of *Charlotte Temple* through this edition by enabling readers to both see her in person, and to experience her other writings.

A final example is found on the title page to Phillis Wheatley's 1773 *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. Here Wheatley's name is italicized under the book's title, but then her name is followed by the description that she is "Negro Servant to Mr. John Wheatley, of Boston, in New England." This phrasing is verbatim, excepting the addition of "in New England," to the inscription on the frame surrounding the engraving of Wheatley that appears opposite the title page. The very first word used to describe Wheatley establishes her race, her artistry stands in the title above her name but immediately below her race is mentioned as if it is of great importance to the reader. As noted previously, it was important to contemporary society that the "To the Publick" note was included later in the volume, appearing before the poems as a witness to Wheatley's poetic capabilities. The description then euphemistically elevates Wheatley's social position to that of a "servant," sidestepping her enslavement but strongly hinting at her enslaved status by following that with mentioning whose "servant" she was, John Wheatley's. Linking Phillis' name and status to her enslaver reinforces her subservience not just as African-British, but also as a woman; the three other names that appear on the title page as booksellers are also male. Finally the biographical description denotes her residence in Boston, specifically in New England to distinguish it from Boston in England; this was a necessary distinction given the book was, as noted prominently, published in London, printed for a London

bookseller and for Cox and Berry of King-Street in Boston. Incidentally, Cox and Berry operated their store on King Street near the Wheatley's residence (Carretta 95), the same street where the Boston Massacre occurred in 1770. The Boston Massacre is the subject of Wheatley's lost poem "On the Affray in King-Street, on the Evening of the 5th of March," included in the 1772 proposal for Wheatley's poems (Carretta 72). The title page of *Poems* then operates on several levels, first communicating the title of the collection, the author's name and description, and finally the geographical parameters of the book, printed in London for an English bookseller, but listed as "sold by" American booksellers in Boston. Wheatley's work is trans-Atlantic, much like her own life experiences, and an international commodity that is transported across the ocean to be sold in the colonies. While other scholars such as Vincent Carretta and John Shields have already discussed Wheatley's voyage to England and the possibilities for freedom that trip allowed, it should be noted here that curiously the only three locations of the first edition's title page that are italicized are Wheatley's name, and the words London and Boston for the location of the American bookseller. Wheatley's name is then linked to these places through similar type styling, and rightfully so. As a slave her life at first centered around Boston then changed during her experiences in London, finding freedom through manumission following her trip there. But for the contemporary reader this use of italics also links Wheatley to both of these places, demonstrating the poet's connection to the cosmopolitan London while tethering her to her life in Boston as a "servant." Rather than merely mundane minutia, these details contribute to the reader's imagining of the author, a task made easier by the inclusion of the engraving. Her name appears placed between the title and her status, she is at once a poet and an African slave, religious and moral, influenced by London and Boston. It is these ascriptions which lead to the later letter testifying to the authenticity of her talent, positioning the reader to accept expert

testimony to accept her work. Wheatley's title page also reflects the broad literary community that publishing in the colonies could be reflective of, sold on both sides of the Atlantic though heralded as being from Boston, "in New England." Textual community is then placed on a larger scale, reflecting Wheatley's African heritage while dismissing her enslavement, linking her to a colonial merchant, and engaging in a globalized printing economy. All of this is left for the reader to consider as they turn past the title page and move on to additional prefatory material. Wheatley is also linked to the most important part of the volume, her poems, by placement of her name below the book's title which, while a common printing convention, also serves in the creation of imagined textual community by linking author and text. In the first American edition of Wheatley's poems, published in 1786, there are few variances on the title page; for example, the only italicized word is "Philadelphia," which appears on the lower portion of the page with the remaining publishing information. Though like the 1773 edition, this title page also maintains the presence of Wheatley's racial and social statuses. The American edition, like the British, emphasizes the trans-Atlantic nature of Wheatley's connection by informing the reader that the original was printed in London and that this edition is from Philadelphia, which is followed up by the declaration that this volume is reprinted, informing the reader that the volume was a product of American material culture. In 1786, approximately 2 years after Wheatley's death, Wheatley's poems re-appeared, and then again in 1787 (Carretta 197), re-articulating Wheatley's voice at a crucial time as the country re-evaluated its direction. While history demonstrates that her poetic influence on the course of the nation at this time was minimal and untraceable, the reappearance of her poems underscores her literary and cultural importance to the early republic. In addition, her re-publication in America for two consecutive years demonstrates the posthumous extension of textual community, not merely for an audience but rather a community

of readers given the obvious demand for editions of her poems, both editions of 1786 and 1787 were printed in Philadelphia, the site of the Constitutional Convention. Wheatley's *Poems* served not only to extend the community of readers of her works, but also to extend Wheatley in the literary imagination of the day, reproducing her name and influence with each edition and copy printed.

Through name placement on the title page, the author through his or her name thereby becomes one with the text; the author and their creation are bound together in a textual community that is extended to the publisher, subscribers when present, and the readers. The author's name, though the author is clearly physically absent from the text unless an in-person reading by the author is occurring, reflects an extension of the author beyond his or her corporeal self. The printed authorial name then becomes a textual incarnation of the body of the author while the text itself is a metaphorical soul extending and touching, embracing the reader in his or her literary solitude. The author then incarnates a present absence, absent as Barthes would have us believe, but present in a metaphorical sense. The words in the book are, the reader assumes, the author's words and ideas which are being read, consumed, and responded to on emotional, aesthetic, and ideological planes, as one would respond to another person in a spoken conversation. Responses to texts, whether embracing, rejecting, ignoring, forgetting, or remembering, all constitute interactions, not just, but certainly in part if not mostly so, a reader's interactions with an author. While that author could be physically or temporally distant, or deceased, a reader's reaction to a text is also a reaction to the author, despite his or her presence having been metonymically reduced, or magnified as the case may be for each individual reader, through the textual incarnation of the printed name on the book's title page, bound up with all other names included in a volume. By reading a text and responding to it, a reader then ceases to

be merely an audience, he or she enacts a literary community that centers on a particular text. At the very least this community is on a micro-level, consisting of the reader, the text, and the author.

This community then expands as more readers participate in a text and as readers discuss that text, either in parlor conversations or other modes of discourse such as mentioning texts in letters or printed reviews. In this sense, then, the author really is dead in that, once a text is printed, he or she generally has no further ability to add or subtract from that particular copy of the printed edition of a text which is now either in the hands of readers, on their shelves, or busily being exchanged through sale or loans to other readers. And yet the author is still present in the text, though their ability to speak actively to the reader ceased with the printing of the text, their voice is now locked in to the pages, present and absent, some would say quite dead but still very much alive in eliciting reactions on various planes from readers. This necessitates on the part of the author the need for further editions of a text, revised, edited, enlarged, or otherwise altered from its original printings, thus providing an author the ability to mimic an active presence in the life of a text; that is, mimic in the sense that once a revised edition is published, it too becomes like the first edition, where the author is both present and absent, perpetually speaking through the presence of his or her printed name on the title page to the reader of the text, and through his or her mind, printed in the remainder of the volume. This ability to resurrect a text is perpetually present as long as an author is alive and has an interest in revising the original text, though this does not preclude the possibility that unauthorized publishers or an author's descendants will not provide new editions of a text that might be at variance with the author's wishes without any sort of authorial authorization. This is of interest to this study precisely because the possibility of future, edited editions of texts means that a textual

community is not merely incidental to initial readers immediately following a volume's publication; future editions enable a continuation of textual communities. The development of imagined textual communities is never guaranteed to be static to a specific edition, version, or even from printing to printing. For example, Joel Barlow's *The Vision of Columbus* originally appeared in 1787, appearing 20 years later in an expanded, and altered form under a new title in 1807, as *The Columbiad*, appearing initially in a rather ornate edition. This 1807 text eventually appeared again in 1825 with final editorial oversight by the author, providing contemporary and future readers with Barlow's last wishes for the text. The creativity involved in alternate, corrected, edited, expanded, redacted editions of texts belie Barthes' "death of the author," as long as the author, or someone else acts to change the text either in an authorized or unauthorized manner. The paradox is that these varying editions of texts then themselves become static objects, held and read by their textual community with no future ability for change in those specific copies, with the exception of the addition of marginalia which suggests the continuing interaction and building of community around and literally within the text itself. The initial creation of the textual community originates with the author, subscribers, printers, and book sellers, while the perpetuation of that textual community, that is, the transformation of a textual audience (i.e., the initial readers of a text) into a textual community beyond that contained within the printed text, relies primarily on the continued reading of that text by the public and responses to that text, whether in the form of private discussion, printed reviews, or the inscribing of marginalia.

The text as the author incarnate is only a portion of the author; it is his or her thoughts at the time of composition in manuscript and then in the editorial stages, problematized by the often unseen hands and minds of publishers and errant typesetters, both of whom potentially

complicate the ability of readers to comprehend the author's original meaning. Here again we see Barthes' dead author in a sense, the author cannot always prevent editorial and printer mishaps. Printers and typesetters enter the textual community in a very physical sense, though they may not have participated in the reading of the text as a literary consumer, yet their employment in the printing profession necessitates their inclusion in this community. In addition, booksellers also played an important role in the distribution of texts, providing an economic backdrop along with supporting subscribers, important contributors to the emerging culture of American literature. Important to the development of American literature, these often un-discussed supporting actors may have been the first people to encounter a text in its initial transformation from manuscript to printed form, and may have been in some cases potential readers' first exposure to the knowledge of particular texts, learning from a printer or seller about the availability of newly published, or revised, texts. In addition, newspaper advertisements provide another means of communicating this availability, as well as an opportunity to build textual community about texts through text. A published volume's print advertisements create a textual community for the text itself, whether through initial advertisements for subscribers, or by promoting the availability of a finished product, a printed volume ready for purchase and binding. This multiplicity of printed references to a text, added to by published reviews, suggests a text's reach beyond its own pages, and evidences not only a community of readers but also a supporting textual environment for the text itself, thereby multiplying cultural references to a particular text and creating for readers a greater sense of the community that surrounds a particular text. Textual references to a particular book can reflect not only the marketing of a text, that is, the creation of an advertising environment, but also the existence of the non-reader community that supports the publication process that was a necessary prerequisite for readers

being able to learn about and acquire new texts, a community without which the later textual community surrounding a particular text could not exist. Readers then participated in a continuation of a textual community by the time they began reading a volume, from the author to the printer to the bookseller and then to a library shelf, personal or otherwise. This process reflects the movement of a book within a society, suggesting the social fluidity that a text experienced and the wide-ranging influence that a text could enact.

Another important lens through which to consider the role of authorship in relationship to reading the author and text as imagined community is Michael Foucault's "What is an Author?" essay. Here Foucault challenges traditional notions of authorship, distinguishing between writers and authors (127) and asserting several manifestations of what he terms the "author-function" (127). These four functions are summarized as:

[1.][T]he "author-function" is tied to the legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine, and articulate the realm of discourses; [2.] it does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture; [3.] it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures; [4.] it does not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy. (130-131)

I will discuss each major point of Foucault's author-function as it relates to Warner and my own argument that the author is both an imagined community and part of the textual community that surrounds individual texts. Foucault's first point is similar to Warner's assertion concerning the limitation of the principle of negativity to the exclusivity of race, sex, and economic status by Foucault tying the author-function to "legal and institutional systems" (130), areas often controlled by Warner's parameters, especially in late 18th and early 19th century America. Yet examples such as Phillis Wheatley challenge Foucault's first assertion of the author-function. Even while operating within the institutional context of slavery, Wheatley undergoes the

subjective and degrading experience of having her work authenticated by Euro-American males in order to operate within the cultural milieu of authorship, despite her otherwise disempowered status. This participation, albeit under the exacting eye of her owner and others, operates both within and outside of the system by virtue of her race and sex. Not all discourse necessarily falls under the “legal and institutional systems,” even printed discourse can fall out from under this purview if it acts on a subversive level, such as Wheatley’s poetry. A text that appears with the approval of these cultural systems of control, but acts on a subversive level challenges the full applicability of Foucault’s first operation of the author-function by suggesting that this principle is not completely enforceable; it is a principle which can never be fully expressed and implemented. Moreover, it cannot be shown that the author-function is exclusively and always operating within social control systems that exclusively “articulate the realm of discourse” in that not all discourse is inherently public in nature, witness the discourses of private conversation, personal letters, and privately and illegally printed materials which inherently circumscribe the circumscription of the established institutions that may dominate print culture in specific times and places, e.g., the printing of heretical materials against the approval of the church or state occurs outside of institutional purview. This rather abstracted take on the first role of the author-function is necessary to explore the pragmatic limitations of Foucault’s theory in relation to the print sphere. Practically speaking, Foucault’s observation is true most of the time, but certainly there are exceptions that should be taken into consideration. Texts can also operate outside of official sanction, resulting in libel suits or government censure, for example. The 1798 Sedition Act demonstrates, by its very use to prosecute “unpatriotic” citizens, the existence of oppositional dialectics and the consequent prosecutions of those dialectics by governmental authorities. Texts deemed offensive under the act were clearly not published within the

parameters of Foucault's author-function, yet their authors and/or publishers experienced being objects of official prosecution. The author-function, at least within the first rule, then has limited use. It was certainly functional in most but not all cases of literature of the early republic. Foucault's first function rests on the assumption that authorship is inherently tied to state authority, an assumption with which this study disagrees, since textual evidence, exemplified by prosecutions under the Sedition Act, suggests otherwise. Most published texts fall within the culturally and politically acceptable parameters of their historical milieu, but the presence of non-approved texts in which authorship of the text(s) is identified as being indeed an authorship necessitates an expansion of this idea of the author-function. Enter the imagined author not as a replacement to this principle of the author-function, but rather as an expansion of it. That is, the author, by virtue of his or her appearing in print, implies to readers an understanding that the text operates potentially either under or not under Foucault's "legal and institutional systems" regardless of the text's and author's intentions or legality; by virtue of appearance in print, a text and its author are presented as being condoned, approved of enough to have been printed. In the case of subversive authors such as Phillis Wheatley, this proves to enable the author to disseminate their texts under the guise of official approval.

The printing of a text is its own form of sanction. But who is sanctioning the text? In the case of texts that fit within Warner's trinity of characteristics for the principle of negativity, white, male, and economically privileged status, all prove to be the parameters that constituted institutional authority in early America. If a text appeared in the early republic, its author more often than not fit within those parameters in a conflation of Warner's characteristics with Foucault's first author-function. Yet the existence of texts that fall outside of institutional approval, texts prosecuted under the Sedition Act or by authors who were not members of the

groups most often associated with legal power, such as female authors, prove limitations to the applicability of both the first author-function and Warner's principle. The imagined author, however, provides a nexus for understanding authorship as fluidly flexible, a liminal status that vacillates freely between states of approval and disapproval by societal institutions. Imagined authors exist post-mortem per Barthes and simultaneously within the self-perceived power structures of Warner and Foucault, while also negotiating interstices for variant definitions of authorship, namely authors who exist outside of institutionalized authority, outside of the parameters established by Warner and Foucault. This is accomplished by imagining an author as both creator of and part of the text, not a distant god for agnostic readers, but rather a constant present-absence, present in name and spirit, through the title page as well as the very words of the text and various manifestations and incarnations through characters, but also absent in every literal sense that Barthes would have us believe, and no longer able to alter meaning in a text once it is printed, with the exception of future editions of the same text or through the creation of new works. This leads us to consider Foucault's second author-function.

The second principle of the author-function is that, "it does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture" (Foucault 130). Here Foucault acknowledges the variations in the various aspects of the "author-function" by allowing for wider parameters than the first function inherently implies. By saying this, Foucault allows for a fluidic definition of authorship that can very much go beyond the first author-function, the author-function "does not operate in a uniform manner." This is to say that if the author-function is found operating in forms other than Foucault establishes in "What is an Author?" then he is at liberty to acknowledge those variances without contradicting himself. This expands the author-function to provide virtually limitless mutations and variations for author-functions that push the

definition of authorship in to an increasingly nebulous definition, not that there has ever been a precise definition of the concept. Foucault's move is important and valuable as it forces recognition of the lack of precision in "pen-ing" down a solid definition of authorship, leaving room for the broader conceptualization of the author as an imagined entity, the imagined author. This operation does not occur in a "uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture" (Foucault 130), suggesting that the author-function also varies by discourse area, time period, and cultural milieu. All of these factors are important in determining historical definitions of authorship, as well as necessary to discuss in any attempt to find a more broadly historically transcendent understanding of authorship as both Barthes and Foucault move toward, without definite resolution in either case. And while no adequately broad definition of authorship may be found, this study suggests that conceiving of the author as the imagined author, in a constant present-absence in relation to the text, bridges the parameters of authorship spelled out by Barthes, Foucault, and Warner, linking the reader with a necessary creator of a text whose role, while indisputably important to the text's origins and continuation of meaning found by the reader in the process of reading, also acknowledges the role of authorial absence found in that presence both on the text (i.e., title page) and in the text through authorial insertions ("I") and other self-referential inclusions (i.e., biases and self-referential remarks). Foucault obviously disagrees with Barthes's totalizing post-mortem observations; the author is, according to Foucault, always found to some degree in the text: "since a text always bears a number of signs that refer to the author" (129). At the same time Foucault suggests that authorial presence is not the only presence in a text: "[i]t would be... false to seek the author in relation to the actual writer as to the fictional narrator; the "author-function" arises out of their scission—in the division and distance of the two" (129). However, with this particular statement I disagree. These two aspects,

writer and narrator, are obviously at variance with one another in form and function. Foucault is suggesting that the idea of the author, here “the “author-function,”” occurs from the “scission” of these two factors in relation to the “author.” By conceiving of the author as the present-absent, that is, the imagined author, the unification of those functions, of writer and narrator in relation to the author, allows for a simultaneous duality and interconnectedness rather than, as Foucault sees it, division. The present-absence of the imagined author unifies author, writer, and narrator (as Foucault acknowledges and as just quoted, “a text always bears a number of signs that refer to the author” (129). This is especially relevant to a discussion of early national American literature in that the role of the author to the text and to the community of the new nation were both evolving. In the case of Phillis Wheatley, her presence in the first edition of her *Poems* (1773) was established by multiple factors, most famously by an engraving, while her presence was both established and erased through a minimization of the importance of her authorship by the “To the Publick” note establishing the authenticity of her authorship through a covering of witnesses who perfectly fit Warner’s parameters for the principle of negativity, an absence also felt alongside her subversive presence in the poems of the collection.

The third author-function “is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures” (130). Foucault’s conceptualization of the author is detailed and necessary in consideration during constructing the imagined author. Foucault’s “series of precise and complex procedures”

results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author. Undoubtedly, this construction is assigned a “realistic” dimension as we speak of an individual’s “profundity” or “creative” power, his intentions or the original inspiration manifested in writing. Nevertheless, these aspects of an individual, which we designate as an author (or which comprise an individual as an author), are projections, in terms always more or less psychological, of our way of handling texts: in the comparisons we make, the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities we assign, or the exclusions we practice. In addition, all these operations vary according to the period and

the form of discourse concerned. A “philosopher” and a “poet” are not constructed in the same manner; and the author of an eighteenth-century novel was formed differently from the modern novelist. There are, nevertheless, transhistorical constants in the rules that govern the construction of an author. (127)

Primarily Foucault relies on the reader’s projections on the idea of the author based on the reader’s contemporary milieu: “in the comparisons we make, the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities we assign, or the exclusions we practice.” While these are certainly relevant in studying individual readers’ concepts of the author, the imagined author as a present-absence recognizes these parameters as implicitly understood and relative to each reader: they are distinct strains of conceptualizations present in varying form in each reader’s imagination but impossible to collectively define for an entire readership, even in a thriving textual community. In part this is because as each reader changes on individual psychological and intellectual bases as they progress through life and their reading experiences. A reader’s perspectives and aesthetic tastes change, so too will each of these parameters laid out by Foucault for each reader over the course of their lifetime as a reader. These categories are unstable and necessarily nebulous, for a reader in 1799 who just read Brown’s note to the public in *Edgar Huntly*, she may re-conceptualize the author anew or even possibly apart from his other works if she is not otherwise familiar with Brown’s authorship.

Foucault essentially acknowledges this when he declares the relativity of these factors in relation to variations in time and discursive form. As he observes, a philosopher is conceptually different than a poet for readers, the role of authorship varies not only between individual readers but also between different types of texts authored. Thus, the author who publishes novels will be thought of differently as an author than if she were then to write a collection of poetry. A nineteenth century example would be Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) has overshadowed her literary legacy (though novels were her primary mode of discourse) to the

point that to conceive of Stowe as a poet (*Religious Poems*, 1867) would serve to force a reconceptualization of her as author with both her novels informing her poetry and her poems possibly reflecting influence on her novels, a trans-generic influence demonstrating an increased depth of understanding Stowe as a creative writer. Foucault acknowledges the variances of authorship as they relate to the varying texts which authors produce as well as the influence of a text's contemporary cultural milieu. The "transhistorical constants" of Foucault are then detailed in "What is an Author?" and reflect further the idea that an author is really the product of a reader's imagination as influenced by collective historical understandings of authorship that transcend, but that do not erase, the personalized parameters previously listed as "in the comparisons we make, the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities we assign, or the exclusions we practice" (127). All of these factors play a role in, as Foucault notes, constructing the author.

The idea of the author is never then an organic function, but always a construction. It is never a sequestered construction post-mortem, even for authors who have passed to the great beyond, for even dead authors are once again constructed in the imaginations of readers centuries after they are dead. Authors are constructed and then reconstructed by generations of readers, and generations of critics and scholars whose dust-shuffling work attempts to shed new light on pages darkened by time, and on the authors they investigate, as well as reevaluate. The place that works find themselves in centuries after their conception, along with re-imaginings of those works in other media, such as film and online editions, also work to re-position not just the works themselves, but also their authors whose multiplication of presences across media platforms, from ebooks to television serials, reimagines the author as somehow related not only to various reproductions of the same work, but also links the author to re-interpretations that may

be at significant historical variance with the original work. The author's presence is still found in the text, but in varying levels of influence depending on the disparity between the newer editions and reinterpretations of the text. Reinterpretations, or appropriations of authorial creations, signify a distancing of the present-absent imagined author and relegate the authorial presence to an increased distance, mediated by new and different authorial interventions with a text or elements of that text. In these cases, the original author is mediated by later interventions into the text or its creative environment (e.g., fan fiction) while the original author's contribution is never fully forgotten or even ignored (here is a story based on so-and-so's book), he or she becomes distanced from the re-telling and even more absent from newer versions or interpretations than he or she, the original author, is from newer editions of a text original to that author. For example, some television series appropriate one or two characters from a story but otherwise reimagine entirely new settings and plots for those characters, such as the *Sleepy Hollow* series that repositions Washington Irving's characters within the setting of a contemporary television drama. In this case, authorial presence is mediated by a battery of writers, editors, producers, and actors among others involved in the production of the series. The imagined author then is a fecund concept in that it encompasses, transcends and even violates Foucault's author-functions through offering broader parameters by which to conceptualize authorship. In the case of retellings and re-interpretations, the imagined author provides the ability to find traces of the original authorial present-absence even when that presence is facing effacement through other authors interacting with the text and expanding or contracting the original author's text.

Construction of the imagined author is accomplished not just through reinterpretations and reprintings of the original author's works, it also occurs through specialized, expanded editions or those editions that otherwise feature supplementary material with the text: variorums,

critical editions, scholarly or popular introductions, editions featuring the author's biography, or other relevant historical or contemporary context. This also includes editions whose covers implicitly add to, or attempt to interpret, the text historically or contemporaneously with that particular edition's publication. These supplementary and auxiliary materials serve as interpretative materials that influence the reader while also engaging audiences with texts that might otherwise be passed over or not fully understood within the text's original historical and literary context. Not only do these materials add to the text, they also serve to re-conceptualize the imagined author on an expanded plane that re-orientates the authorial present-absence within a larger historical and cultural corpus, serving either to diminish or magnify authorial standing in any period, elevating or lowering an author to or from wider continued literary and textual communities. This includes selectively using, and ignoring, authors in literary anthologies, whether for general or collegiate audiences. The imagined author works to perpetuate reader recognition of authorial presence both within an author's lifetime and posthumously in future editions, translations, and re-interpretations.

While the imagined author recognizes and incorporates Foucault's conceptualization of the author through his "precise and complex procedures" as inherently implicit in the construction of the imagined author, the imagined author then belies Foucault's statement that the author-function is, "not formed spontaneously through the simple attribution of a discourse to an individual" (127). It is, in fact, this initial attribution of a text to a name that initiates and in a sense solidifies a person, whether pseudonymously or properly named, as a site of an imagined entity who is the source of a particular text. Ascribing authorship to the author's name inherently creates an imagined community of readers linked together through a collective identification of an author. This body of readers collectively identifying with an author—he or she is the author of

such-and-such novel –Susanna Rowson is the author of *Charlotte Temple* –is understood by a body of readers. This serves the dual purposes of creating an imagined author while also building textual community: readers of the same text not only collectively imagine the author of this novel as Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* is her novel, this sad, sad story of a young lady left to die by her estranged lover, alone in the New World, pregnant and alone, dying in the house of a stranger, this is Rowson’s story, this is her textual creation and readers identify her as the author, she is the first citizen of this textual community originating with the text. She is both the imagined author and an integral part of the textual community that her readers form. The initial connection of a name listed on the title page, this is *the* author the title page declares, with the following text providing an initial “simple attribution” that does indeed present readers with a straightforward, simple connection between the text and a name. This connection may be influenced by the individual reader’s knowledge of the author or the text prior to reading the text: through newspaper reviews, experiences with previous works by the same author, or a recommendation from a friend. Nonetheless, there is an automatic understanding for readers that the author listed on the title page of a work is connected to the text, the author is the name listed, and it is this initial attribution that allows for the existence of the imagined author.

The author’s printed name becomes the foundation on which the imagined author is constructed as a present-absence. Initial attribution provides the basis for the “precise and complex procedures” which Foucault discusses; without the “simple attribution” there would be no ability for readers to understand the author-function as involving “the comparisons we make, the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities we assign, or the exclusions we practice” (127). These “comparisons ... traits we extract... continuities ... [and/or] exclusions” cannot take place outside of an initial point of origin for conceptualizing the author, which I argue is conceived of

as an imagined author whose present-absence begins with the placement of the author's name on the title page. Appearing at the beginning of the work, or in the form of initials as in Brown's *Edgar Huntly* following his note to the reading public, signals that there is an authorial presence who is willing to acknowledge ownership of the text, willing to identify as the originator or person responsible for the following text. This signals a willingness to identify to the public an embracing of responsibility for the printed text, a move that counters Warner's principle of negativity with the acknowledgement of authorship and self-interestedness that is inherent in acknowledging opinions or views as one's own. Once a reader identifies that a text possesses an author, and perhaps even identifies that author, then that reader can begin processing conceptualizations of authorship through, among other factors, the parameters which Foucault describes. These include comparing the author to other authors and texts, are they better or worse than other authors whom the reader has either already encountered or heard things about through friends or book reviews? But all the while, this not only extends Foucault's sense of the author-function, it also perpetuates and allows the imagined author to evolve in individualized conceptualizations of specific authors, a move that all of these steps discussed here perpetuate. Next readers engage in extracting traits they deem as pertinent, as Foucault remarks. Readers might consider if the author is geographically close or faraway, agreeable to the reader's opinions, sensible to the same aesthetic tastes, or even if the reader values or devalues the author's race or gender. By "extracting" these traits, readers are ascribing one or more traits to the author based off assumptions concerning the author made by the reader, based off their previous and current experiences with the traits of the author the reader identifies as relevant to themselves. If a reader is racist or sexist he or she will transfer those prejudices to their conceptualization of the author, considering the author's work(s) as inferior to the reader's

biases; these biases will be transferred to include not only bias against the author, but their texts as well will receive the same bias as the author receives from the reader even if the author and/or text are geographically and/or historically removed from the reader. This part of the author-function involving these “precise and complex functions” (Foucault 130) then can both originate from positive or negative sources and have positive or negative results depending on the various manifestations that these movements on the part of the construction of the author may take, relative to each reader. The extraction of traits occurs through a reader bringing his or her biases and life experiences and expectations to a text and correlating those factors to relate the reader’s perception of both the author and text, creating an imagined author who finally takes as many or more forms as there are readers of a particular text. The imagined author may also take differing forms for the same reader if and when a reader encounters reviews of a text, biographical information about the author outside of the text, other editions of a text, or re-interpretations of that original text. This is to say, there are multiple ways in which readers may extract perceptions of an author, all of which may not be factually accurate. In fact, due to the influence of personal biases, whether consciously or unconsciously, the reader does not actually “extract” these traits, readers extrapolate traits due to the influences of personal biases within each reader, hence the ability for there to be potentially limitless permutations of the author-concept; the author-function is after all, as Foucault constructs it, more of a reader-function of conceiving of the author than it is an actual work of authorial presence. The conceptualization of the author is the work of a body of readers and critics conceptualizing, reifying, and reinterpreting concepts of the author. Foucault recognizes this in his positioning of the role of readers and critics as conceptualizers of the author, with the bulk of the work of this conceptualization lying on readers and critics, those to whom the concept of authorship matters most. The author, to the author, has

no need to conceive of himself or herself as an author in order to carry out the work of authorship, at least on some level. The author may find some personal or social value in self-conceptualizing himself or herself as an “author,” but just like for readers, this varies across genres and time periods. The poet may see herself as playing an integral role to the perpetuation of her culture much the same way the ancient bards served as historians and story tellers for ancient peoples. Or the author may see himself along the lines of a philosopher, here I borrow Foucault’s examples mentioned earlier. The way in which an author self-conceptualizes may play a role in the degree of authorial intervention in a text in that an author’s self-conceptualization as an author may influence the way in which they insert their presence either directly or indirectly in a particular text. In the present context, Charles Brockden Brown may have seen himself as having the need to include his comments on the need to draw from the American landscape in his construction of an American literature as a preface to his novel of American themes, the landscape of Pennsylvania, land grabbing, and the genocide of Native Americans. Self-conceptualization of authorship changed over time, and as American culture and print culture changed, so did the ability of authors to make profits from their writings. Authors were no longer just people of leisure who wrote because they had the intellect and time to write, the role of authorship shifted to become an occasionally viable career, as the examples of Washington Irving and Edgar Allen Poe demonstrate. These changes also play a role not only in how authors interject themselves into texts, but in turn, how readers perceive of this change in authorial presence within texts. Readers perceived of both *Edgar Huntly* and Charles Brockden Brown differently after reading the novel than they would have if there had been no note to the public preceding the text. Foucault’s author-functions work primarily as readers search for authorial presence and meaning in texts while also allowing for authors to meet reader

expectations in the text through authorial interjection in the author's own voice, or as a poet speaking in the first person in an introduction to or body of a poem. This does not negate that in Foucault's construction of the author, the majority of the construction of authorship lies primarily in the actions of readers and critics who "read" the author in and through a text, despite that, to return to a favorite example, the author allowed his or her presence to appear on the title page.

As an intentional interjection into contemporary cultural movements, the invention of American literature also allowed for the necessary positioning of the role of the author not merely as a generator of literature, but also as a source of cultural creation and development that includes literature and for which literature is a sort of metaphor: if the country can produce its own literature and its own authors, it can also not only produce but also sustain an American culture that is not only generated in part by American literature, but that also, paradoxically, produces a generative environment for both more American literature specifically, but also American culture in general. That is, critics and readers extract ideas and symbols of American culture and literature from American literature, some of it quite intentionally developed as the examples of Charles Brockden Brown and Joel Barlow demonstrate. These extractions becomes some of the bases for the development of the author-function, acting as threads that hold together individual and social conceptualizations of authorship while enacting reader and critic biases on an individual level.

Foucault also discusses "the continuities we assign" (127). In part discussed earlier, this can include pragmatic associations that are made both by publisher and readers when a title page includes intentional references to other works by the same author. Other manifestations of this can be lists of the author's works in other parts of the book or even publisher advertisements that

promote either works by the same author or other works that the publisher thinks might crossover from the market for that particular volume in which the advertisement appears to other publications. Continuities can be assigned through a variety of means, whether through association of an author with other authors or even with associations of genre, Brown is a gothic writer, Barlow is a political poet. Continuities can also be found in grouping authors together, these are the Major Connecticut Wits and these are the Minor Connecticut Wits, these are the deist poets and these are the Christian poets. The continuities that are “found” can also reflect the biases of the readers and critics, much as the traits which are extracted. These two agents in the construction of the author-function are similar in that they both rely on the reader-function in the synthesis of the author-function and they may also be infused into a text through intentional authorial or publisher interjection. For example, an author may suggest that the publisher position a work in a list of advertisements to spatially associate one work with others, or an advertisement may declare that if one is a fan of another author or particular genre that this new publication may be just the thing for the consumer-reader. Even within the corpus of an author’s work, a reader who is familiar with the larger body of work, including and outside of a particular text, may relate continuities from one work to another, even if two or more works by the same author are not explicitly related. This sense of continuity can be reader-perceived as in the case of Phillis Wheatley’s poetry constituting an “intertextual epic” (Shield 179) which may be read as competing with other early American poetic epics when taken as a whole. The risk of this perception is not to inaccurately reflect a critical understanding of the author’s works, but rather a diminution of the individuality contained within the totality of the author’s (in this case, Wheatley’s) collective works which cover a wide range of topics from varying perspectives over the course of her poetic career. Continuities, then, can be constructed either through reader

inference or even critical construction, the product of long-term scholarship or even the intentional re-evaluation of an author whose works have been typically acknowledged by the academe but who may not have received the critical attention that the critic who is drawing these continuities believes that the author's works merit. Hence critical re-evaluations become a function of Foucault's author-function in the sense that critical analyses of works then can be means of carrying out the author-function on a plane apart from that of the average reader who may choose not to dig as deeply into a text and its background as critics might.

Other continuities are intentional, such as succeeding editions, revised editions, expanded editions, and completely re-written texts such as Barlow's *The Columbiad* (1807) as a heavily revised version of the earlier *The Vision of Columbus*. Continuities can be constructed by readers, critics, publishers, and authors, but regardless of their origin, intentional or inferred, they serve to construct imagined community around both the author and the text. This occurs through the expansion of conceptualizations of individual texts and authors beyond the physical limits of the text as the imagined author moves beyond fulfilling the mechanics of Foucault's author-function and into becoming an action of the reader as well, that is, intended uses of the mechanics of Foucault's author-function then must become incarnated through readers carrying out Foucault's parameters, e.g., assigning continuities. Even then, the incarnation of these parameters occurs purely on an abstract plane, constructions and actions of pure thought with little or no physical manifestation. It is difficult if not impossible to physically quantify these "comparisons ... traits we extract... continuities ... [and/or] exclusions" (127) beyond recognition of their presence as mental experiences of readers, and then in the pragmatic expression of reader reactions to texts, whether they offered unfavorable reviews in journals or stopped buying a particular author's works, or otherwise praised certain texts or authors. As

Foucault remarks: “these aspects of an individual, which we designate as an author (or which comprise an individual as an author), are projections, in terms always more or less psychological, of our way of handling texts” (127). Only in reader reactions can Foucault’s author-function be witnessed, with this often revealing that these parameters are primarily the responsibility of readers. The author then becomes an imagined community not because of these authorial-functions, but she exists apart from the functions, with the functions serving to demonstrate what happens when readers imagine an author according to their own biases and opinions, or those biases and opinions that they adopt from critical sources such as scholarship or book reviews. Taken together, the reader and critical conceptualizations of texts build a self-perpetuating imagined author and textual community through a continued re-engagement with a text that occurs when future readers encounter both the originating text and/or author of a particular textual community as an imagined author. While this may seem a rather nebulous approach, it shows that there is a practical application, and trans-theoretical approach, to Foucault’s author-function in the demonstration of the imagined author and textual community as integral parts of literary communities (inclusive of both imagined authors and textual communities). Practically speaking, this analysis reveals the broad nature of the construction of these communities as inherently linked to authorial and reader participation and construction.

The final parameter which Foucault lays out as relevant to his third author-function is described as “the exclusions we practice” (127). This concludes his listing of a “series of precise and complex procedures” that allow for the construction of an author rather than “the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator” (130). Exclusions may be seen in the enactment of reader biases and aesthetic tastes. Those who prefer Gothic romance may find little of supposed literary value in the sentimental fiction of antebellum America, and therefore disregard

certain authors and texts who do not fit within their (individual readers') ideas of what constitutes an author, what readers and critics designate as an author. Walt Whitman, for example, was at one time a hack, an author nonetheless, but still a hack before he finally wrote poetry. Other exclusions can be witnessed in Phillis Wheatley's subjection to attestation. Wheatley's race and sex precluded her in 18th century North America from being accepted as an author only on the basis of her work; she was effectively excluded from the authorial advantages experienced by her contemporaries such as Timothy Dwight and John Trumbull. Exclusions can affect writers falling outside of Warner's parameters of the principle of negativity, or other parameters that reflect historical and geographical variants on those who have cultural privilege. Exclusions can also be practiced when readers dismiss writers with lower levels of education, a factor often, but not always, tied to racial, economic, and social privilege. Other exclusions occur in the construction of literary canon and the dismissal or overlooking of texts by authors whose identity remains obfuscated by either pseudonymous or anonymous statuses. Using exclusions in the construction of authorship is perhaps the most complicated of the four parameters that Foucault provides for his third author-function because it is the most broadly applicable parameter, one that can find expression in a number of actions. At its heart, "practicing exclusions" allows readers to effectively designate, consciously or not, the author as an "other," a non-corporeal identity relegated to a textual expression on a title page. This allows the reader to de-personalize the author from being a real person and erases any equation of the idea of "author" with "person." Hence it was possible for Wheatley's race to become a factor in denigrating her claims to authorship, followed by mediating her authorship through both a letter from her "owner" and the letter of attestation from other prominent citizens. Practicing exclusions can also affect authors who are otherwise within privileged parameters, for example

an author who is seen as too politically or theologically unacceptable either to the general public or to the tastes of publishers may be excluded from printing, or reprinting, their texts. Or their works may be banned from libraries or their works declared illegal. Additionally, exclusions can be practiced by authors themselves in their own writing in the intentional non-inclusion of relevant references to other authors or texts. This parameter can serve as a form of censorship against ideas and authors that do not agree with those in power over publishing. Finally, though this brief discussion is not exhaustive, readers enact exclusion every time they intentionally choose to not engage a particular text for any reason, including available time for reading and monetary resources for purchasing books, these resources are prioritized away from certain texts and spent on other texts. Of all the examples given, time and money are the most innocuous factors, items which readers may have little control over. Practically speaking, exclusions include the other parameters which Foucault mentions: “in the comparisons we make, the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities we assign, or the exclusions we practice” (127). All of these parameters inherently include some degree of exclusion, in what comparisons we do not make, in the traits we ignore or do not otherwise extract, in the continuities we do not assign, all of these are a form of “practicing exclusions.”

Textual authorial presence in the printed author’s name is necessary for a beginning point of the imagined author; otherwise a reader must assume or infer authorial presence as a beginning point for the conceptualization of the author by readers and critics alike. And while there are indeed complex actions that occur in the formulation of the idea of authorship, the genesis of this concept appears to be the initial moment a reader encounters the name of an author, or even a new text for which the reader may subconsciously assume that there is an author. An area where this may be complicated is in the event of texts that are anonymous,

pseudonymous, or otherwise inaccurately attributed. Incorrectly attributed or pseudonymous texts, if the reader is unaware of this status at the point of initial encounter with the text and when reading it, may not cause the reader to formulate a conceptualization of authorship any differently than if the name were accurately printed. Either way, authentically ascribed or not, a reader constructs authorship based off a variety of parameters as suggested by Foucault. An exception occurs when an author has chosen a pseudonym that hides their race, ethnicity, or gender in order to make their text more palatable to audiences when either the author or publisher understand that reader biases may interfere with the popular or critical acceptance of a particular text. If a reader learns that a particular text's author is writing under a false name, and the reader then learns the accurate name of the author, this may lead to a re-evaluation of the previously conceptualized author: an author previously accepted may be excluded or dismissed due to the reader's biases. Here Foucault's "series of precise and complex procedures" (130) take effect, or other factors that produce a series of re-evaluations and re-conceptualizations of an author occur. That being said, a reader may read a text and favorably receive the text (e.g., the reader does not dismiss or disagree with the text), and the reader may, after learning the author's real name and/or identity, then choose to positively receive the text and author. This can occur even if the reader had previously known the authentic identity of the author prior to reading and then originally ignored that text based off of personal biases toward part of the author's identity, whether biological, cultural, or ideological. Pseudonymous texts, incorrectly attributed texts, and anonymous texts complicate notions of authorship as something that is always lucid for the reader and critic, forcing a potential for questioning the authenticity even of correctly attributed authorships. At the same time, the parameters which Foucault lays out in "What is an Author?" may not be entirely adequate for conceiving of authorship when authorial uncertainty exists

among readers, even if that uncertainty does not prevent readers from consuming a text. Here the idea of the imagined author allows for an expansion of Foucault's principles by providing a wider-ranging set of parameters that proposes that all authorship is imagined, insofar as the reader imagines the idea of the author based off a holistic set of parameters that include and expand on Foucault's parameters for his author-functions. The author is not dead per Barthes, nor is he or she exclusively relegated to Foucault's parameters of the author-functions. Rather the imagined author transcends these limits with conceptualizations of authorship being relegated to the potentialities for authorship as conceived of by readers and critics, which indeed includes Foucault's principles, but also challenges and simultaneously incorporates them into the idea of the imagined author.

Anonymous texts are also not immune to the conceptualization of authorship by readers, the lack of an author's name on a title page does not preclude readers imagining the text's author. In fact the absence of an author may spark speculation concerning the origins of the text, since it is not conceivable that a text may originate in a vacuum. Here we find a further variation in the imagined author from Foucault's author-functions, though he recognizes that the parameters which he presents are only some among many possibilities: "[t]he author— or what I have called the "author-function"—is undoubtedly only one of the possible specifications of the subject and, considering past historical transformations, it appears that the form, the complexity, and even the existence of this function are far from immutable" (138). Near the end of his essay Foucault remarks, "[w]e can easily imagine a culture where discourse would circulate without any need for an author. Discourses, whatever their status, form, or value, and regardless of our manner of handling them, would unfold in a pervasive anonymity" (138). This anonymity is conceivable especially if one speculates that future texts could be generated by machines, e.g., novels

composed by software or stories constructed through other internet-searching algorithms. But even here, where there is no easily identifiable human author to whom readers may attach a text, the presence of an author is still inescapable in tracing back the origins of texts that might “unfold in a pervasive anonymity.” Every discourse has origins somewhere or from someone, and when that source is some-“where” then even that “where” must have someone conceptually behind it on some level. The imagined author is part of the mutable conceptualizations of authorship which Foucault acknowledges, though it is oppositional to his claim that there could eventually be “a culture where discourse would circulate without any need for an author” (138). Anonymous authorship does not negate the ability of readers and critics to imagine an author, though it certainly may inspire an unproductive line of speculation about authorial identity. Instead, anonymous authorship forces a repositioning of conceptualizations of authorship from known parameters of authorship (e.g., the name of the author) into speculative modes of conceiving of the author that include inferring authorial identity through perceived authorial textual presence. This repositioning of conceptualization requires that the reader have faith in the existence of a textual author, whether or not the author is named or not. Foucault declares, “[n]o longer the tiresome repetitions: “Who is the real author?” ... New questions will be heard: ... “Where does it come from; how is it circulated; who controls it?” (138). Even in this speculation on the disappearance of the author (oddly Barthes-esque, e.g., “without any need for an author”) Foucault acknowledges that authorship will be present. His first question draws from the current paradigm of authorship where he implies that the question “Who is the real author?” is currently being asked, but that in a future paradigm it will be replaced by such questions as “Where does it come from ... who controls it?” The latter question still denotes an author, though oriented differently, nonetheless it still implies the presence of an author as a source for origination of a

text. The imagined author functions within both paradigms by recognizing that authorial identity, even obfuscated identity or non-identity as anonymous texts possess, is relevant to textual perception by readers.

Foucault's fourth, and final, author-function "does not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy" (130-131). Perhaps one of the more vague of his summaries, Foucault described this function earlier in his essay: "the author is a particular source of expression who, in more or less finished forms, is manifested equally well, and with similar validity, in a text, in letters, fragments, drafts, and so forth" (128-129). In other words, the author is never a static identity, a fact which the imagined author concept affirms as relevant and relative to each reader's individualized conceptualizations of the author: the idea of the author changes between readers and even for the same reader over time. Foucault remarks that there can be "a variety of egos and ... a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy." This "variety of egos" can be a multiplication of authorial egos when an author changes over the course of their career, or even depicts alternative egos in different texts, such as Foucault lists. An author may present one distinct self privately in letters to his lover and another self to his textual audience, or change his self-representation over the course of a series of related texts or a career. Some may call this a maturation of style, but it can also signal authorial awareness of the ability to enact a multiplication of egos over the course of a textual oeuvre or even throughout a single work. In this sense, authors can conscientiously participate in their textual community through the self-construction of potential reader perceptions of the author. Additionally, it can also refer to the changing perceptions of an author by readers, varying from reader to reader and over time, or a combination of both intended

authorial variation of self-representation and the relativity of reader perception. Foucault recognizes the instability and versatility of authorial identity spanning the different facets of the literary spectrum, authorial egos are multipliable and variable for both reader and author. This means that authorial identity is an unstable category capable of being shaped and reshaped as necessary, as well as an identity that can be, as already seen, obfuscated and even potentially erased in the event that an anonymous author is unable to be identified. Behind all of this subjectivity is the underlying existence of an authorial identity, the original author, who the author is apart from reader perceptions. How the author perceives himself or herself is also at play here in the development and projection of various egos through a text, and finally how that author perceives his or her own projection of their self to others that must also be considered. But some of these topics can clearly never be fully analyzed; there is no way to ask Freneau in what ways he wanted to project of himself to his readers, or how he perceived of himself as either a poet or a philosopher and what those terms meant to him. That being said, authorial identity starts “purely and simply” with an “actual individual insofar” as authorial identity refers back to the human source of a text or texts, an identity or identities that merit the construction of conceptualizations of authorial identity. What is interesting about the construction of authorial identity is its ascription of the creation of text or texts to an individual who is then an “author” apart from other identities. A writer is not just a novelist, she is also an “author,” the general term is readily substituted for the specific term since an author may write throughout a number of genres over the course of their career, a la Isaac Asimov. As Foucault remarks, “[a] “philosopher” and a “poet” are not constructed in the same manner” (127) yet they may both be authors regardless of the literary merit of their texts. In the same way, novelists and poets may also be assigned varying categories in terms of the value of their work as authors due to both the

genre and/or quality of their work. In the late eighteenth century it is safe to say that in American literature the category of “poet” held the connotations of a higher literary status than that of “novelist,” and arguably until Thoreau and Emerson, the term “philosopher” could have been barely applied at all.

Working against Warner’s parameters of an authorial principle of negativity, Foucault also recognizes that, finally, the parameters of authorship are not limited to persons of any class: “a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy” (131). Authorial identity only merits an initial association of an identity associated with a text, regardless of race or sex or other personal identifying factors. These sources of identity, self-ascribed or ascribed by others, may be obfuscated to counteract discriminatory reader dispositions, a disguise against prejudice to make a text more appealing to a wider audience as an effective means to promoting, or at the least not hurting, reader receptivity of a text during eras when discrimination was socially acceptable. Yet here the notion of authorship may be troubled with the obvious limitation that authorship may be typically regulated to those in socio-economic classes where reading and writing abilities are present. On the other hand a person is an author if their oral transmissions are transferred into textual form, or even if their voice is recorded. For there to be a conceptualization of authorship ascribed to an individual, a text need not necessarily be textual or otherwise printed. Foucault’s point is important: as much as authorial identity can be mediated by a wide variety of factors, such as those which Foucault discusses, and despite the fact that most of those factors are external to the author proper, those factors are in fact the product of reader conceptualizations of the author influenced in part by intentional or unintentional authorial presence on and within texts. The parameters of what one means when one says the word “author” is infinitely subjective to time and place and, more importantly, to

the individual who uses the term “author” whether to describe someone else or to describe themselves. This subjectivity underscores Foucault’s terminology: the author is indeed a “function,” though an imagined function as the use of relativity in defining the author means that the definition of an “author” may never be fully defined, and therefore may be refined continuously as needed by those using the term. The imagined author speaks to this flexibility in Foucault’s definition, and merits a repositioning of the idea of author not merely as a “function,” though it certainly is a function of both the writer, the originator of textual presences, but also the function of readers and critics continuously defining and re-defining authorship. Beyond being just a function, then, the imagined author stands for the endlessly multipliable definitions and conceptions of authorship, even including such broadly contradictory ideas as those that falteringly ignore the historical, and human, realities behind authorship, such as Barthes. His idea is truly an imagined author apart from any anchor in reality except a floating name associated vaguely with a text, lying purely on a conceptual plane and departing from the idea of there being an authorial textual presence. But even here by Barthes suggesting that rigor mortis has set in on the idea of the author, he acknowledges that the author is indeed imagined, though imagined only as a deceased entity. The imagined author recognizes this death of the author as inherently one conceptualization among many that may have a relevant place in certain contexts of authorship. Foucault even comes close to this possibility in his suggestion that “[w]e can easily imagine a culture where discourse would circulate without any need for an author. Discourses ... would unfold in a pervasive anonymity” (138). While this has already been discussed, it should be noted that while this is a future possibility in Foucault’s conceptualization of the “author-function,” and is a present reality for Barthes, the imagined author necessitates a continuous possibility for authorial presence in some form, even if distantly acknowledged as no

longer alive. This form, however, may even be conceived in Barthes' phrasing in the idea of the anonymous text; in which case though the author is not dead, he certainly may have gone missing. Thus to use Barthes's term, and to follow Foucault's final suggestion, is not to merely reiterate their larger ideas as much as it is to continually re-conceive of authorship in its subjective possibilities for interpretation. The imagined author allows for a multiplication of relative conceptualizations of authorship that some may perceive as ignoring an author or even as including an option that may not include the necessity or possibility of attaching an author (Foucault posits this, but only under the veil of the term "anonymity"). In some cases, the possibility of ascribing authorship of an anonymous or pseudonymous text may indeed be impossible due to a lack of evidence to accurately ascertain authorship. There may even, as Foucault suggests, come a time when "discourse would circulate without any need for an author" (138), though for that to happen people will have to abandon one of the principle pillars of a textual community, namely the originators of that community. In the case of machine-generated texts, as posited earlier, there would still be an authorial identity linked to either the machine, program, or programmers who created the opportunity for the text to exist in the first place. Another side consideration is that with the proliferation of digital editions of texts, through webpages or other electronic formats, the sense of authorship becomes even more complicated. For example, the University of South Carolina, through its Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, currently hosts a digital edition of Phillis Wheatley's first edition of her *Poems*. Included with this edition is not only a searchable text, but an introduction by Wheatley scholar Vincent Carretta, similar to the print edition which Carretta has edited for Penguin Publishers (2001). In the case of digital editions, web designers and even web developers among other technical professionals also play a role in re-communicating texts in digital formats.

Essentially digital editions are new editions of texts which must be understood as re-publications on par with new print editions of the same text. In other words, each new digital edition of a text also enacts a redeployment of, and expansion of, the idea of authorship by re-contextualizing the process by which a text is reproduced for future readers.

While this seems far from the topic at hand in this study, it is in fact necessary to address directly when considering authorship in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in America by demonstrating that with endlessly multiplying potential manifestations of conceptualizations of authorship, there was no set sense of authorial identity in the early American republic, as apparently there remains to this day as technology allows for the continued distribution of texts of the early republic to new, and potentially global, audiences. Digitalizing texts multiplies authorial presence beyond the physical parameters of a printed volume and allows for the imagined author and the associated textual community to expand to theoretically as many members as there are people with internet access and a literacy of the language of the text. But even this final limitation may be reduced with the potential advancement of online translating resources. The expansion of digital humanities as a field of study will be necessary to begin to comprehend the way that digital texts, online authorial presence, and digital textual communities are relevant to our understanding of the evolution of authorship. Digital authorial presence can be augmented with supplemental materials that may not be readily available for print “critical” or “scholarly” editions at a significantly lower cost threshold than print editions. In addition, the creation of discussion boards and other forums online for the exchange of textual commentary by readers can foster online textual communities between people who might otherwise not meet offline.

The imagined author serves an important role in the expansion of textual communities, digital or not, in that the author is an initial foundation on which textual community is built. The imagined author enriches the development of textual community by serving as a foundation on which that community is built, a foundation on which the rest of a text rests. Even texts that are seemingly depersonalized rely on an initial authorial presence, anonymously, pseudonymously, or published with an accurate authorial identity; there is nonetheless an authorial identity associated with a text, however obscured that identity may be. Authorial identity is built through authorial presence and this presence goes beyond just the name printed in the volume, listing who the author is. The reception of texts by readers and critics also plays into the building of authorial identity, creating opinions of authors whose reputations will serve to further shape future readers' opinions of the author and their authorial identity. Hence when a work is lauded, the author's identity is associated positively by people who have not yet encountered a text, setting up future readers to have an initially positive view of the author and her texts. In addition, authorship also serves as a foundation for understanding a text as a text that is written and intentional: for example, Walt Whitman was intentional in developing continual revisions of *Leaves of Grass*, creating a diaspora of cosmic identities through the varying editions that have been reified by critics, and in innumerable undergraduate anthologies as his authorial identity has been understood as one of the most important American poets from the 19th century. In addition, Whitman's authorial identity has been deemed relevant as literary studies have taken on increasingly culturally relevant and contemporary understandings of the human experience.

An imagined author also operates as an imagined community in the sense that the imagined author becomes a site of textual community. This occurs when the author is associated with a text or group of texts, the occurrence of associating an author with a text that is itself a site

of textual community. The imagined author then becomes a semi-self-reflexive force driving textual community not just toward the text but also extending that textual community to reach back and include its author in that textual community. The imagined author becomes a part of the textual community surrounding a particular text by virtue of his or her association with that text and through direct and indirect textual authorial presence. This textual authorial presence is the result of the author or publisher intentionally creating authorial presence through inserting direct and indirect self-referential material in a text, e.g. use of the first person or the presence of an author's personal opinions, opinions which signal to the reader the presence of an author even if there is an absence of self-references. Readers associating a particular name or authorial identity with a text link the author to an already-forming textual community which integrates the author, already an imagined entity, with the imagined community that centers on a text. This does two things: it emphasizes the tendency for readers to associate an author with a text (no text is parentless, if I might infantilize texts) while also further emphasizing the imagined nature of the imagined author. In the first observation, reader presumption of an author occurs with or without intentional authorial presence in that readers will at the very least denominate authorship of a work as "anonymous" or "pseudonymous" when authorial identity is unknown, indicating a need on the part of readers to identify a source of authorship for a text, including when that source is not immediately known. This association of a source with a text, that source which is termed "author," suggests that authorial identity is both necessary and mutable. Authorial identity is tenuous in the sense that its association with a particular text is relative to the continued association of that authorial identity with a specific text, a connection that, in the case of pseudonymous and anonymous texts, can be revised in light of historical research that may challenge traditional authorial associations with particular texts. For example, Royal Tyler's

poem “The Death Song of Alknomook,” a poem in the tradition of the dying Native American trope, was historically associated with another author before authorship was accurately accredited to Tyler based off on the work of scholars (Péladeau 9). At no time did readers assume that there was an absence of an author, rather it was simply a question of who the author was. That both speculation and a search for the author occurred suggests the need for identifying an authorial identity: innate curiosity of the human species necessitated this search for true authorial identity.

Whether authorial identity is uncertain or ascertained, the role of the author functions primarily on a theoretical plane, the imagined author functions (if I might borrow from Foucault) as an imagined entity, indeed through the parameters of Foucault’s principles while also extending beyond those principles to the purely imaginative. This is especially true when there is an unknown or uncertain author whose identity becomes a site of research and speculation. When authorial identity is known, the name is correctly identified on the title page or elsewhere in the volume, the author is, in relationship to her text, an imagined entity. This occurs as the product of reader association of a name or identity with a text or texts: readers imagine who the author is based on both the text and extra-textual encounters with other information on the author, such as reviews of and advertisements for texts by that same author, among other sources that can also include inter-personal communications. The imagined author rests in the reader’s imagination, and as noted previously, can also undergo changes as the reader learns new information about the author or encounters further works by the author. Seated in the imagination, the reader’s perceptions of the author both in and outside of a text or texts suggests the potential for the multiplication of authorial identities and the self-reflexive nature of authorship: a writer is an author because they are associated with the creation of texts, and texts

are associated with the existence of an author. And this is information created and contained within the imagination. Certainly there is an author or originator of a text, but to construct that person as an author rather than the writer of a particular text is to merit various cultural associations with the concept of an “author” in the construction of authorship; these include but are not limited to Foucault’s author-functions. Construction of an author, begun by an initial association with a text and then transcending that foundation, proceeds through the reader’s imagined perceptions of an author, through associating that author’s name with particular texts and information gathered about the author from outside of the text. Even the initial association of an author’s name with a text originates within the reader’s imagination, despite the pragmatic placement of the author’s name on the title page, the reader must accept that this name is indeed the name of the person responsible for composing that text. In the case of Phillis Wheatley, that initial association was, due to the biases of the times, mediated through an attestation of authenticity of authorship, suggesting that the reader had to be convinced of the association of the name “Phillis Wheatley” with the role of “author” and the role of “poet.” With or without mediation, the idea of authorship is always ascribed through an act of the reader’s imagination. In some instances, such as anonymously authored or poorly written texts, the reader’s imagination must be activated to a more active degree, but nonetheless the author is always a creation of the imagination. At no point is the author not an imagined entity, even operating within or beyond Foucault’s author-functions.

This imagined status of the author is relevant especially to the idea of authorship in the early republic as authors often sought to establish not only their own identities as authors, but to also craft parallel construction of an even more subjective experience, the experience of nationhood in an imagined community. The imagined author then works hand in hand with the

development of literary nationalisms, both are imagined and the existence of one (the imagined author) helps create the second: literary nationalism requires authors whose identities can be readily ascribed as “American.” Imagining an author who invokes parameters of “Americanness,” in all of its variables for each individual reader, builds not only an “American” literature, but also an “American” nation by expanding the imagined parameters of nationhood to include authors, originators of a national culture whose literary contributions work to expand the cultural reach of a nationalism while also practicing elements of national identity, e.g., Charles Brockden Brown’s note to his readers and Barlow’s “The Hasty Pudding” are American because of the identities associated with their social role as authors, but also because their texts consciously work to develop a distinctly American literature. The parallel processes of imagining author and imagining nation reinforce each other, the imagined author becomes a basis of the imagined nation, and the imagined nation not only serves as one starting point for imagining an author, it also serves to reinforce the imagined nature of the author by virtue of the association of a nationalism with a specific authorial identity. This association involves Foucault’s “the traits we extract as pertinent” (127), referring to the traits associated with authorial identity which the reader imagines. The imagined nation, a politicalized imagined community, becomes a trait associated with a text or its author, allowing by virtue of this loose function of association (loose because there are no definite parameters that must be met to define association) for expanding the idea of a national literature to include works that might precede the historical formation of a particular country or even the invention of a term used to describe a particular imagined community. Early Native American texts are included within the corpus of an American literature on the same basis which Freneau’s poetry is part of this “national literature,” because both are associated by readers with the development of an imagined American identity. The

imagined author allows for an expansion of a nationalistic literature by decentralizing the parameters of association which the imagined author requires for the initial construction of the idea of an author to begin, which in turn leads to the ability to associate a national identity with an author based on a wide variety of individualized reader parameters. The imagined author is associated with a distinct national identity through the reader's imagining or "extracting traits" that are deemed relevant to a particular national identity, with authorship potentially occasionally being constructed with as few traits as are deemed relevant to a particular national identity; that is, an author may be conceptualized as an author on as few traits as a reader considers to be the minimum parameters of a national identity, such as geographical location or historical association. This ties together both the construction of authorship and of national identity as both functions of the imagination on a continually evolving plane where conceiving of and revising that conception of identity can take place without any limitations other than that of the imagination. Authorial and national identity occur as products of the imagination and can therefore be easily crossed with each other: authorial identity can be synthesized with a national identity as dually mutable imagined identities and the two may even at times be conflated. This critical point is important because it underscores the intersection of the imagined author with the imagined community, distinct yet potentially productive concepts when interacting together. The imagined author serves as a function of the imagined community, a cultural function of nationalism intersecting with authorial identity.

The imagined nature of authorial identity perpetuates the ongoing critical theorization of authorship as no definitive unifying theoretical framework has been identified that can adequately and comprehensively define the word "author." The risk of this concept is that it may be too loosely constructed, broadly recognizing the infinitely multipliable manifestations of

authorship as solely the product of the imagination rather than limiting authorship to a list of functions. With this risk comes the possibility that the concept may be considered too nebulous to be useful for extended critical and theoretical application. This chapter has focused on providing critical explanations of the concept as well as the relationship of the imagined author with Barthes' "The Death of the Author," Michael Foucault's "What is an Author?," and Michael Warner's "principle of negativity." While the primary focus of this study is on poetry of the early American republic, the imagined author represents the foundation for the text as an imagined community, specifically an imagined national literary community. This community takes place through readers' participating with a text and authors engaging in the self-construction of their authorial identities and textual presence in their writings to which readers respond; readers may also respond to unintentional authorial presences such as slips of the pen by which authors may make self-referential remarks that may alert the reader to authorial identity, such as remarks that may indirectly refer to an author's personal identity. This construction of authorial identity not only expands a nationalistic culture (i.e., this is an *American* author) it also builds a nationalistic textual community. While the imagined author involves operating within Foucault's functions to some degree, as discussed above, it also involves transcending these functions. The imagined author enacts the expansion of cultural conceptualizations of authorship because the imagined author relies on individual reader conceptions of authorship which are not limited by particular functions of critical theory. Imagining authorial identity allows for a genesis of textual community, the imagined author becomes the foundation of this community.

The text as an imagined community takes many forms, expressed through the number of individuals ranging from the author to the typesetters, printers, newspaper publishers whose

works included proposals for texts, subscribers, subsequent purchasers, book borrowers, reviewers, and those whose lives otherwise touched or were touched by the publication of a particular volume. Circulating across state lines and even oceans, the currents of textual distribution from early authors of the American republic distributed American culture and provided a witness to the world that the new country could produce its own authors, however original or not. Textual communities, transformed from simply being audiences to readers engaging with texts by various means, from simply subscribing to reacting privately, evidence the formation and spread of a literary culture centered on American texts, a literary culture that like the idea of the nation itself, was imaginary. Held together by words, the imagined literary community had as its locus not a recognized and officially established canon heralded and enshrined by literary scholars, but rather a fluidity of disjunctively juxtaposed texts representing a wide variety of viewpoints both aesthetically and politically, as well as theologically. At the same time, the role of the imagined author contributed to the imagined literary community. This disjunctive nature of early American literary culture was a product of the politically and socially unstable times following the American Revolution as the country stumbled its way down a path of nationhood, struggling with ideas of citizenship, national identity (i.e., national character), as well as the role of the country on the face of the rapidly globalizing earth, currents of slavery and the balances of political power between upper and lower classes, the roles of women in society, and the continuing infringements and genocides against Native Americans, all serving as part of the broader, chaotic social background against which early national authors attempted to forge an American national literary corpus, an imagined and disjunctive collective of disorder and imitation of European models with original, New World innovations on old themes, an aesthetic collusion of disunited voices weltering together amidst criticism both international and at home,

forging not a unified voice of any single over-arching thematic narrative, neither exclusively Judeo-Christian (i.e., Adamic) nor secular (i.e., Aeneas-pagan), but rather inchoately American.

3. THE IMAGINED PAST: DWIGHT AND BARLOW FORGE HISTORY

The imagined past served as a valuable cultural resource for early American poets in their endeavors to construct a literature that allowed for the individualized poetic deployments of developing nationalities in the new country. Drawing from the past allowed early American authors to enact a wide variety of inherited literary strategies through their writings, including connecting American culture generally to a deeper historical sense of being, reinterpreting the past and past texts through an American lens (through John Shields' *translatio cultus*), reinterpreting America through a deeper past than its colonial parameters, as well as using the past to discuss contemporary issues (a common occurrence outside of the parameters of this study as is already widely recognized). The imagined past presented poets the opportunity to actively engage a deeper historical vision than might seem readily available to a new country whose founding had occurred in 1776. Even some proto-nationalist poets such as Wheatley engaged the ancient past to discuss issues relevant to the colonies even before nationhood. The past sometimes served equally as a means for exploring the potential future for the new nation, with Joel Barlow's emphasis on the Incan civilization in *The Vision of Columbus* (1787) providing not only an example for the historical past of the pan-American continents, but also to provide an allegory for the potential future of the United States, or in Timothy Dwight's use of the past in *The Conquest of Canaan*. Kenneth Silverman, in his biography of Timothy Dwight, remarks that "[i]n the arts of Revolutionary America, history became a vehicle of political philosophy and partisanship. The past became a metaphor of the future ... Biblical vehicles were

even more popular and more expressive, for they recalled that treatment of American affairs in the guise of biblical narrative which had been maintained in the colonies since the Puritans ... [d]uring the Revolution, these traditional parallels gained a new life” (31). The imagined past also allowed poets of the early republic to build a national literature rooted in the literature of, most often, European and Biblical traditions.

Accessing the past for many authors was as simple as accessing traditions that occurred historically prior to their contemporary times, such as engaging Biblical or European traditions. The imagined past also included accessing and reinterpreting Native American culture, as demonstrated by Philip Freneau’s “The Prophecy of King Tammany.” Like Barlow’s use of the Incans, this historical trans-cultural use for contemporary purposes enacts a use of Native American persons and cultural symbols in the creation of a Euro-American culture. In a sense this becomes a form of indigenous *translatio cultus*, which I will call here indigenous cultural appropriation. The use of indigenous cultural appropriation often takes place as a means of securing a sense of identity for Euro-Americans during times when their own sense of national identity was insecure due to war and other uncertainties, including times of forceful advancement through the settling of the ever-moving and always further away land of the west. Use of Native Americans as a source of national identity for early Americans has already been discussed by other scholars (e.g., Cheryl Walker), but here the historical indigenous cultural appropriation merits consideration since this so often happens in an imagined context. For instance, Freneau uses the historical figure of Tammany within a purely imagined setting in which the Native American leader essentially cedes his land to European encroachment, positioning him as a mouthpiece for the early republic rather than for indigenous rights.

Any depiction of the past must inherently involve use of the imagination, especially in the creation of literature. This allows for the rewriting of history in a syncretized manner in which the role of the historical becomes an object of the imagination. No longer is the historical tied to the past per se, but it becomes a possible element to project the future onto as well, as demonstrated by the example of Barlow allowing Columbus in both *The Vision of Columbus* and *The Columbiad* to see the future of his discoveries. Rewriting history functions in at least two ways: first there is a distinct mixing of the historical with the ahistorical imaginative effusions of the author's creative genius which augments the historical with the imaginative in a way that expands historical accounts beyond the purely descriptive, creating a narrative that transcends being exclusively "academic." This expansion allows for a recreation, one might say a re-articulation, a retelling, of the historical past within a narrative that makes the poet or novelist also a historian, where he or she fulfills dual roles in an expansion of conceptualizations of authorship that includes the simultaneous use of multiple genres of writing. This trans-generic role of the author illuminates the imaginative nature of such authorship. Trans-generic use of the past also enables the flexibility of both the imaginative and the historical, complicating the roles of "historian" and "poet." The historical past, then, acts as a partially blank canvas on which the author projects not only her creative tendencies but also her view of that past as well as its applicability to both her present and future cultural milieu. In other words, the author's use of the past is always historical in the sense that the imagined past can concern itself with the imagined historical in whatever form, even that of a history, which manifests itself through the use of the present and/or the future being conflated with a historical past, creatively appropriated by the author.

This subjectivity of the historical introduces the ability to mold the plastic past into any shape needed or desired by an author, providing the past as a blank canvas much as the imagined future is also blank. The imagined past has the advantage of already being populated with elements that may be readily appropriated for use in constructing, and re-constructing, both the past as a past and the past as relevant to the present, the latter case being the use of the past in the poly-authored text *The Anarchiad*. The flexibility of the past made it a popular area of exploration among early poets of the United States as authors crafted a past for a nation rising out of the chaos of fighting both England and Native Americans. The imagined past, then, offers a particularly potent area for creative exploration, the past as a place to posit imitative pasts for molding present and future constructions of the nation, an idea which also included beckoning to the classical past which had a noticeable influence on the development of American government.

Timothy Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan*

One of the works of the early republic in which a deep historical past is appropriated for discussing contemporary America is Timothy Dwight's reconstruction of the Biblical story of the ancient Hebrews conquering Canaan; the use of Biblical subject matter in poetry was something with which Dwight was already familiar from other projects (Silverman 20). (A brief note: the long "j" has been modernized in all quotes along with other older type conventions). Beginning after the exile from Egypt, Dwight imagines the Hebrew nation in a state of political unrest during attempts to settle in their Promised Land. Clearly drawing from the Puritan idea of the "Errand into the Wilderness," discussed in Perry Miller's book of the same name, Dwight's work focuses almost exclusively on telling the story of the ancient Hebrews in an embellished format; there are many extra-Biblical conversations and even a romance that are not readily discernable in the Old Testament. This indulgence in such a creative interpretation of the Old Testament

story allows for the verse epic to be more appealing to a wider audience rather than simply being an event-for-event versification of a Biblical story; in a sense Dwight novelizes the Biblical story to make it centered around events in the lives of specific characters (e.g., the lovers Irad and Selima).

One of the most direct nationalistic moves that Dwight makes in *The Conquest of Canaan* is found in his dedicatory note to George Washington who is described in terms of nothing less than perfection. The dedication begins “To his Excellency, GEORGE WASHINGTON, Esquire” (15). Washington is then described as “[t]he Saviour of his Country, The Supporter of Freedom, And the Benefactor of Mankind” (15), and that is just the beginning. Obviously paeans to Washington were virtually innumerable in the first several decades of the country, though Dwight makes the unusual, unusual for a minister perhaps though certainly not unique to the time, move to describe Washington by the term Saviour, a term often reserved for reference to the person of Jesus Christ. Dwight, who was fully committed to his religious beliefs, saw Washington specifically, and the country generally, as in line with Divine Will for him to appropriate the term “Saviour” for Washington. In another sense this is highly appropriate considering that the allegory, a perpetuation of the Puritanical vision for settling the New World which Dwight effectively creates in *The Conquest of Canaan*, is of America as ancient Israel. According to Silverman, Dwight disavowed any knowledge of this interpretation. Nonetheless “most of his [Dwight’s] contemporaries read the poem as an allegory of the Revolution, with Washington represented by Joshua. “America is obviously placed before us,” an English reviewer said, “under the allegory of the Israelites having left Egypt, which means the British government.” This interpretation irked Dwight” (Silverman 30). Perhaps this allegory also irked the British reviewer with the recent close of the War of Independence. Though as Silverman

points out, despite his disavowal of allegory, “Dwight was not telling the whole truth” (31) given the unavoidable parallels that were evident to consumers of *The Conquest of Canaan*; in fact, “[w]ishing to celebrate America, but finding little tangible to celebrate, Dwight claimed Canaan and Joshua as archetypes of America and its leaders” (38). Dwight continues to praise Washington by declaring that “[t]his Poem is inscribed, with the highest respect for his character, the most ardent wishes for his happiness, and the most grateful sense of the blessings, secured, by his generous efforts, to the United States of North America” (15). Dwight’s willingness to dedicate this work, considered the first epic poem of the United States, posits Washington automatically as both an admirable figure, the cult of personality around him arguably had no serious competition in this time, as well as a major figure of early American literature. By virtue of his inclusion, Washington represents the nationalistic endeavors of both the Revolutionary War as well as the cultural ascendancy of the new country: Americans had their own home-grown heroes and its own literature to dedicate to them. Washington in this context is enacted by Dwight as a connection that posits a nationalistic vision that incorporates the Biblical past as part of the story of America, a long-standing tradition that included at one time the belief that Native Americans were descended from the ancient Hebrews, though there is no evidence that Dwight himself was readily aware of that particular theory. Dwight’s use of this connection, the Biblical past with contemporary America in mind, provides a deeper historical past than the new country could readily claim; its then current historical past was one of colonization by European powers. Dwight provides *The Conquest of Canaan* as a vision of American nationalism that does not deny the strong cultural connections of Europe to America. Rather this builds an alternative past that suggests that the spiritual origins of the country run deeper than the cultural ties to Europe that were the primary cultural and social influencers in this period. While Dwight undoubtedly

had other motives, he was a strong proponent of his brand of Christianity, this establishing of a cultural past with ancient Israel allowed Dwight to present Biblical stories to an increasingly secularized literature of the times: more and more novels and poems concerned with non-religious matters were proliferating in the late 18th century than at any time prior to the Revolution. This was in part due to the general increase in printed matter as well as the slowly increasing social acceptance of deism and alternative beliefs to Christianity, a trend that would continue well into the 19th century with the rise of Universalism and Transcendentalism. Dwight then is promoting a syncretism of theology and political belief under the guise of entertainment, a combination which worked to promote a nationalistic vision that precluded any denial of a strong Christian heritage. While this would be impossible in a literal historical sense, through the imagined past, Dwight is empowered to argue through allegory that America at the very least could find a spiritual heritage in applying Dwight's interpretation of the establishment of ancient Israel to the ongoing project of the United States. No longer required to look exclusively to Europe, America could look to both its "saviour" George Washington and the Bible for sources of cultural and historical identity. Dedicating *The Conquest of Canaan* to Washington also allowed Washington to be established as a co-genesis for an American culture along with Biblical Christianity; Washington is both saviour and dedicatee of the poem, establishing a connection between Revolutionary America and literary culture, enshrining both Washington and Dwight within the context of nascent American culture. By dedicating his work to Washington, Dwight instills a connection between himself and Washington; that is, Dwight not only enshrines Washington at the beginning of the epic poem, he also secures for himself the connection to an American literature that not only beckons back to Biblical times, but more importantly also reinforces Dwight's distinction as the author of the first American epic. Dwight

served as a chaplain during the Revolutionary War (Headley 175-198, Silverman 24) under General Samuel Parsons when, in 1778, he wrote, along with an introductory prefatory letter from Parsons, to George Washington requesting permission to dedicate his poem to Washington (Benjamin Dwight 142-144, Sparks 288-289). In writing to Washington, Dwight asserted his belief that “[t]he application, which is the subject of this letter [i.e., requesting permission to dedicate the poem to Washington] is, I believe, not common in these American regions” (Benjamin Dwight 142). Timothy Dwight admits that “[o]f the merit or demerit of the work, your Excellency cannot form a guess, but, from the character of the writer; with which you will be made acquainted by Gen. Parsons” (Benjamin Dwight 142-143). The poem was, as Dwight acknowledged to Washington, a project on which he had been at work “[f]or several years” (Benjamin Dwight 142). Washington’s response is affirmative, he remarks that, “[n]othing can give me more pleasure, than to patronize the essays of genius, and a laudable cultivation of the arts and sciences, which had begun to flourish in so eminent a degree, before the hand of oppression was stretched over our devoted country; and I shall esteem myself happy, if a poem, which has employed the labor of years, will derive any advantage, or bear more weight in the world, by making its appearance under a dedication to me” (Sparks 289, see also Benjamin Dwight 143).

The presence of Dwight and Washington’s exchange evidences that both men had keen insight into just how valuable Washington’s name would be to *The Conquest of Canaan*, both as a marketing technique and in terms of the cultural and literary impact that name association would have at that time. Dwight is aware of the potential cultural uniqueness of his project as the first American epic poem, it is a project that is “not common in these American regions,” suggesting a motive for Dwight as well: this project is specifically of interest to “these American

regions.” Washington’s response to Dwight is important because it notes Washington’s concern with the “cultivation of the arts and sciences” in the new country as well as accurately engaging some of Dwight’s aims in the writing of *The Conquest*. Dwight’s use of the Biblical past works toward this by engaging a reading public anew with an ancient and well-read text; the reading of his epic poem would not only demonstrate the growing presence of a distinctly American literature, it would also reinforce the need for continuing the production of local culture while simultaneously providing the literate public with a deeper historical connection to a specifically non-European historical tradition, except by virtue of the Europeanized version of theology (i.e., Calvinism) under which Dwight worked for so much of his life. Washington is aware of the importance of Dwight’s work, and he reflects in his letter to Dwight on the effects of the British “hand of oppression [which] was stretched over our devoted country” under which the colonies had labored for so long. Additionally, Washington demonstrates more than a hint of egotism, or at the very least recognition of the cultural weight of his name, which he supposes, correctly in Dwight’s view, will benefit the popularity of the text if he should be listed as the poem’s dedicatee. The cultural continuity that this dedication creates is one both of deification of Washington that occurred during and after the Revolutionary War, while also signaling to the reading public that American culture had its own patron for literary endeavors; in addition to the providential nature of America’s origins, Washington is the “Saviour of his Country” which has experienced “blessings, secured, by his [Washington’s] generous efforts” (15). Through the dedication to Washington, Dwight also connects the ancient Biblical past to the immediate past of the Revolutionary War, enhancing the perception of his contemporary readers who readily saw *The Conquest of Canaan* as clearly about the new country (Dwight 30-31). This link occurs because Dwight has not applied a strictly historical re-telling of Biblical events to his poem, but

rather it is because he uses the power of the imagined past in presenting a poem which is implicatively about the new country, though Dwight initially denied this trans-historical connection between his poem and the United States, as Silverman points out. Additionally, Dwight was too insightful a writer and thinker to ineptly or mistakenly place hints, some more blatant than others, at the connections he makes between the new country and ancient Israel. Dwight's dedication is a succinct way of emphasizing the nationalistic endeavor of the project despite the primarily Biblical subject matter. One does not simply dedicate America's first epic poem to George Washington.

Nor does one simply sign one's dedication as being specifically from "Greenfield, in Connecticut" to clearly place that dedication within the geographic parameters of the United States, and not imply a connection to the American republic. As with the title page, which lists the place of publication as Hartford, this notation of geographical location is important in that it, along with its succeeding text, demonstrates the specifically American material cultural production that the book is evident of. Dwight's use of Greenfield would serve a minor literary link between his two major epic poems, of which the second would not be published until 1794. By referring to two cities in Connecticut, Dwight harkens to both his roots and a central locale of the Hartford Wits, that group of sometimes erudite poets whose mark on American literature is now largely forgotten, though culturally important in their own time. The publisher is American, the author is American, and the dedicatee is definitely American: the book itself then is infused with patriotic undertones, except for the primary substance of the epic. However, when these factors are viewed in relationship to the main text of the poem, they form a careful backdrop with which to frame the text proper. This title page would otherwise seem very European if not for the notation of location of publication. Below the poem's title is a quote from Alexander Pope's "An

Essay on Criticism” which reads “Fired, at first sight, with what the Muse imparts, / In fearless youth we tempt the height of arts” (219-220). Pope influenced Dwight extensively, as did Milton, though these were commonplace influences in the era (Silverman 22-23, 25). Of course at first glance this may seem unpatriotic, but it signals Dwight’s recognition of Pope’s influence on poets of the era (Trumbull would readily agree given the influence of Pope’s *The Dunciad* on *M’Fingal*, Giles 46) while also appropriating Pope’s words for a specifically American purpose and an American audience. The quote is accurate to Dwight’s endeavors, he was in his early 30s, certainly a time of youth, at the time of publication and the poem represents an attempt at “the height of arts,” though the value of that attempt may be deemed more symbolic than successful. Dwight’s use of Pope underscores the nascent state of American literary culture, the basis for this poem is a Biblical story and Pope’s presence only adds to the material which Dwight is otherwise appropriating and then re-articulating in a specifically American context; this is a clear example of John Shields’s idea of *translatio cultus*. For Dwight to quote Pope connotes the appropriation of British ideals in the creation of American literary art, an unabashed use of British literature to serve as a basis for a distinctly and uniquely American creation that rejects the commonplace pejorative accusation of merely mindless imitation of British models that is often repeated about American literature of this era. Rather than using Pope’s quote as something on which to build an imitation, Dwight uses it to proclaim his own poetical aspirations for *The Conquest of Canaan*. The name of Pope though, is quickly overshadowed both by Dwight’s own name on the title page and the following dedicatory note to Washington.

Certainly not the only poet of the era, Dwight worked with knowledge of and at times friendship with both Trumbull and Barlow, and so his endeavor to construct a new literary project, specifically in the context of America, is important because it demonstrates that he is

very cognizant of the nationalistic context of his project despite its overarching Biblical theme. This is an American Biblical theme which Dwight is enacting through *The Conquest of Canaan*, not merely a work of theological and spiritual purpose, nor just a project to provide entertainment for readers, nor merely an exercise in authorial vanity; rather it is a purposeful construction of a distinctly American nationalism, a project aimed at and for Americans. This religious nationalism by Dwight was perhaps unparalleled in terms of the scope of *The Conquest* in the context of other early American poetries, certainly Barlow nor Freneau would have attempted a project as unique as Dwight's. That being said, the commonplace use of Biblical themes in Revolutionary poetry meant that "a biblical poem on a patriotic theme would have been no novelty in Revolutionary America" (Silverman 32). Enlisting George Washington as dedicatee allowed Dwight to link his work to the recent events of the Revolutionary War while at the same time reminding readers of his own war service as a chaplain and simultaneously linking the establishment of the United States with the establishment of ancient Israel through *The Conquest of Canaan*.

The project would take several more years until it was published in 1785, a testament to the great amount of work which Dwight put into his project. Richard Buel asserts, not entirely correctly, that it was originally completed in 1775 (Buel 29), an assertion which is not accurate since Dwight includes a reference to the death of Nathaniel Hale, a Revolutionary War hero who was killed in 1776. Kenneth Silverman remarks that "[t]he poem underwent three distinct stages of revision before its publication" (24), of which only the first stage was completed in 1775 (Silverman 24). Dwight began work on the project in 1771, with the potential for copyright violation playing a part in the delay of publication according to Joel Barlow (Buel 58, Silverman 25).

Following the dedication, Dwight includes a prefatory note to Book 1. In this note Dwight lays out his hopes for the work at hand, noting various alterations he has made between the Biblical account and his own retelling of the story. Dwight curiously attempts to decline any explicit connection of his poem to American culture. The poet declares that “[i]n the best characters, he has endeavored to represent such manners, as are removed from the peculiarities of any age, or country, and might belong to the amiable and virtuous, of every age ...[o]f such manners, he hopes he may observe, without impropriety, that they possess the highest advantages for universal application” (17). Dwight also remarks that, “[i]t may perhaps be thought the result of inattention or ignorance, that he [Dwight] chose a subject, in which his countrymen had no national interest. But he remarked that the *Iliad* and *Eneid* [sic] were as agreeable to modern nations, as to the Greeks and Romans” (17, italics added). Claiming a desire for “universal application” for the development of his characters and suggesting that he chose a subject in which “his countrymen had no national interest” is what I will call a trope of reversal, similar to the humility trope. The trope of reversal is enacted when the author claims one thing and then by the actions of his text, he intentionally undermines and reverses his claim by the substance of his text. Dwight does this here; he has already made this text relevant to the interests of his countrymen by telling the story of the establishment of a country from a text with which most literate Americans of his era would have been readily familiar. Additionally, the dedication to Washington as well as American geographical references connote the clear American context in which Dwight is telling *The Conquest of Canaan*. Dwight also makes a blatant move to undermine his claim of a lack of interest from his fellow Americans. As Silverman remarks, Dwight’s “wish to dedicate the poem to Washington ... reflects a nationalistic demand for historical art by a public proud of its recent glorious past and eager to commemorate it” (31).

Referring to the epics of *The Iliad* and the *The Aeneid* and suggesting that these works are universal, which perhaps they are given their continued popularity, allows Dwight to ignore the strong cultural and nationalistic undertones that each work possesses, since each is seen as a nationalistic epic for the Greeks and Romans respectively. It is especially difficult to avoid the *The Aeneid*'s reflection of the establishment of nationhood, something which John Shields considers to have been notable: "Vergil's epic functioned as a basic text in the education of numerous Early Americans. The more thoughtful among them must have noticed parallels between the *Aeneid* and their developing religious and cultural consciousness within the new World setting" (*Aeneas* xxxvi). Dwight ostensibly claims a lack of applicability to any sense of literary nationalism but then effectively reverses this claim through the pragmatic comparison of "this poem [which] is the first of the kind [i.e., epic], which has been published in this country" (17). By mentioning both *The Aeneid* and *The Iliad*, Dwight engages his audience's classical learning while also implying the place of his new epic in light of these major works that stood as national epics for their respective civilizations. Hence Dwight is implicatively introducing his work as inherently comparable to these works, though not through an obviously nationalistic sense. Rather Dwight remarks that "[t]he reason he [Dwight] supposed to be obvious --the subjects of those poems furnish the fairest opportunities of exhibiting the agreeable, the novel, the moral, the pathetic, and the sublime" (17). Dwight then assumes that "the subject he has chosen possesses, in a degree, the same advantages" (18). He elevates his own poetic creation to the same literary plane as ancient national epics not on the basis of their appeal to specific nationalisms, but rather on literary and "moral" aesthetics, a target which the early critics of the poem would generally not have tended to see in the poem as distinctly as Dwight saw in his own work. Nonetheless, Dwight's attempt to create a work comparable to *The Aeneid* and *The Iliad*,

while not unique to his time, was important in that it evidences one way of working toward an American nationalism through the construction of a specifically American literary aesthetic that demonstrated to both Americans and the rest of the world the ability of the early republic to formulate their own sense of literary creativity. Reflecting the strong Calvinistic influences of his personal theology, Dwight's *Conquest* partakes of the deep and meaningful Biblical literary tradition while mixing in references to the new republic by inserting, seemingly at random times, the names of heroes of the recent Revolutionary War. So while he presents his project as solely an attempt to match ancient epics on their own grounds of "the agreeable, the novel, the moral, the pathetic, and the sublime" (17), Dwight is in fact consciously working not against this claim, these are part of his endeavors, but Dwight is also intentionally enacting both the creation of a specifically American literature as well as crafting a work that is noticeably politically American as well. In terms of creating a specifically American literature, Dwight's Washingtonian dedication and multiple references to American war heroes and cultural figures suggests that his work is contrary to his assertion that "[i]n the best characters, he has endeavored to represent such manners, as are removed from the peculiarities of any age, or country, and might belong to the amiable and virtuous, of every age: such as are elevated without design, refined without ceremony, elegant without fashion, and agreeable ... [of] such manners, he hopes he may observe, without impropriety, that they possess the highest advantages for universal application" (17). In fact, Dwight has purposefully made his characters as widely applicable as possible, not exclusively on a plane of "universal application," but rather as a means of reaching a specifically American audience. Curiously for a poem whose author intended to remove connections from his characters in regards to "the peculiarities of any age, or country," his contemporaries quickly saw the parallels to their own nation. Either Dwight failed at his purported goals or he simply

declared this to appear as if he were writing for writing's sake, creating literature that would stand the test of time and cultural transitions, while at the same time intentionally creating a nationalistic epic. Critics might suggest that Dwight succeeded in neither context, though the latter reason, the attempt to create a national epic of some literary quality, is apparent through contextualizing the poem with Dwight's intentional nationalistic moves which he enacted through the poem's dedication, prefatory note, and references to the Revolutionary War throughout the poem, especially in his vision of the future glory of America in Book 10. Here Dwight's intentional avoidance of any claim to nationalistic endeavors enacts a clear example of the trope of reversal. Additionally, Greek and Roman cultures were important cultural touchstones for the developing early American republic. Dwight's calling up of these particular cultures in the context of claiming to be producing a poem which has "universal application" is underscored by the role of Greek and Roman culture in the developing United States and their widespread influences on early American cultural and political thinking.

Dwight concludes his prefatory note by remarking that "[a]s the poem is uniformly friendly to delicacy, and virtue, he hopes his countrymen will so far regard him with candour, as not to impute it to him as a fault, that he has endeavoured to please them, and has thrown in his mite, for the advancement of the refined arts, on this side of the Atlantic" (18). Now ignoring his earlier design for a "universal application" of his characters, Dwight acknowledges his audience as "his countrymen," it is they for whom he is writing and for whom he attempts to make a poem "friendly to delicacy, and virtue," not just as a purely literary endeavor. Addressing his countrymen allows Dwight to continue the patriotism of his dedicatory statement that appeared right before the prefatory note, and belies Dwight's pretence concerning the lack of an allegory for the new nation (Silverman 30-31). In fact, Dwight goes so far to remark "that he has

endeavoured to please them,” which can be seen not merely as a note of contemporary propriety, but rather as a remark of deference to Dwight’s expectation of his contemporaries’ reading preferences and stylistic expectations for epic poetry, which would presumably be either limited as *The Conquest* was indeed “the first of the kind, which has been published in this country” (17), or set at a very high standard given Dwight’s comparison of his own project to *The Iliad* and *The Aeneid*. Echoing scripture, Dwight exercises the humility topos by declaring that he “has thrown in his mite,” referring to the story of the widow’s mite in Mark 12:41-44. His poetic endeavor is, as Dwight concludes his preface, “for the advancement of the refined arts, on this side of the Atlantic” (18). Directly acknowledging his nationalistic project, Dwight remarks that this poem is meant to be an exercise in high literature, particularly for his “countrymen” and especially of relevance to the creation of a specifically American literature. Even ignoring the role of allegory in *The Conquest of Canaan*, this statement alone positions Dwight’s epic in the cultural zeitgeist of the development of a distinctly American literature. Dwight fully recognizes the role of his project; it is not merely a literary contribution aimed at garnering the author national or international fame as the poet of this work as the first of its kind in North America. Rather *The Conquest* is meant particularly for the promotion of a nationalistic American literature as part of the “refined arts” of the early republic. Signaling his own role within a larger trend in cultural self-articulation, Dwight sees his role as one of contributing to an American literature that finds itself cosmopolitan enough to both draw on Pope as well as to explore, appropriate, and expand Biblical texts. Appropriating both British and Biblical literary themes allows Dwight not to be exclusively imitative, but rather go beyond the plane of John Shields’s idea of *translatio cultus* in a move that transcends just re-articulating Old World and ancient texts and authors to step toward the creation of an allegory that is self-consciously American.

That is, Dwight is synthesizing former literary environments into a new project entirely, specifically a project whose basis rests not just on British or Biblical models, but also relies on the imagined past as a foundation on which elements from other nationalistic literatures may be woven together in a syncretism that produces a uniquely American literature. This use of the imagined past requires moving beyond the purely historical past into an imagined rewriting of this past in order to convert a historical order of events into a poetic literary narrative capable of being molded into a poem that is relevant to Dwight's contemporary reading republic. Use of the past also allows for Dwight to communicate his vision for the nation, specifically one that blends his version of (Calvinist-Congregationalist) Christianity with a political lionization of George Washington under the obvious moniker of the Biblical Joshua (Silverman 31-32). As a Federalist, Dwight would have favored a strong central government and *The Conquest* reflects his design for a government under a strong leader who effectively unites a nation under the threat of martial conflict from the outside (i.e., the Canaanites) as well as the threat of political divisions from within (i.e., Haniel). Utilizing the imagined past allows for a subtle yet obvious allegory to communicate Dwight's vision for the nation, one of a Christian nation under strong central authority. This is Dwight's vision for the American nation, one that utilizes the written "refined arts" not merely as literature but also as a tool in the construction of American nationalism.

Yet Dwight also was cognizant of the role of the development of American literature in a globalized context, more narrowly understood as the transatlantic world. Dwight acknowledges this when he remarks that his "advancement of the refined arts, on this side of the Atlantic" (18) is presented to the reading public as part of a larger cultural context. Participating in the globalized, trans-Atlantic world of the late 18th century as part of the upstart United States,

Dwight's literary "mite" was a necessary first foray into the concept of the national epic. Had he not published in 1785, his work would have perhaps fallen into relative obscurity as of secondary importance in the chronology of American literature, probably second to Barlow's equally loquacious *Vision*. Recognizing the trans-Atlantic role of American literature, despite its novelty at the time and its lowly state of development, Dwight consciously places his work on display not just for an American audience, but also for a distinctly globalized literary culture that places American literature in full view of the experienced eyes of European critics. Here Dwight's borrowing of epic conventions and forms, as well as his use of Biblical references, create a sense of continuity between European literary and religious traditions that connect European readers with a text that originates in North America. These connections are important not because they reflect tendencies of early American writers for imitative practices, but rather because they reflect the adept tendency of utilizing European and Biblical cultural contexts in the establishment of a distinctly American literature by Dwight, contexts that provided bases on which to build an American literature that is not so far removed from American cultural origins as to be completely foreign to both American and global readers. This is vital because it was important in the creation of American literature to craft texts that were accessible to readers in their cultural milieu, which for early American culture was very much a continental mix of cultural forces and literatures that were, with the establishment of the new nation, struggling to develop their own distinct national culture and nationalistic literature. For Dwight to incorporate European and Biblical elements into his work not only provided a convenient framework for someone already very familiar with these cultural standards, but it also created a space for further innovation among these cultural icons and standards that would be fertile for the growth of a new literature that drew from these elements. Dwight does this well by not moving to create an

American epic that was entirely divorced from European and Biblical cultural and literary contexts, but rather an epic that makes itself familiar to those immersed in the larger Weltgeist while concurrently creating room for variation and innovation along these themes that creates a uniquely American literature. Familiar both to readers at home and abroad, Dwight's literary nationalism in *The Conquest of Canaan* projected a nationalism that embraced a broader vision than the parochialism of his later *Greenfield Hill*. This broader vision perhaps reflected Dwight's recognition of America as part of a larger world; "this side of the Atlantic" (18) was just that, part of the literary and cultural environment that transcended America's borders. Additionally, Dwight's statement also recognizes the role that American literature plays in this trans-Atlantic world. *The Conquest of Canaan* would not stay just on the continent of North America, but also embark on its own journey across the Atlantic Ocean and the growing cultural divide between the United States and the European continent.

While there is nothing remarkable in particular about a dedication to George Washington in this era, its presence in relationship to a poem that is ostensibly a re-telling of a Biblical story in verse form, by itself also not unique given the influential cultural presence of *Paradise Lost* (Silverman 25), provides an interesting juncture of political and theological visions. These political and religious presences are conflated into a vision of the current state of America as found in the ancient past of Biblical Israel. Dwight's training as a minister would have left him readily able to engage and then re-tell the Biblical story, as well as provided him with the ability to see beyond the text to engage in a deeper meaning through explication and application of his readings in the Bible. This would not only engage Dwight's contemporary parishioners, but also the nation at large as he saw the parallels between the ancient Hebrews establishing their nation

through strife and bloodshed and the recent events of the Revolutionary War, as well as the continuing conflicts that Americans had with Native Americans.

America in Dwight's 1785 vision of American nationalism was a nation establishing itself as a new Israel after exiting the slavery of England, and now encumbered by open political debates (e.g., Haniel and Joshua) and the challenge of continuing to encounter "Canaanites," who may be read in the poem as Native Americans. The role of Canaanites as Native Americans in this epic allegory includes the conquering and killing of those who oppose Israel. This complicates Dwight's allegory since references to Native Americans are typically oblique throughout the poem, though the Gibeonites specifically may be read as Native Americans. Dwight inserts the Gibeonites into the poem as a group of Canaanites who, like in the Biblical story, pretend to be from far away, and thereby outside of the divinely sanctioned area of conquest. Acknowledging variations with his Biblical source, Dwight remarks in the prefatory note that, "[h]e has varied the story of the embassy from Gibeon, for reasons, which he thinks will be obvious to every reader, and which he hopes will be esteemed his sufficient justification" (17). This "obvious" reason must be that Dwight necessarily had to vary his account of the Gibeonites from its Biblical account (found in Joshua 9-10) in order to account for his forced and extra-biblical love story of the Hebrew girl Mina and the Gibeonite prince Elam, who asks Joshua for Mina's hand in marriage (4.317-362) after the two nations have essentially agreed to a treaty. Successfully luring the Hebrews into a treaty with them (*The Conquest* Book 4) would parallel the North American trend of establishing treaties with Native American tribes, a method of attempting to establish non-hostile relationships with Native American tribes, though history demonstrates that these treaties left Indians with few if any advantages at all. Utilizing treaties with Native Americans started under colonial rule and was eagerly perpetuated by the United

States. It is interesting that Dwight presents the establishment of the treaty between Gibeon and Israel as one established through oral communication (4.103-238), since as Helen Carr notes, “[i]n eighteenth-century accounts of Indian life, admiration ... for Indian oratory and a high regard for their power over words are widespread ... [t]his oratory was best known through Indian treaties, which were orally delivered before being translated and recorded, and then often printed for bookshop trade” (59). Dwight’s use of this convention, establishing a treaty with a nation that seemed to be culturally far removed from the new American nation as Gibeon appeared to Israel, and yet was geographically nearby, would have echoed with the persistent challenges that Native Americans and Euro-Americans found in terms of establishing political relationships with one another. The resultant battles that surround Gibeon, it is attacked by other Canaanite tribes because of its treaty with Israel, is Biblical in its origins (Joshua 10), though Dwight alters this account as much as any other portion of the story.

Dwight’s positioning of the Gibeonites fed into negative stereotypes of Native Americans by presenting the Gibeonites, true to their Biblical depiction, as deceptive. At the same time, Dwight left the Gibeonites/Native Americans as essentially a part of the new nation, a limited acknowledgment of the cultural importance of Native Americans, though one that left Native Americans in a state of disadvantage. In the Biblical story, the Gibeonites were, after the discovery of their deceptive practices, enslaved by the ancient Hebrews (Joshua 9:22-27). As part of the developing nation, the Gibeonites would have been left segregated culturally into a slave class, a complicated status given Dwight’s evolving anti-slavery stance, especially in light of his parallel view that perhaps Native Americans could be segregated from the Euro-American population, though from relatively humane motives, humane in the context of the early republic that is (Silverman 69-71, 113-114, 123). Dwight echoes the Native American experience by

relating the story of the Gibeonites. Though he does not emphasize the Biblical enslavement of the Gibeonites in *The Conquest of Canaan*, their Biblical enslavement reflected historical trends of enslaving Native Americans during colonial rule (Jacobs 122-123). While Native American enslavement was not as prominent in Dwight's time, its historical presence and the association of his contemporary America with ancient Israel would still be familiar to readers alert to the complicated and tortuous relationship between Native Americans and an often intolerant Euro-American population. Because Dwight did not emphasize the portion of the Biblical text concerned with the enslavement of the Gibeonites, and given his proto-abolitionist views of slavery, he would not have endorsed the enslavement of Native Americans, though nor would he have readily embraced them as equals. Not ready to see Native Americans as fully equal, nor accepting of genocidal elimination, Dwight saw the future of Native Americans as one of a paradoxically segregated assimilation (Silverman 123).

Canaanites both in the Biblical account and in Dwight's retelling end up being either eliminated or subjugated by the ancient Hebrews as Dwight, wittingly or not, perpetuates an eerily relevant analogy of the Canaanites for the treatment of Native Americans in his allegorical appropriation of ancient history. Dwight's second epic, *Greenfield Hill* (1794), also referred to Native Americans in Part IV, though his allusions in *The Conquest* posit Native Americans relative to the American republic as both disposable and subject to subjugation, all under divine mandate, similar to the placement of Canaanites in the Biblical account. Positing Native Americans as disposable to the new nation, a republic that is paradoxically assimilative of those with whom treaties are established, leaves Native Americans dependent on the whims of the new country, with no hope of establishing a separate stable political identity beyond subjugation to

the early American republic. Dwight's role for the Canaanites is to fall to the overwhelming divinely-inspired forces of American society.

Dwight is certainly not the only poet to deal in verse depicting the death of Native Americans, the dying Indian trope is one of the most common of the era; though Dwight's allegorical placement of Native Americans within a scriptural context is perhaps unique. Like his use of references to Revolutionary War heroes throughout *The Conquest*, Dwight's referring to Native Americans allows for a more contemporaneous application of his poem that inserts an immediate relevancy of his poem to the reading public. Dwight is not merely suggesting an analogy for the new nation, nor is he just demonstrating a deep historical past or precedent for the new country, Dwight is also providing a plan for what to do with those already occupying America's "promised land." As unsettling as this perspective is to a reader removed from Dwight's era, it is nonetheless an analogy that is present in the poem in the context of reading the ancient Israelites as Americans recently freed from the fetters of the Egyptian/ British empire and now bent on conquering another area already peopled. Reading the Canaanites as Native Americans allows Dwight to offer two options for encountering Native Americans, either through treaty (as with the Gibeonites) or through conquest. This is the conquest of Canaan, to conquer the land not just as a separation from Britain, but also as a time to firmly establish American, specifically white American, control of the land which lies before the new nation. Silverman declares that Dwight "saw America as the last stage of the westward march of empire" (37), and the expansion of this American empire necessitated the conquest not just of the promised land, but of its inhabitants as well. Positioning Native Americans in *The Conquest* via the presence of tribes such as the Gibeonites served as a convenient placement of Indians as both near geographically and immediately removed through historical context. Euro-Americans would

have a historical precedent not only for securing their freedom from their former oppressors, but they would also have a precedent for the violent establishment of cultural and social domination of Native Americans, conveniently located not only in their Bibles, but now readily available in an allegory replete with a Washingtonian dedicated piece of Revolutionary literature populated by references to heroes from the late war.

Taking place immediately following Israel's initial defeat at the city of Ai, the story soon opens up a political debate between the characters of Joshua (Moses' chosen successor to lead Israel) and Haniel, who criticizes Joshua's leadership. Silverman remarks that "Dwight comes closest to identifying the Israelite and American causes in the debate between Joshua and Haniel in Book One. Their argument over whether the Israelites should return to Egypt allegorizes the patriot and loyalist attitudes toward Independence" (35). In the poem Haniel "[w]ith friendly grasp he squeez'd each warrior's hand; / With jests familiar pleas'd the vulgar band; / In sly, shrewd hints the Leader's [i.e., Joshua's] faults disclos'd" (1.147-149). Allowing political bickering in a public setting, Joshua and Haniel debate each other in front of the public, allows Dwight to draw a political parallel to ancient Israel and the America of the unsettled 1780s. Haniel is listed in Numbers 34:23 as a leader of the tribe of Manasseh, though there is no other Biblical indication of why Dwight would have chosen him specifically as a contrarian voice to Joshua other than the fact of textual availability; he is listed as a Biblical contemporary of Joshua and thus his name is readily available for appropriative characterization. While this may seem minor, the author seemingly randomly selects a Biblical name for a character in his re-telling of a Biblical story, it evidences Dwight's ready engagement with the past as an imagined past suitable for remaking to reflect the politically unstable early republic. The imagined past becomes a means of communicating the present state of affairs to the reading

public while also presenting a “solution,” which in Dwight’s case would be to trust those already in authority (i.e., Joshua). Though a minor Biblical character, Joel Barlow thought Hanniel important enough to mention him in the penultimate stanza of Book 7 of *The Vision of Columbus* (parallel in the penultimate stanza of *The Columbiad*, Book 8) as Barlow remarked on Dwight’s poetic contributions to the country. The past held great value for Dwight; as a minister he had very specific theological views that also heavily influenced his views of the nation, Dwight was both Federalist and Calvinist, and he was later to outline a much more specific plan for the present and future of the nation in *Greenfield Hill* (1794). But for the 1780s, Dwight was content to tread the path that was safe and indirect, the re-telling of Biblical stories that would be both entertaining and communicative of his personal political views through the subtle use of scripture.

One of the main ways in which Dwight connected *The Conquest of Canaan* to his contemporary readers as a nationalistic project was through the inclusion of references to recently deceased Revolutionary War heroes and other persons associated with the development of American culture. Kenneth Silverman catalogs these figures and remarks on their significance: “[w]here the scriptural action [of the poem] did not allow Dwight to allegorize the Revolution, he managed to link the two by similes. The death of each Israelite chief in the poem calls forth an heroic apostrophe to a distantly related patriot. Dwight compares the dead youth Aram, for instance, to the “bright and generous” [*Conquest* 1.76] Nathan Hale, his former student. Through these apostrophes Dwight introduced into his biblical paraphrase a summary of the American argument for independence” (32-33). Silverman continues, after listing several examples of this, that “[e]ach one combines an affecting tableau with a flat statement of republican principles, while keeping the similarities between the Israelite and American causes

always in view” (33). These references are spread throughout the epic and consist of John André (1.76 footnote, 1.86), Nathan Hale (1.76), Hugh Mercer (8.454), Richard Montgomery (7.410), Joseph Warren (6.546), Benjamin West (3.45), and David Wooster (6.471). Of these persons of note, all of them except West perished in the Revolutionary War. Curiously Dwight includes John André whose espionage worked in favor of the British, though in a much less favorable light than his remarks on Hale: “Andre bow’d to war’s barbarian laws” (1.86). The other men mentioned, Benjamin West excepted, perished in the cause of American liberty, thus meriting their role in a poem on ancient Israel’s quest for conquering its own Promised Land following freedom from Egyptian/British enslavement. On Hale, Dwight remarks most passionately

Thus, while fond Virtue wish’d in vain to save,
Hale, bright and generous, found a hapless grave.
With genius’ living flame his bosom glow’d,
And science charm’d him to her sweet abode :
In worth’s fair path his feet adventur’d far ;
The pride of peace, the rising grace of war ;
In duty firm, in danger calm as even,
To friends unchanging, and sincere to heaven.
How short his course, the prize how early won ! (1.75-83)

Hale was a former student of Dwight’s (Silverman 33) whose death apparently emotionally affected Dwight. Painting Hale in terms no less than hagiographic, Dwight’s allegory places Hale within a Biblical narrative that functions on multiple levels. The first level is to draw a connection from the poem’s retelling of Biblical history to the contemporary American historical scene of the Revolutionary War. Conversely, on another level, this also further enhances the cultural standing of those men whose posthumous connections as Revolutionary heroes mentioned in the poem with ancient warriors of Biblical times serves to make their status as ancient; their hero status is one that transcends time and echoes the influence of Christianity on American culture. Additionally, this move also serves to imply a religious justification for the

Revolutionary War: if American martyrs are comparable to Biblical characters, then the American war is as justifiable as the actions of Ancient Israel, in the Christian context. Another level on which Dwight's use of Hale, and other Revolutionary War heroes, works is that of creating an American past. To his mention of Hale, Dwight appends a footnote in which he remarks "[t]he comparisons of this kind [i.e., with Hale] were all written in the early stages of the late war, and annexed to the poem to indulge the Author's own emotions of regard to the persons named in them. As it was impossible to pay this little tribute of respect to all the deserving characters, who have fallen in the defence of American liberty, the Author determined to desist, after the first attempt" (1.76 footnote, author's capitalization). Dwight declares his intention of including Hale and others as a function of his own emotional connections with them due to their patriotic, and in the case of Hale, personal, relationship to himself. The two wars of the poem, the Canaanite conflict and the Revolutionary War, here enter a direct parallel and the heroes of both conflicts are "characters." For Dwight, referring to those who fought in the American Revolution as characters means that here they are no longer just individual persons, but textual creations whose echoes in the ancient world and historically contemporary sacrifice merit literary incarnations that are embellished by Dwight's poetic abilities. Especially concerned with those who died in the interest of "the defence of America liberty," Dwight admits that he is limited by not being able to list everyone he might prefer to in the poem, it is "impossible to pay this little tribute of respect to all the deserving characters," but for those whose names made it in, they are certainly "deserving" in Dwight's eyes. While also providing a positive view of Hebrew leaders such as Joshua, Dwight's enshrining of more contemporary heroes makes his epic American not only in a literary sense, but in a distinctly nationalistic sense through building a literature that promoted patriotism through the recent war, while also hailing the necessity of defending

“American liberty.” This liberty is not a spiritual liberty (as one would expect a minister to be concerned with) nor is it of concern to the ancient Hebrews who constitute the larger portion of the epic. Calling out American liberty allows Dwight to unabashedly demonstrate his preoccupation with the American endeavor despite the poem’s overarching focus on the conflict of ancient Israel. Dwight’s conflation of the two causes was obvious to his contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic as an allegory, which Dwight would have expected, given his non-opaque manner of praising the recent war’s dead. The imagined past for Dwight is both immediate and ancient, accessible for allegory and nationalism and ready for appropriation to construct an American literary nationalism that involves those he felt most “deserving” for remembering in the early republic. Along with Nathan Hale, Dwight’s patriots, like their Biblical counterparts, undergo an imaginative transformation through glorification as part of the imagined past.

Dwight’s writing of these martyrs into *The Conquest of Canaan* demonstrates a use of the ancient past to frame not only a type from the past that stands in for America in allegorical form, but also a past that is in syncretism with a more recent past, the Revolutionary War. Here Dwight’s combination of both ancient and contemporary pasts works to provide American readers with a deeper and immediate historical past on which to build their country. The religious justification is provided in addition to the promotion of patriotic heroes who demonstrate that, like the ancient Israelites, there are martyrs worthy of remembering and enshrining in poetic nationalistic epics. The imagined past for Dwight operates in a duality, both ancient and immediate, distant and relevant through allegory and analogy. Both the immediate past and the ancient, the reader discovers, are immediately relevant to the nascent nation’s developing sense of identity through both a religious and political synthesis of imagined pasts which enables

Dwight to engage the past as a site of contemporary American cultural and literary identity. The role of the Revolutionary War heroes further enables the creation of an American epic from a Biblical context with the mention of the heroes making the text immediately relevant to Dwight's contemporary readers with names that would have been present in recent cultural memory so shortly after the end of the war. Dwight's fusion of the ancient and immediate pasts, with Biblical history and paeans to contemporary war martyrs, represents a way to engage both American audiences and European readers with a text that forcefully leaves his readers with a clear picture of Dwight's vision of the role of the American Republic in the larger, deeper context of the historical establishment of countries. This also places America clearly in the role of Israel, a dangerously ostentatious project that saw America as the inheritor of ancient Israel's role as "God's Chosen People" occupying a "Promised Land," in a way that also dismissed, ironically, British/Egyptian influence while at the same time constructing a contemporary American historical parallel that included the enshrining of Revolutionary War Heroes. This is Dwight's disjunctive imagined past that also promotes his vision of the role of the country in relationship to the continuing flow of history as well as the bases on which Dwight envisioned the establishment of the new country, a country for which he would provide a version of the "Rising Glory of America" motif in Book 10 of *The Conquest*.

Including the living painter Benjamin West in his poem briefly references the rising arts of America to Dwight's audience at home and abroad: "on the canvas, West, with raptur'd view, / Sees new-born worlds his magic hand pursue" (3.45-46). Joel Barlow also comments on West in *The Vision of Columbus* Book 7, and it parallel in *The Columbiad* Book 8.587, as well as in an extensive endnote appended to the latter version. For Dwight, West represented the ability of American artists to rise above European expectations for American mediocrity in the arts.

Providing a reference to another artist working in a different medium than himself allows Dwight to again access an immediate past that provides American readers with a cultural background that transcends martial heroes while at the same time providing a bridge to his contemporary readers' present, and presumably their future in a country with internationally successful artists whose work not only built American culture, but whose work also symbolized a potentially bold future of success for American artists. Dwight notes that West envisions "new-born worlds" which "his magic hand pursue" in the creation of vistas that reflect the potential of art and artists of America. West's artistic vision is, in Dwight's eyes, like America, part of this "new-born world" of representative democracy, a world that was replete now with its own painters and, as soon as *The Conquest* was published, its first epic poem. Dwight is also, like in his inclusion of the war martyrs, linking himself and his work with these patriots and this artist. Dwight's reference to Hale and other war heroes posits Dwight akin to the patriotism of those who perished in the war (Dwight was, after all, a chaplain during the Revolutionary War) as well as positioning himself as an artist along the same lines as West. This latter link is similar to his implicit connection to Virgil and Homer included in the prefatory note's references to *The Aeneid* and *The Iliad*. Dwight presents his work as part of a larger move within American culture toward a distinct and unique artistic culture that does not engage in the wholesale ignoring of older traditions, but rather functions as part of a new and developing American artistic scene that incorporates and grows from those artistic cultures which preceded it. American culture, Dwight suggests through *The Conquest*, is not here to dismiss and replace Eurocentric traditions, but rather sees this past, both European and ancient Biblical pasts as relayed through European traditions, as essential soil in which the nascent American culture can begin to grow.

Finally, Dwight moves in Book 10 of *The Conquest of Canaan* to participate in the ever-nationalistic Rising Glory of America genre. By positioning a vision of the future of America in the context of a poem otherwise primarily preoccupied with ancient and immediate pasts, Dwight blurs the temporal distinctions present that had already been muddled by war hero references and the poem's dedication to Washington. Unafraid to disrupt his claim to a desired "[u]nity to the action" (17), Dwight's vision of American futurity readily embraces the typical saccharine view of the great potential he saw in the country. Blurring the chronotopic ethos of a focus on the past allows Dwight to simultaneously view America from the future as part of a purely imagined past, the future is the past in this segment of Dwight's poem. Disrupting temporality allows for the idealization of the country that Dwight saw forming before him, faltering under the Articles of Confederation and about to experience Shay's Rebellion, Dwight predicted that the future would bring a more hopeful time than the present. This shifting of the past to the future within a vision would later be appropriated by Barlow in his use of the vision to describe the future of America. For Dwight, the vision is an excuse to suggest once again that the future glories of America are indeed part of a Divinely sanctioned plan, the vision is given by an angel to Joshua, whose apparent conquest of Canaan foreshadows a great deal of history, including America.

Dwight places America in a summary of world history that takes place after the primary action of the poem and includes an overview of Biblical history that includes the, according to the Book's "Argument," the "Messiah, his Birth[,] Baptism, Miracles, Trial, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles, and succeeding Ministers. Prospect of America..." (258, italics removed). On America Dwight remarks that it is "a mighty realm, by heaven design'd / The last retreat for poor, oppress'd mankind!" (10.481-482), the latter line a distantly prescient echo of Emma Lazarus's

“The New Colossus.” Conceiving of America in a slightly self-aggrandizing manner, a move not unique among poets generally speaking and in this poem specifically, the United States will be “a mighty realm” through the auspices of Dwight’s divining. Lest anyone doubt that he is discussing America, Dwight footnotes the segment where he begins discussing America by noting that line 479 refers to a “Vision of America” (273). America will be, in Dwight’s eyes, a place and source of safety for those oppressed through economic and political power. Dwight also refers to Native Americans: “On countless hills, by savage footsteps trod, / That smile to see the future harvest nod” (10.495-496). Cognizant of Native American presence, Dwight posits Indians as willingly accepting of the coming American age that will eliminate their ability to freely occupy their current lands. Following the tradition of the Dying Indian trope, Dwight presents Native Americans with a passive acceptance of their cultural demise in front of Euro-Americans. This acceptance is paired with a promised “future harvest” which will, presumably, provide both Native Americans and Euro-Americans with enough sustenance to peacefully coexist. While a perhaps originally benign view, Dwight reinforces the overwhelming perspective of the time that Native Americans would submit to the advances of Euro-Americans. This paradoxically reinforces Dwight’s own allegorical implications of the Canaanites as Native Americans to his ancient Hebrew/American patriots story. In the poem though, rather than passively accepting the Hebrew invasion, most of the Canaanites fight for their lives, though the Gibeonites successfully integrate themselves into Israeli society, albeit through slavery.

Continuing his description of America, Dwight describes the land: “[f]ar from all realms this world imperial lies ; / Seas role between, and threatening storms arise” (10.501-502). Describing America as “this world imperial” counteracts the traditional image of a democratic country and eschews the image of the biblical theocracy which ancient Israel operated as prior to

becoming a monarchy, well after the invasion of Canaan. Reflecting expansionist tendencies, this also reflects Dwight's belief in a strong central government. Use of the word imperial also suggests that Dwight's vision for America is of a country whose geographic reach and influence will extend well beyond its contemporary manifestation as a struggling group of ex-British colonies, but it is also implicatively isolated, presumably so as to be free from degenerative European moral and political influences. It is "far from all realms," ready to develop a sense of American identity apart from its colonizers so that it can become an influential and expansive nation. Dwight is also cognizant of the potential for future conflict, whether internal or external, when he suggests that this American ship of state may face difficulty as "threatening storms arise." Published the year before Shay's Rebellion, Dwight was cognizant of social unrest circulating in the country.

Imagining the country soaring to new heights, Dwight writes, "... a new Moses lifts the daring wing / Through trackless seas, an unknown flight explores, / And hails a new Canaan's promis'd shores" (10.506-508). This "new Moses" will continue to lead America away from the shackles of British oppression now that the war is over, and hopefully, Dwight hints, away from the shadows of chaos that now threaten the country as "threatening storms" (10.502). This leader will guide America on the "unknown" and "trackless," uncharted paths that no country has heretofore experienced, a bright future to be sure if one believes Dwight's prospects. Leaving no doubt about the allegory which he has faithfully constructed throughout the over 9,600 lines of the 11 books of *The Conquest of Canaan*, Timothy Dwight clarifies for any readers whose powers of interpretation have been dulled, that this America is indeed the vision of the country's Puritan forefathers. This is the "new Canaan," though it is a Canaan which faces an unsure future and uncertain leadership; Dwight provides no declaration of who the "new Moses" is, though the

poem's dedication to Washington implicitly suggests that Moses is already in America, though that presents a complication to the general reading of Joshua as Washington. This Canaan is also under divine sanction much as the Biblical conquest was, for this new land is "promis'd," a reference to providential provision.

Next Dwight addresses the issue of slavery: "Lo, Slavery's gloom in sable pomp descends ; / Far round each eastern clime her volumes roll, / And pour, deep-shading, to the sadden'd pole" (10.524-526). Recognizing the deleterious effects of the immorality of slavery on the physical, moral, spiritual, and cultural environments of the country, Dwight addresses the evils of slavery ahead of widespread abolitionist movements while demonstrating an acute cognizance of the negative potential for tolerating its continuation. Commenting on the effects of slavery on the individual, Dwight observes that "[t]he fainting body stupefies to stone ; / Benumb'd, and fix'd, the palsied soul expires, / Blank'd all its views, and quinch'd its living fires" (10.530-532). The evil of slavery is related to its denial of humanity from enslaved individuals, but here Dwight also reveals one of his concerns, not just for the physical treatment of enslaved African Americans, but also for both their spiritual and political well-being. Slavery results in having a "palsied soul" which "expires" without the ability to experience the spiritual regeneration that Dwight, as a minister, would have been preoccupied with. This recognition of the spiritual effects of slavery demonstrates that Dwight observed that his country still had a great deal to work on if its future would be as glorious as he envisioned. Slavery affected the enslaved person's condition in that it "[b]lank'd all its views, and quinch'd its living fires." Deprived of the ability to assert personal identity and to experience the same freedoms as Euro-Americans represses the potential for enslaved African Americans to fully enact political, social, and cultural individualities, resulting in a "quenching" of the "living fires" of personhood. The

solution, Dwight suggests, either naively or presciently, is that America will provide a resolution to the evils of slavery: “In that dread hour, beneath auspicious skies, / To nobler bliss yon western world shall rise” (10.535-536). To clarify for his readers his precise intentions with these lines, Dwight provides a footnote to line 535 to point out that he is discussing the “[f]reedom and glory of the North American States” (274). From under the “gloom” of slavery America rises under “auspicious skies” to present a new hope to the world, under a naivety of assumption possible before the British Empire strikes back in the War of 1812. Instead, Dwight sees the American enterprise as engaging the ideas of freedom, despite the non-phantom menace of slavery continuing in the country: America is boldly going where no men had gone before. America is voyaging into a bright and glorious future, one that will only be possible with the elimination of slavery from within its borders. America is “[u]nlike all former realms” (10.537), because in America, “union’d Choice shall form a rule divine ; / Here countless lands in one great system join ; / The sway of Law unbroke, unrivall’d grow” (10.539-541). America’s nascent newness comes under “a rule divine” and unites “countless lands,” an implicit assumption of the continuation of political expansion for the country. All of this, Dwight asserts, will be under the rule of “Law” which will allow for America to “unrivall’d grow” into a glorious future.

In Book 10 of *The Conquest of Canaan*, the past echoes the future and, as history would demonstrate, America would go back to the future of Dwight’s vision, rising as a country while also eventually beginning to face the immorality and effects of slavery. Utilizing the past as a basis for imagining the future allowed Dwight even greater creative freedom than following, even loosely, the dictates of the literature of the Biblical past. Inserting the role of America’s future into a vision bestowed on the ancient Hebrew leader Joshua, the allegorical Washington,

allows Dwight to present the present and future of America as part of a larger overarching flow of world history that occurred not through the rebellious actions of a few American rebels, but rather as the result of Divine Plan. America will rise, Dwight suggests, because in the context of this poem, that rise is inevitable exactly because it occurs as a parallel to the rise of the ancient Israeli nation, which in the Biblical account is the result of Providential direction. It is no accident, then, that the rest of Book 10 presents the Christian eschatological view, in shorter form than Michael Wigglesworth, that includes “[s]igns which forbode the end of the World. Resurrection, Conflagration, General Judgement, and consummation of all things” (258). As part of history, its past, present, and future, America figures in the course of events as part of “all things” in Dwight’s Calvinistic view of the destiny of the country as it began recovery from the Revolutionary War and looked to its present existence and future, and its past, for sources of cultural and literary identity that would allow the new country to understand its potential, while also establishing a much-needed cultural and literary past that provided Americans with a national identity linked to the past through literature. For Dwight, it was essential to find that past not just among European literary traditions, through the use of epic conventions and the influence of European writers such as Pope, but also in a strongly Biblical context, to insure the perpetuation of his view of the country as the inherent result of Divine intervention and direction. Providing a bridge to the colonial past through adopting European literary influences allowed Dwight to suggest that though America needed to completely break away from the moral and political influences of Europe, it was not necessary to fully discard the relevant literary influences that could be appropriated for establishing a new American literature and culture. *The Conquest of Canaan*, then, is about the conquest of an empire, a continent, and the settling of this New World and the establishment of a new American cultural milieu that, Dwight promises in

the vision, will fulfill part of a larger role in world history planned by God, while also concurrently demonstrating to European critics of America that the country was indeed capable of producing its own poets and art.

Joel Barlow's *The Columbiad*

Along with Dwight's imagining of the past, Joel Barlow introduced, and then refined, his vision of both America's past and future through first *The Vision of Columbus* (1787) and its later expansion and revision entitled *The Columbiad* (1807, 1825); here it must be the latter of these works which concerns this current study as it represents the last incarnation of Barlow's project, specifically the 1825 edition which posthumously provided Barlow's final edits (Blakemore 18). Barlow sets up his project as a vision which Columbus receives so as to provide solace to the explorer by demonstrating the ultimately, in Barlow's perception, positive consequences of the discovery of the New World. There are thematic parallels between Dwight's *Conquest* and Barlow's *The Columbiad*, including the creation of an imagined past and a promised future glory for the country. Barlow borrows from the historical past of the Incan empire as a genesis for American cultural independence from European influences, though his contextualization of the history of the Incans through their relationship to the eventual arrival of Columbus problematizes a reading that might valorize his depiction of indigenous populations. Unlike Dwight, Barlow provides no dedication to Washington at the beginning of *The Columbiad*, though his earlier *Vision* was dedicated to Louis the XVI. That being said, Barlow eagerly memorializes major American leaders such as Benjamin Franklin and George Washington as part of the on-going vision which Columbus receives from Hesper, who is described as "the guardian Genius of the Western Continent" (412), having progressed from his imagining of the Incan Empire's founding. Navigating the late 18th century through the

beginning of the 19th century, Barlow's poetic journey and diplomatic career reflected a trend toward a simultaneously increasingly secular and patriotic worldview that found expression through *The Columbiad*.

Barlow directly asserts his intentions when he remarks in his Preface that “[t]he Columbiad is a patriotic poem; the subject is national and historical. Thus far it must be interesting to my countrymen” (375). Accurately summing up the entirety of the text as “national and historical” evidences that Barlow perceived the necessity of including that which is historical with the construction of what he considered national, the two are not only parallel, they are necessary for each other. There cannot be a national literature without there first being a historical literature on which to build the imagined community of the nation. Dwight understood this, as did Wheatley, when they incorporated Biblical stories in their visions for the nation. In Wheatley's case this may be seen in her “Goliath of Gath” poem in which she hints at the need for fighting for freedom, not only from the British, but for those enslaved as well. Barlow's use of the imagined past, both in the framing device of the poem, of Columbus encountering a vision from Hesper, and in the use of the Incas, suggests that Barlow is cognizant of both the European endeavors and their value to the establishment of the American enterprise as well as of the contributions of Native Americans, though the latter perspective is subsumed in Barlow's narrative of the political machinations of the Incans. The historical interacts with the national when the former provides one of the foundations on which the national is constructed, the past is a story which a nation may inherit and re-tell, or in Barlow's case, reprint. The value of this is that a nation has an established past; or at least in the case of Dwight and Barlow's use of the past, precedents that become a part of the American past. This past becomes an initial common story to which and through which all participants in an imagined community can conceivably

connect with, regardless if they do not agree with it or like the aesthetics of the tale. That not everyone in America would, or could, read the epics is irrelevant to the cultural significance of the poems. The very presence of such mythologizing tendencies, mythologizing in the sense that the past is imagined and re-imagined in new contexts that are nationalistic, this is a version of Shields's *translatio cultus* excepting that it is a specific examination of the use of the imagined past, creates a cultural and literary presence that demonstrates the presence of the past in the present as a means on which to construct a literary nationalism. Barlow's imagined past is a tool that helps shape the founding of America and its future glory, a founding and future that Barlow finds as historically based not in the act of colonization and independence from the colonizer, but through a specific re-imagining of the historical realities and their expression in his poetic epics as acts of the imagined past, an imagined past that demonstrates the flow of history as leading inherently toward the United States. This imagined past, then, necessitates the American present, and forcefully predicts an American future.

It is because of this linkage which Barlow understood that the poet declares that “[t]hus far it must be interesting to my countrymen” (375). The work is presented as a piece specifically to engage with his fellow citizens on a literary level that he understood as “interesting,” but only because “the subject is national and historical.” Understanding the linkage between the historical and the national as both relevant and clear to his countrymen, Barlow actively engages a re-imagining of the past. On the mechanics of the poem, the poet remarks: “in no poem are the unities of time, place and action more rigidly observed: the action, in the technical sense of the word, consisting only of what takes place between Columbus and Hesper; which must be supposed to occupy but few hours, and is confined to the prison [of Columbus] and the mount of vision [from which Columbus observes the future]” (376). Anchoring the entire context and

events of the poem to an experience of Columbus, he sees the Native American experiences and the Incan past of South America prior to his arrival (Books 2-4), and then the settling of the New World and the establishment of the United States (Books 4-9), and the future unity and success of the world as a whole (Book 10), Barlow's imagined past incorporates an appropriation of the historical past as an imagined future for Columbus to view. This move allows Barlow to provide a poetic history of the world to his readers so that they could place their new country within a broader historical context, one that specifically glorified the founding of the United States.

Barlow does not, however, gloss over the human cost of the discovery of the Americas. In Book 4, Hesper remarks to Columbus that "[t]hy followers, rushing like an angry flood, / Too soon shall drench them [the Incans] in the nation's blood" (4.15-16). History would demonstrate this to be an understatement that would not be completely fulfilled until after Barlow's own death. Presenting Columbus as remorseful over the results of his discovery, Barlow remains faithful to deific portrayals of the explorer, a necessity strictly within the context of the poem for maintaining the aesthetic continuities established in Book 1 and maintained through the entirety of the poem.

Linking the chronology of the New World to a single event provides a tether for present and future, both securely anchored in the past as an imagined past. There is no need for Barlow to explain or defend his poetic innovations to the historical account of Columbus; he is not writing a history: the explorer's encounter with Hesper and the following revelations about world history are provided within the context of a New World epic for which Barlow's poetic license provides more-than-adequate ability to creatively expand from the parameters of history, a move similar to Dwight's appropriation of Biblical history for his own endeavors. The static historical placement of the poem as something which Columbus encounters and experiences through

supernatural intervention in both the jail cell and on the “mount of vision,” is itself a placement of the action of the poem in the past of both *The Columbiad*’s publication and Barlow’s readers. The past is not only a source of identity, Barlow shows his readers both where the country originated and what occurred on American soil prior to the founding of the country, but also a place in which to discover the future found in Columbus’s vision for the future glories of America. Barlow, optimistic about the country’s potential, assured his readers that the promises of future glory for the country were not new, they were very old, as old as Columbus’s experiences with Hesper. The past not only holds a source of political and cultural identity for the new Americans, it also provides the key to a successful future. Understanding an American past as a part of an orderly and ever-improving current of events, though troubling at times as Barlow acknowledges with his references to the genocide of indigenous peoples, permits readers to envision America’s future through Barlow’s poem as one of endless hopefulness for success and prosperity, the goals of any new nation attempting to establish itself.

In contrast to Dwight, Barlow’s sense of nationalism promotes the rise and success of America as part of a larger historical context that is noticeably not as providential as Dwight’s allegory. Rather than being under the direction of a god, the establishment of America occurs through the strength and ingenuity of its own citizens living in liberty. Barlow positions this ideal of liberty as the solution to social problems. While not dismissing religion, Barlow embraces the rise of rational thought when he declares of the changing cultural milieu of Europe that “[h]ere social man a second birth shall find, / And a new range of reason lift his mind, / Feed his strong intellect with purer light” (4.435-437). For Barlow, the potential for the future progress of humanity is not found in Dwight’s Christianity, but rather in man’s own intellectual abilities which provide, in terms familiar to his readers immersed in Christianity, a “second birth” that

comes not through salvation through Jesus Christ but rather from the tenets of reason; the “intellect with purer light” provides for this rebirth as the mind encounters “a new range of reason.” Here Barlow proposes a counter-narrative to Dwight’s vision of America as a product of divine direction and planning. Part of Barlow’s “purer light” includes “sense of duty and of right, / The sense of liberty; whose holy fire / His life shall temper and his laws inspire” (4.438-440). This is paralleled in the Argument for Book 4 in which Barlow summarizes part of this book with “[l]iberty [as] the necessary foundation of morals” (526). This liberty has its first basis in the rational thought of man, which then leads to rational laws: “[h]is life shall temper and his laws inspire” (4.440). In the context of Book 4, Barlow shows that reason leads humanity away from tyranny and toward liberty. Prior to discussing the political founding of America, Book 4 demonstrates the power of liberty not just as a source of morality, but for social prosperity as well:

Yes! righteous Freedom, heaven and earth and sea
Yield or withhold their various gifts for thee;
Protected Industry beneath thy reign ;
Leads all the virtues in her filial train; (4.499-501)

Freedom leads to “all the virtues” which are listed and then described as leading to economic prosperity on a private level which then positively affects the larger public good. One might say there is a trickle-down effect of morality, if not economically. According to Barlow, economic prosperity, the result of morality that comes through liberty, not divine guidance and protection, allows for an individual, a country, and the world to experience progress:

Protected Industry, careering far,
Detects the cause and cures the rage of war
And sweeps with forceful arm to their last graves
Kings from the earth and pirates from the waves. (4.509-512)

Freedom is Barlow's panacea to the evils of the world: use of reason leads to liberty, liberty leads to virtues which create morality, morality leads to economic prosperity, and prosperity makes the world a better place as the world becomes liberated from pesky George IIIs and, in Barlow's era, Barbary pirates who are eventually mercilessly swept away in a flood of progress brought about by industry's "forceful arm." Barlow posits these ideas chronologically in the poem after discussing the Incans and before hordes of settlers begin making their way to the new continent to take over the land. Placing these ideas as preceding the American republic allows Barlow to suggest that the principles which he sees as relevant to the establishment of the United States are categories of morality resulting from liberty that are not specifically American in origin, but rather are essentially representative of the essence of America in relationship to the vision of the successful futurity of America that he provides later in the poem. The principles which Barlow suggests lead to prosperity, principles resultant from reason and liberty, are part of the ideological past of America, and by virtue of their linkage with economic and political success, America's link to those virtues insures its future success. America's cultural inheritance, in Barlow's poem, is one of liberty and reason. Unlike Dwight's implications, America for Barlow is not the result of a divine appointment to success in a new Canaan under the guidance of an American Joshua, though Barlow certainly has no difficulty in also presenting an admiring view of Washington in Book 5. The imagined past allows the construction of a vision of the American nation that is a nationalism disjunctive with Timothy Dwight and others whose religious views suggested the necessity for considering the role of Providence in the past establishment of America and its future, which all American sides agreed would be prosperous, though for different reasons, whether hard work, divine blessing, or the continuation of liberty.

Books 5 through 7 provide Columbus and Barlow's readers an overview of the progress of the Revolutionary War, covering multiple battles and challenges faced by the American people. Like Dwight and so many others, Barlow does not shy away from valorizing Washington; the 1825 edition includes interspersed throughout Book 5 engraved portraits of George Washington (571), Benjamin Franklin (581), and Book 7 includes an engraving entitled "Cornwallis Resigning His Sword To Washington" (653). Washington is seen early in his military career during which Hesper prophesies that this "Washington in that young martial frame / From yon lost field begins a life of fame" (5.239-240), referring to his martial experiences in the French and Indian War, which will lead Washington eventually "in future straits with loftier stride, / The colon[y] states to sovereign rule shall guide" (5.241-242). The portrait of Washington rests on the page opposite these lines; wreathed and regal, Washington's face looks on the reader with a steady gaze that Barlow suggests through his verse, instilling the idea that Washington's guidance was essential for the success of the nation. In the immediate past, much like Dwight in *The Conquest* with his references to late heroes of the war, Barlow finds a source of nationalistic literary identity not just through the political and military significance of Washington to the American cause, but through his imagined past that includes Washington's role as the fulfillment of a prophetic vision delivered by Hesper to Columbus. The role of Washington in the new country is, contra Dwight, part of a secularized understanding of the origins of the American Republic, and Washington the fulfillment of a non-Christian vision for a country whose origins are not divine but rather rational.

Book 8 allows Barlow to discuss a hodgepodge of matters relevant to the new nation, now under the guidance of peace. Lamenting his brother's death, a fallen soldier in the Revolution, Barlow invokes the sacrifices of war. Nonetheless, later Barlow embraces his love of

country: “[t]he high toned anthem of my country’s praise; / To sing her victories, virtues, wisdom, weal, / Boast with loud voice the patriot pride I feel” (8.180-182). Invoking notions of the role of the bard and invoking America as a person in a Whitman-esque flourish, Barlow demonstrates pride in his country. But this does not keep him from facing the reality of the American republic. Over the course of over 200 lines he addresses the immorality of slavery and suggests the hypocritical nature of the nation for embracing the institution (8.189-394). Barlow is unafraid to address the contradictions of America, where people “[p]reach faith and justice, bend the sainted knee, / Invite all men their liberty to share” (8.216-217), yet where slavery exists despite the fact that “all men [are] equal in her [nature’s] human mold” (8.226). Not only does Barlow see slavery as immoral in *The Columbiad*, he also sees it as a threat to the very country he loves so dearly: “Ah, would you not be slaves, with lords and kings, / Then be not masters; there the danger springs” (8.353-354). As America shook itself free from the fetters of British tyranny, the country itself engaged in its own forms of tyranny through slavery, and there Barlow sees a source of “danger” to the future of the country to fully realize the national dream of liberty. Fostering a host of social ills, slavery is a “crude system that torments this earth, / Of rank, privation, privilege of birth, / False honor, fraud, corruption, civil jars” (8.355-357). Instead, Barlow declares, “[e]quality of Right is nature’s plan; / And following nature is the march of man” (8.363-364). Seeing the origins of liberty and rights as within nature and not from a divine source, Barlow unapologetically asserts the need to return to this sense of equality despite the current social conditions of the country where slavery was accepted. Barlow remains optimistic under the presumption that despite the current ills, “following nature is the march of man.” Social progress is inevitable in Barlow’s humanistic and rational perspective, though the system of slavery that America uses is seen as imported from that constant source of social and

moral ills in the early republic: Europe (8.377-394). Barlow finalizes his discussion of slavery in Book 8 with a plea: “[p]urge all privations from your liberal code, / Restore their souls to men, give earth repose / And save your sons from slavery, wars and woes” (8.392-394). Ending slavery, then, is not merely an issue of addressing its contradictions with the ideological propositions on which America rests, liberty and equality, but is also an issue of social and national survival. This poetic vision of the evils of slavery parallels Barlow’s position against the territorial expansion of slavery (Hill 101-102), but is also complicated by his own ownership of slaves toward the end of his life. Peter Hill remarks that, “[f]or all his professed dislike of slavery, Barlow never saw fit to explain how he and Ruth [Barlow’s wife] came to purchase a black couple as house servants during their later years in Washington” (102). His view of slavery was apparently as complicated as his career, though Barlow’s voice against slavery, undermined by his hypocrisy, was an important early warning to the nation, contextualized within a vision in the past witnessed, ironically, by Christopher Columbus.

Not to leave America hopeless, Barlow continues Book 8 by discussing, in the words of the Argument, “the progress of the arts in America. Fur trade. Fisheries. Productions. Commerce. Education. Philosophical discoveries. Painting. Poetry” (680). Exploring these various areas where Barlow saw social improvement in America allows Barlow to position the cultural, scientific, and artistic advancements of the country as the product of a secularized prophetic vision that suggests to his contemporary readers the historical inevitability of the success of America. While his overwhelmingly positive view of America in this rising glory of America section of the poem is expected, its contextual parallel to Dwight’s vision of America in *The Conquest of Canaan* is unavoidable. Both poets stepped into the past to find the future of their country, though from notably distinct perspectives, Dwight with his religious perspective and

Barlow from a more secular view. Invoking commonplace American names from Benjamin Franklin (8.551) to painters such as Benjamin West (8.587-604), John Singleton Copley (8.605-616), and John Trumbull (8.617-630, John Trumbull the poet was second cousin to the painter, see Cowie 8), Barlow builds a social pantheon to demonstrate contemporary cultural productivity, evidence of cultural success, through placement of these men in the past. Barlow does not ignore literature, he also praises the poet John Trumbull's "darts of satire" (8.664) and even Timothy Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan* (8.671-682), as well as the poetic talents of David Humphreys (8.683-694), whom Barlow helped, along with Trumbull and Lemuel Hopkins, to craft *The Anarchiad* from 1786-1787. All of these cultural references and the success of the American endeavor come only after pleas for the elimination of slavery in Book 8, suggesting a causal link between the end of slavery and the prospects of a prosperous future. The imagined past allows for Barlow to create a plane on which this causal link makes literary sense. Providing an imagined chronology of America's cultural and indigenous past presents readers with an arena for continuing Barlow's poetic speculations in relationship to their present, evidenced by the cultural figures whom Barlow mentions, and allows readers to assume a continuity between the typically positive historical narrative and a promised vision of a prosperous future. Delivered historically in the imagined past to Columbus, Barlow's imagined past presents American nationalism as part of an inevitable flow of historical events, which in Books 9 and 10 proceeds to digress on the future of society on a global scale, which Barlow foresaw as taking on a one-world government, which, Barlow posits as proceeding from the American form of government (9.695-702).

Reason provides the basis for the new potential of the country precisely because it leads to a sense of moral responsibility, a civic morality, in contrast to Dwight's vision of a religious

basis for the new country. Like Dwight, Barlow appropriates a real historical past and then significantly expands it through his poetic visions in an attempt to provide his fellow citizens a history for America to consider itself a part of, namely as an inheritor of both New World and Old World traditions, the legacy of Native Americans and Columbus's explorations.

Additionally, Barlow places America in a larger historical narrative that transcends the scope of the establishment of the American country to forecast a worldwide government that will imitate the American establishment, consequently providing a bright future not just for Barlow's fellow citizens, but for the entirety of humanity. This huge scope reflects Barlow's personal cosmopolitan tendencies and reflects the unique world view brought about through both a powerful mind and an international career as an American diplomat, the occupation in which Barlow died while traveling in Europe on duty. Pushing forward an ever-optimistic and humanistic vision for both the United States and the world, Barlow's *The Columbiad* provides both parallels with, and a counterpoint to, Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan*. Through the use of the imagined past, both poets offered their own contrasting and disjunctive visions for poetically creative sources for an American past, while also both offering similarly positive and hopeful outlooks for the future of the country. Dwight saw the American past as rooted in Biblical precedents and European culture while maintaining through his allegory a constant presence of Divine appointment for the establishment of the country through the idea of conquest not only of the tyranny of the British Empire, but also of Native Americans. Barlow offered an intellectual perspective on the origin of liberty and the secular benefits of its application in a political setting. Both Dwight and Barlow present views on slavery, suggesting that while the abolitionist movement was inchoate in the late 18th century, the time was nonetheless ripe for cultural engagement and social recognition of the moral and societal effects of slavery. By presenting

their views, both men, though in complicated ways as exemplified by Barlow's slave ownership, demonstrated the use of the imagined past as an avenue for discussing pressing issues of immediate relevance to their contemporary society. Early voices for the abolishment of slavery, their recognition of the ills of slavery foreshadowed the coming social unrest that would overtake their country decades after their deaths, suggesting that both men had uncanny abilities to read the progress of their society as a whole in a way that transcended their own lifetimes. Their prescient voices reflect the move toward a stronger abolitionist movement that would raise awareness of slavery to the point of the necessity of another revolutionary war. Though they found disjunctive visions for the basis of American nationalism, that Barlow and Dwight shared similarities nonetheless did not serve to repair the decline of their initial friendship (Hill 118) which took place due to growing distance based on opposing political perspectives and theological differences. These differences found expression in the specifics of each poet's epic endeavor while reflecting cultural tensions of their era in the construction of American literary nationalisms.

Disjunctive nationalisms found expression in the imagined past because the past as an imagined plane allows for a creative re-telling of events in ways that evoke the malleability of the imagination in its engagement with narratives of history and nation-making. These two narratives need not run together in a conflation, but in early American poetics, that is often the case as poets sought to establish deeper historical narratives on which the American public could construct a sense of historical depth from which to draw both the creation of a distinctly American literature and culture to distinguish themselves from European cultural traditions whose presence maintained a long-running influence through at least the nineteenth century. These imagined and disjunctive American pasts reached deep into both European and Biblical

traditions for literary form and content that became the beginnings of a unique American literature. In Barlow's words, the imagined past is both "national and historical" (375): an opportunity for history to be re-made under the visions of a variety of disjunctive nationalisms as evidenced through the endeavors of both Dwight and Barlow. As both poets demonstrate, the past served as a useful way to discuss not only the past, but also both the present and the future. The present found its way into the past as both poets suggested the potential that the country possessed for continuing to establish itself in the world, and in Barlow's case, the potential that America possessed as a model for the entirety of the world in the future. Both Barlow and Dwight, despite their contrasting political and religious views, fully expected the success of their nation, an attitude not uncommon in their era. Each poet's epic made use of the past as a place in which to find not only roots for the nation, but also a foundation on which to build the future of their country.

4. THE PRESENT PRESENCE OF THE IMAGINED NATION

Of all three uses of imagined time, the imagined present gives authors the opportunity to directly address their readers in the relevancy of their contemporary zeitgeist. Referring to persons and events that held a sense of immediacy for readers increased the cultural currency of poems while also affording poets a more-readily accessible avenue for communicating their poetic visions to the reading public than use of the imagined past. This is because the imagined present affords the author the use of a creative plane that is free of the weight of history, thus giving the author the creative flexibility to re-interpret relatively recent events in light of their views of political nationalism and creative aesthetics. The imagined present allows poets several advantages in that it can be used to reflect on current events and promote views on contemporary issues. At the same time, the imagined present reflects the need to draw from the present for poetic material, thus indicating the potential for the American culture to generate creative literary topics suitable for versification. Signaling the generative potential of the American culture, poets utilized the imagined present in the development of a nationalistic literature that was informed through relevancy to the contemporary culture and thus sustainable as a mode of poetic production that made literature relevant to the reading public because its subject matter was immediately accessible to those readers without a high level of cultural literacy. Responding to recent events allowed for a nimble reaction to events and demonstrated the flexibility of poets in

the era to work across multiple planes of time, past, present, and future; imagined present provided an opportunity to explore events with a degree of verisimilitude that was not merited by uses of the past or future since neither of those creative planes, unlike the present, were readily accessible to readers.

Additionally, utilizing the imagined present allowed authors to position America among the other nations of the world by presenting contemporary scenes and experiences to readers across the Atlantic Ocean. America was not simply a land where its poets could endlessly present permutations of the past through re-writing or cast visions of the future filled with speculation, but rather America was a land of the present where life happens in real time, where poets respond to those experiences of the immediate with relative immediacy. This access to the immediate did more than provide material for the development of the national literature; it also provided poets the potential to help shape their contemporary society where other print forms were circulating such as newspapers (some included poems), political pamphlets, sermons, novels, and letters. Poems that address the present are part of a flood of print material that addressed recent events and that helped shape the early reading republic in a way unique to literature: the imagination's influence on poetic presentations of the present fused literary aesthetics and the creative imagination with contemporary events in presenting disjunctive views on a variety of subjects including nationalism. Part of the nature of nationalism is that it entails the acceptance of an imagined community, and the use of the imagined present, rather than a strict factual accounting of events, permits a flexibility to the facts that is acknowledged by the reader when they engage with a literary text such as a poem. When a reader consumes a poem concerned with the imagined present, he or she recognizes that by virtue of the fact that a poem is being read, the imagination's influence is present. To read a poem on the imagined present is

to recognize that the contemporary event(s) that are being responded to are not going to be recounted in a straightforward manner, but rather filtered through the poet's imagination, thereby producing an imagined present.

Poets utilized the imagined present in very subtle ways, such as Phillis Wheatley and Philip Freneau who both spoke to the present through imaginative and sometimes indirect ways in order to communicate their own sense of nationalism to the developing nation. While Wheatley faced more blatant marginalization than Freneau, they both faced such literary reactions. The imagined present permitted poets who were marginalized due to race or political views to access a voice of relevancy to their nation and to participate in a poetic way in the development of not only a national literature, but also in the development of the nation itself. The imagined present also proved a fertile ground for the use of satire and mock-epics such as Joel Barlow's "The Hasty Pudding". Drawing from their zeitgeist, Barlow mirrored his society, and the public found it amusing. Additionally, the authors of *The Anarchiad* adeptly adapted their contemporary culture into extracts from a fictitious ancient epic in order to speak to the political and social turmoil of that present. The imagined present afforded poets with a variety of means to address their reading public, all of them inherently relevant to that public which provided the poets with a plentitude of readily available material. This concurrence of poetry providing a voice to marginalized views and the ability for the imagined present to be used as an avenue for co-opting current events that are then re-articulated through the lens of marginalization results from the flexibility that the imagined present allows. Because the limits of the imagined present are based in the contemporary zeitgeist, a continuous source of fluid information, occurrences, and stories, it represents a readily accessible avenue for creative appropriation that can be re-articulated through a marginalized lens in a way that gains cultural currency outside of the

typical circles of influence which marginalized literature might be forced to inhabit; that is, the imagined present provides marginalized voices, whether political or racial, the opportunity to reach audiences who might otherwise ignore texts that are forcefully didactic. This necessitates the use of subversive techniques to communicate ideas that might not be readily acceptable by the poets' mainstream society, communicated through appropriations of current events through the use of the imagined present. The imagined present, unlike the imagined past or future, both of which also represent opportunities for co-opting by marginalized authors, provides the opportunity to use contemporaneous events to communicate in widely relevant ways that cannot be achieved through the imagined past or future.

Wheatley's Present America

One of Wheatley's Biblical epyllion, "Goliath of Gath," represents the use of the Biblical past to speak to the American present. Originally published in *Poems On Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773), this poem ostensibly recounts the story of the shepherd and future king of ancient Israel, David, and his battle against the Philistine giant Goliath of Gath in which the young shepherd courageously faces and stones Goliath and then beheads the giant. This story is a bit bloody for what is often used as a children's Bible story, but not apparently for Wheatley or her late 18th century audience. Appearing in 1773 as tensions between the colonies and Britain were simmering, the poem's use of Biblical imagery to refer to trans-Atlantic tensions was not unique to the era, as seen in Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan*. Reading the American colonies as personified through the oppressed Israelites as they faced the international threat of Philistine occupation and political oppression would have echoed with Wheatley's early American readers as they faced the harsh reality of the threat of British oppression through unjust treatment. As Vincent Carretta remarks, Wheatley's poetry is infused with a "protonationalist" (67) world view

that saw great potential in the possibility of the American nation. Carretta remarks that Wheatley “was already commenting on transatlantic economic and political subjects by the time she was about fifteen years old. The teenaged poet was in effect laying claim to being a proto-national American muse” (67). Recognizing her own oppression in Biblical stories of overcoming enemies, whose powers far outstripped her own, undoubtedly resonated with Wheatley’s poetic talents as she engaged her contemporary society in ways both subversive and relevant to her readers. Biblical stories would have been readily familiar to most readers of her time and this relevancy is enhanced by her re-articulation of the Biblical story with clear references to her contemporary society, enhanced through Wheatley’s infusion of the imagined present under the guise of a Biblical past.

Wheatley’s poem parallels the Biblical account as the Israelites faced the threat of enslavement by the Philistines if the war was lost. This threat works on two levels, including the analogy that was commonplace in the early republic, that of the ancient Israelites being enslaved, though typically that analogy related to enslavement by Egyptians rather than Philistines. Here Wheatley demonstrates her poetic talents by taking a commonplace and innovatively showing that even if America gained political independence, the threat of enslavement would be just as real post-independence as it was pre-independence. Innovating on this analogy of enslavement of the ancient Israelites by changing the story commonly used to demonstrate the analogy also suggests a second parallel meaning to the threat of enslavement, namely the threat of chattel slavery to African Americans. David’s necessity of fighting not just for his freedom, but for the freedom of his country, is a direct response not just to the threat of invasion by the Philistines, but specifically of the threat of slavery. Goliath declares, “see who loses, and who wins the plain; / For he who wins, in triumph may demand / Perpetual service from the vanquish’d land” (34-

36). This threat of “perpetual service” was experienced by Wheatley along with countless others during and after her lifetime and presents an imagined use of the present through the past.

Wheatley’s echoes of the present (international conflict and slavery) found in her re-telling of the Biblical story shift her poem from being just about the imagined past to be eerily relevant to her present. The trans-historical relevancy of the imagined past as the imagined present is found through the recognition of the analogies with which Wheatley subversively infuses her poem as she re-tells an imagined present through the Biblical tale, which, along with the international tensions and the presence of potential slavery in the story, reflect her contemporary society.

David faces Goliath with little to defend himself. Excepting his slingshot and a few stones as he addresses Goliath, David declares “*Jehovah’s name—no other arms I bear, / ... / To-day the Lord of Hosts to me will give / Vict’ry, to-day thy doom thou shalt receive*” (156-159, poet’s italics). Wheatley recognized that David and the ancient Israelites, despite the presence of some martial force, were inadequate to fully defend themselves against the overwhelming threat of British attack. Martial power for securing freedom was virtually absent for African Americans as well; hence in Wheatley’s perspective her faith creates a force for sustaining a fight for freedom, “*Jehovah’s name—no other arms I bear,*” hints not only to the righteousness of her causes, American independence and freedom from slavery, but also as the source for redemption which she sought to translate from her spiritual experience of committing to Christianity into the realms of political and social freedom. For Wheatley, the experience of spiritual freedom enabled her to envision the Biblical past as a means for recognizing precedents for securing freedom in her contemporary society. Hence the imagined present encompasses the imagined past as a means of understanding current events through ancient texts, translated through Wheatley’s poetic genius. The headless Goliath’s “blood in gushing torrents drench’d

the plains, / The soul found passage through the spouting veins” (186-187) and David returns to the Hebrew camp where he is celebrated as a hero of the war. For Wheatley this story holds not only personal but also nationalistic (i.e., proto-nationalistic) meaning as she presents the Biblical past as inherently relevant to an imagined present wherein there must be a fight for freedom, where blood must be shed in order to secure not just political freedom from Britain, but blood must be shed and warfare waged to create freedom for those who are enslaved. In Wheatley’s imagined present, the threat of slavery transcends history and is evidently a very old struggle which Wheatley understood as not just relevant to her spiritual life in her commitment to Christianity, which emphasizes freedom from sin through Christ, but also the threat of political oppression, and especially relevant to Wheatley’s life, the reality of slavery in the colonies before and after the Revolution. Wheatley suggests the necessity for a coming war to face these harsh realities.

Wheatley’s perspective was not always proto-nationalistic however, as two of her other poems indicate. “To the KING’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1768” praises George III, declaring that he is “belov’d by all the nations round” (10), though Wheatley evidences her clear awareness of the flow of current events in the colonies as she remarks that “[m]idst the remembrance of thy favours past, / The meanest peasants most admire the last” (8-9). Line 9 is footnoted with an asterisk with the remark that these lines refer to “[t]he Repeal of the Stamp Act” (13). Reinforcing the commonplace analogy of the colonies as children to the parent Britain, Wheatley describes George III as “our father, and our lord!” (6), an analogy she repeats in greater detail in her poem “America,” also from 1768, though not appearing in *Poems* unlike her verse to the king. In “America” Wheatley posits the American colonies as the rebellious child of Britannia. Again Wheatley addresses unjust taxation: America “grew up daily virtuous as he

grew / Fearing his Strength which she undoubted knew” (9-10) and then Britain “laid some taxes on her darling son / And would have laid another act there on” (11-12). Wheatley’s political prescience is evident throughout the poem as she then moves to address the relevant and contemporary analogy of America as enslaved to Britain: “Tis thus with thee O Brittain keeping down / New English force, thou fear’st his Tyranny and thou didst frown / He weeps afresh to feel this Iron chain” (29-31). Another of Wheatley’s references to slavery in “America” states, “[t]hy Power, O Liberty, makes strong the weak / And (wond’rous instinct) Ethiopians speak” (5-6). Speaking on these lines, Carretta remarks that “[t]he poem’s speaker implies that the “Liberty” that white Americans seek from metaphorical slavery also empowers black people suffering under actual enslavement” (70). Wheatley’s push then, for a recognition of the unjust political slavery that she witnesses between England and its colonies, also parallels Wheatley’s personal experiences and provides a parallel hope for her own freedom in her recognition in the poem of the rising potential future of the American colonies to become politically independent from the tyranny of England. Keenly aware of the power of slavery, Wheatley’s recognition of the political enslavement of the colonies shows that she valued the potential of the colonies in light of her own enslavement, and that, in spite of her acknowledgment of the social place of the king in “To the KING’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1768,” she was not afraid to speak against the political injustices of that king. However, from this poem’s placement in *Poems* and the absence of “America” from that same volume, Wheatley and her publishers may have considered the latter poem potentially too problematic for publication, especially in London where her collection first appeared. Nonetheless, “America” demonstrates Wheatley’s cognizance of the political atmosphere of the later 18th century in the colonies. Her concern for the future of the colonies is also evident in the poem as she expresses the commonly held sentiment that there

would be reconciliation between the colonies and Britain; Wheatley implores England to “[t]urn, O Brittainia claim thy child again” (32). Wheatley’s hope for a better future suggests that she saw, at least in 1768, the best option for the colonies as continuing as part of the British Empire. By the end of the poem, however, Wheatley intimates that such a future harmony will not arrive with a continuation of the status quo of familial placement on the part of the colonies: “O Brittain see / ... New England will increase like thee” (41-42). Rooted in the present, Wheatley imagines the colonies as a rising force on the global scene, one which was experiencing political tensions from a misbehaving parent. The tensions of the present are merely growing pains which will see the colonies become like their parent, a powerful nation in its own right which will be an example for the world. Wheatley’s protonationalism hence is evident at least from 1768.

Wheatley’s active participation in her contemporary political sphere demonstrates her deft use of the imagined present to secure her voice in the tumultuous late years of the American colonies. In this regard, one poem by its very subject matter, though mostly lost at the moment, demonstrates that Wheatley’s use of the imagined present went well beyond elegies to memorialize those for whom Wheatley had personal respect. “On the Affray in King-Street, on the Evening of the 5th of March” covers the 1770 tragedy of the Boston Massacre, a key event in stirring up the American Revolution a few years later. The poem was originally included in Wheatley’s “Proposals” in 1772 (Carretta 72), though perhaps like “America,” it was too suggestive of the political potential of the American colonies to be safe for the comfort of British publishers and readers in 1773. Despite its currently undisclosed location in its entirety, that Wheatley was willing to engage such a contemporary and potentially contentious issue as the massacre of colonial citizens by its parental Britain evidences Wheatley’s knowledge of her current political and social environment, as well as both the desire and ability to participate in the

ongoing debates of colonial conflict with Britain on such issues as taxation and the violent treatment of citizens, of whom Wheatley saw herself as one, though in a state of great disadvantage as a slave. Nonetheless, as Carretta points out, that slavery might be remedied with freedom in the event of American independence (Carretta 72). This is a hope which Wheatley held out for as the American Revolution rapidly approached, when she addressed a poem to George Washington.

In late 1775 Wheatley sent George Washington a poem composed in his honor, including a letter declaring her admiration for his endeavors. The poem appeared in a periodical in April of the next year, most likely courtesy of Washington's efforts (Shields, *Wheatley's Poetics* 49-50), and Wheatley eventually met with Washington during 1778 in Massachusetts (Shields, *Wheatley's Poetics* 90). Wheatley's admiration for Washington stemmed in part from her desire to see the goals of liberation from political enslavement transmute into liberty for those enslaved with chains and forced labor. John Shields observes that Wheatley engaged her "role as a politically astute Black woman whose primary objective was ever to promote liberation of all Americans, regardless of color" (*Wheatley's Poetics* 90). As a poet, Wheatley recognized her potential for utilizing her talents for communicating through the imagined present her vision for the future United States, a country which would shake free from the chains of Britain. In her first stanza Wheatley declares, "Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write. / While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms, / She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms" (2-4). Recognizing the power of her own voice, Wheatley, through engaging a poetic trope of self-declaration, also enacts the power of self-recognition of her own personhood and the power of her own voice while also amusingly noting to her reader that she is indeed writing. Wheatley is a part of the poem itself as her presence of self engages the reader with a focus on not just Washington, but herself as well.

She is inextricably linked to the subject matter of the poem, George Washington and “Columbia’s ... glorious toils,” the latter of which experiences “freedom’s cause” with “alarms” in “her anxious breast,” an anxiousness not only experienced by Columbia, but by Wheatley herself as she intertwines her own identity with that of Columbia in its struggle for freedom. This struggle is one of martial conflict resulting from the “anxious ... alarms” and resulting in the “flashes dreadful [of] refulgent arms” as Wheatley acknowledges the necessity of warfare to establish freedom for the colonies, while also looking forward to the necessity for armed conflict in securing freedom for those in bondage through chattel slavery. In the early stages of the American Revolution, Wheatley interjects her own powerful poetic voice to raise awareness not only of the necessity of the war with the British, but also of the plight of fellow Africans who had no one to fight for them. Washington, and the American Revolution, she probably hoped, would bring this about. To Washington Wheatley states, “Thee, first in place and honours, — we demand / The grace and glory of thy martial band” (25-26), ascribing honor to the general for his abilities in warfare in terms noticeably deific, “first in place ... grace and glory,” as was typical of panegyrics. By glorifying Washington, Wheatley effectively presents her audience with something they would want to read, glorification of one of the main rebel generals in the war. Wheatley thus makes use of her current cultural environment for accessing a wide audience through communicating about a popular subject, Washington and the imminent war. The imagined present allows Wheatley to demonstrate that she, a now free African American poet, has a place and purpose for communicating about current events. Wheatley’s aesthetics, along with her political and humanitarian motives, fully engage the present in an imaginative way that not only meets reader expectations about poems dealing with Washington, but also engages Wheatley’s self identity and communicates the necessity of fighting for freedom. This allows

Wheatley to fully connect with her audiences despite the overwhelming discriminatory environment of the late 18th century.

Washington is the “great chief, with virtue on thy side” (39), to whom Wheatley says, “Thy ev’ry action let the goddess guide. / A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine, / With gold unfading, WASHINGTON! be thine” (40-42, poet’s capitalization). Lionizing Washington was, of course, commonplace, especially following the Revolution, and Wheatley’s use of this trope is not just personal praise, but rather a means of participating in her contemporary society’s focus on the events and persons of the conflict with Britain. Wishing Washington well, Wheatley wisely focuses thoroughly on finding every positive view of Washington that she can to place the general on a pedestal in a move that resonated with readers in the late 18th century. Praising Washington and presenting him with a poetic crown, however, runs counter to Wheatley’s moves toward equality in her poetry. John Shields observes on these last lines, “[i]f Wheatley looks like a monarchist, even if only briefly, we would do well to assume that she, like so many others, was merely responding to the shifting political currents of her time” (*Wheatley's Poetics* 91). An initial reading of Wheatley’s last lines appears to show her favoring a monarchical view of government, “[a] crown ... a throne ... WASHINGTON! be thine.” But it must be pointed out that Wheatley’s positive view of the American colonies fighting for their freedom suggests that she would favor a more democratic form of government which did not imitate the British government, which Wheatley grew to see as oppressive. As Shields states, Wheatley’s cognizance of the contemporary political atmosphere in the colonies in 1775 allowed her to take advantage of the situation to insert her own poetic version of the imagined present into the literary environment of the times. This allowed Wheatley to engage with readers through relevant themes that gave her a voice in current events, “the shifting political currents of her

time” as Shields describes it. While this may seem initially a minor accomplishment, Wheatley’s expectations, quietly present in poems such as “Goliath of Gath” and “To His Excellency General Washington,” for the extension of freedom beyond Euro-Americans, demonstrates her ability to recognize and seize the literary moment. This not only empowers her own voice, but also speaks for oppressed people throughout the colonies, while also promoting political independence from Britain. The imagined present makes contemporary society available for accessing audiences in relevant ways as Wheatley utilizes her imagined present to reach readers who might otherwise ignore her work.

“The Hasty Pudding” and Barlow’s Tastes

One of the most delightful mock-epics of the early republic is Joel Barlow’s “The Hasty Pudding,” a mostly tasteful ode to the glories and Americanness of hasty pudding. Barlow’s use of this subject to explore the imagined present demonstrates his desire to connect with contemporary audiences not just through powerhouse epics such as *The Vision of Columbus* and *The Columbiad*, but also through more lighthearted subjects such as American cuisine. Here the poem is subtitled with a remark on the location of its composition: “[w]ritten At Chambery, In Savoy, Jan. 1793” (87), positioning the poem as a trans-Atlantic endeavor. Barlow’s diplomatic duties frequently kept him abroad and his residencies in France undoubtedly led to a degree of homesickness which could be remedied in part through nostalgic pondering. “The Hasty Pudding” engages the imagined present through the eponymous food’s position within a global setting which Barlow creates throughout the poem. While the French Revolution went on, “[y]e Gallic flags, that o’er their heights unfurl’d, / Bear death to kings, and freedom to the world, / I sing not you ” (3-5), Barlow raised his pen, and spoon, to declare the glorious of hasty pudding in an imagined present that focuses on food as a metaphor for American nationalistic identity: “I

sing the sweets I know, the charms I feel, / My morning incense, and my evening meal, / The sweets of Hasty-Pudding” (15-17). This theme of American cuisine, according to Barlow, is “[a] virgin theme, unconscious of the Muse, / But fruitful, rich, well suited to inspire / The purest frenzy of poetic fire” (6-8). Like Dwight in his preface to *The Conquest of Canaan*, Barlow suggests a newness to his project, a topic unaccounted for yet in American literature, one unaware of the influences of European Muses whose presence was felt in most American literature of the time. The topic is the result of “[t]he purest frenzy of poetic fire” as only the American poetic sensibility unadulterated by European influences can produce.

“Thro’ wrecks of time thy lineage and thy race” (32) allows Barlow to discuss the historical origins of hasty pudding which he places as originating with Native Americans: “Some tawny Ceres, goddess of her days, / First learn’d with stones to crack the well-dry’d maize” (37-38). Barlow then imagines how hasty pudding was first made, providing a recipe for his readers, whose appetites might be whetted, while then suggesting that perhaps his own previous poetic invention of Oella, one of the founders of the Incan nation in his epics, was responsible for the invention of hasty pudding: “[i]f ’twas Oella, whom I sang before” (51). This reference to his own oeuvre works to reinforce the American nature of this poem, its reference to *The Vision of Columbus* not only serves to promote his own works, but also positions imagined Native American identities as relevant to the poem and nation. Without Native American contributions, the country would not possess an identity that was quite as separated in a culinary fashion as it now is through hasty pudding. Bringing his reader back to the present, Barlow addresses the pudding: “Dear Hasty-Pudding, what unpromis’d joy / Expands my heart, to meet thee in Savoy! / ... / ... my long-lost, unforgotten friend” (57-58, 62). It is important for the full effect of the poem that Barlow contrast the boons of hasty pudding with European culture because he is

writing for an international audience and establishing the uniqueness of American identity wrapped up in hasty pudding, an identity that is rooted in Native American identity and disconnected from European influences. To further emphasize this disconnection, a necessary ingredient in this poem given its European composition, Barlow writes, “[f]or thee thro’ Paris, that corrupted town, / How long in vain I wandered up and down” (63-64), and it is Paris “[w]here shameless Bacchus, with his drenching hoard, / Cold from his cave usurps the morning board” (65-66). And sure not to leave Britain out of the picture, Barlow remarks, “London is lost in smoke and steep’d in tea; / No Yankey there can lisp the name of thee” (67-68). For Barlow the French are lost in their wine and the British in London smog, while brightly contrasting with these elements of ill from the continent, hasty pudding is shown incomparable, and fresh, in its glories. Barlow’s engagement with the mock epic as a means of celebrating the joys of hasty pudding allows for the imagined present to be utilized as a means of encompassing an international scope to the poem, with its trans-Atlantic composition and willingness to present its subject matter on an international plane appropriate for Barlow, given his cosmopolitan career. The imagined present is found through Barlow’s references to hasty pudding as a metaphor for American identity in the late 18th century, a fluid substance whose identity held origins in Native American traditions but whose substance was also hot and unsettled, and went by several names, reflecting the diversity of ideas on American identity at the time (lines 85-93): “Thy name is *Hasty-Pudding!*” (93, poet’s italics). This name invokes ideas of America for Barlow despite being abroad (lines 57-62) and is “[a] name, a sound to every Yankey dear, / But most to me, whose heart and palate chaste / Preserve my pure hereditary taste” (108-110). Hasty pudding, in this “emblematic song” (23), is relevant to those who identify as “Yankey.” In a move to emphasize the connection of hasty pudding with American identity, Barlow links his love for the

dish to “pure hereditary taste,” proposing that his palate preference is the result of factors outside of his control, the product of his familial and cultural inheritance (lines 125-134). Rooted in cultural and personal history, hasty pudding becomes Barlow’s answer to defining American identity, suggesting that national identity should be found in family history and Native American culture, the former given with the risk of seeming dependent on European traditions and the latter a frequent source of national identity. Of the former reason, this is perhaps why Barlow includes his remarks on Paris and London (lines 63-70).

Barlow then recounts the growing and harvesting processes of corn (lines 190-261) in a humorous fashion, providing a summary for readers unfamiliar with the pragmatics necessary for acquiring hasty pudding. Next Barlow covers husking the corn: “[t]h’ invited neighbours to the *Husking* come; / A frolic scene, where work, and mirth, and play, / Unite their charms ...” (267-269, poet’s italics). These lines address the illustration that appears immediately before the poem and depicts this group of very friendly neighbors around, and on, a large heap of corn waiting to be husked. People are in various stages of the husking process, some are collecting the corn or carrying the husked ears in a basket, while still others are engaged in more “frolic” than actual work. Children and adults work alongside each other while a blushing young lady and her beau seem rather preoccupied with each other rather than working on the corn. Humor is perhaps the only way to make a dry subject entertaining, and that is what Barlow has done here by allowing his sense of poetic humor, perhaps rivaled only by John Trumbull in this era, to find corollary expression in this accompanying illustration. The importance of this illustration, and its relevant lines in the poem (262-289) which describe a husking, is that it demonstrates a source of community in the early American nation: “The dry husks rustle, and the corn-cobs crack; / The song, the laugh, alternate notes resound, / And the sweet cider trips in silence round” (275-277).

While Barlow's song might not get sung or recited at any of these huskings, his depiction of them as a source for community reflects the division of labor in society between those who husk corn with their neighbors and those who, like Barlow, would simply read, and write, about those who do. But for those citizens who have this kind of experience, Barlow depicts it as an event which is used as an excuse to connect with neighbors, or to find love. This depiction of laughing and singing also suggests the ability of the American culture to generate its own sources of amusement from within its own culture. Not only is work integrated into community around what, in Barlow's poem, is considered a distinctly American product, its processing and preparation for cooking are presented as a means of building culture and community. In a society that was dominantly agrarian, Barlow's poem held immediate relevancy for his nation by touching on a topic that was at once timely in its beckoning to a distinctly American and non-European sense of identity, but also accessible to his readers by virtue of discussing a quotidian subject. Additionally, Barlow's interjection of humor throughout the poem, for those who have an ear to hear it, in a move made possible by his use of the mock epic genre, serves as one of the earlier pieces of humorous American verse and demonstrates that America was indeed capable of producing its own talented poets, even if they could not yet rival European bards of the past. American community centers around the use of corn and its following transformation by the wife of the house into hasty pudding (lines 290-305), the preparation of which Barlow does not regulate exclusively to the wife, suggesting the husband's participation in the preparation process as well: "To stir it well demands a stronger hand; / The husband takes his turn; and round and round / The ladle flies ..." (301-303). While maintaining a stereotype of the male being stronger, Barlow's depiction of making hasty pudding suggests a need for gender equality and a deconstruction of typical gendered spheres in the time by showing the kitchen to be a place

where both genders are necessary for the creation of this American dish, and this American nation. While not completely free of the biases of his time, Barlow nonetheless makes a subtle move toward, but not arriving at, gender equality in the American home. The poem not only presents an aspect of American culture to the world and its home-grown readers, it also seeks to subtly reshape perspectives on the role of agrarian society in relationship to the nation as a whole. By focusing on the topic of corn and its subsequent transformation into hasty pudding, Barlow promotes his perspective on gender roles while also emphasizing the role of crops in the formation of society as an integrated whole; no longer a group of individuals operating in isolation, people come together over and around the produce of the land to experience and expand community. This community is uniquely American in Barlow's perspective because it disavows the influence of the continent while also engaging with corn, a crop originating in Native American traditions. Building community around agrarian traditions provides a blueprint for American society by suggesting a way forward that focuses on building a nation on practical crops and the sense of community that collective work, such as husking, created.

Concluding his poem, Barlow provides direction on the proper type of spoon and the manner in which his readers should consume the pudding, he also suggests the optimal type of bowl to be used. Qualifying himself for providing this advice, Barlow remarks, "[t]hese tuneful lips, that thousand spoons have tried, / With just precision could the point decide" (354-355). Assured of Barlow's expertise, the reader is left to read his final instructions on appropriate hasty pudding consumption, but is also given this encouragement: "[f]ear not to slaver; 'tis no deadly sin" (362). And if the reader is a messy eater, Barlow reminds them that by following his instructions on proper bowl choice, the consumer should be one who "...heeds no drops that fall [from the spoon], / The wide mouth'd bowl will surely catch them all" (368-369). America is no

melting pot to Barlow, but it is a hot bowl of hasty pudding, messy and requiring a proper recipe, it must be mixed with milk for true enjoyment, but also a nation whose identity comes from within, not from European influences. While this may seem absurd, Barlow's framing of hasty pudding, and America, within a mock epic, provides a counter to his more serious epic endeavors found in *The Vision of Columbus* and the then future *The Columbiad*. Not only significantly shorter than his longer works, and much funnier, "The Hasty Pudding" demonstrates the potential for American poets to use nationalistic topics in unexpected and new ways. For Barlow, "The Hasty Pudding" was more than a way to engage his nostalgia for home while abroad; it was a way to communicate through the imagined present a vision of both what the nation was and was not, but also a place to express his hope for what the nation might become. A hasty revolution and a hasty pudding, a hastily made nation, all of these are wrapped up in Barlow's favorite dish, and expressed through his use of the imagined present by using this food analogy to present a humorous vision of American nationalism that recognized the contributions of Native Americans, and of its agrarian citizens as well.

Freneau's Independent America

Called the "poet of the American Revolution" (Axelrod 178), Philip Freneau's life of literary attempts left him with multiple volumes published and with poems appearing in innumerable serial publications such as newspapers. His political views often found expression in these verses as Freneau sought to gain influence for his own political views as an anti-Federalist supporter of Thomas Jefferson. In 1809 he published a two-volume collection entitled *Poems Written and Published During the American Revolutionary War*, which included a poem entitled "America Independent; And Her Everlasting Deliverance From British Tyranny and Oppression." Not one to mince words, this piece, originally published in 1778 in Philadelphia

according to a note after the title, demonstrates Freneau's ability to use invective against those he found deserving of his ill will, and the British in Freneau's eyes certainly fit that bill. The version appearing in Freneau's 1809 collection is used here. Composed early in the Revolutionary War, "America Independent" is a poem encouraging Freneau's fellow citizens to fight hard for their liberty and to recognize the British as a deserving enemy since freedom was, as the cliché of the era said, man's divine right: "When God from chaos gave this world to be, / Man then he formed, and formed him to be free" (5-6).

Freneau's use of the imagined present reflects his career long tendency to quickly adapt current events to versification with varying degrees of success. While critics may debate and often dismiss Freneau's literary talents, his verse possessed a powerful enough effect in its own time to maintain some degree of demand. In "America Independent" Freneau moves quickly to declare his view on Britain and her monarch:

Cain, Nimrod, Nero— fiends in human guise,
Herod, Domitian—these in judgment rise,
And, envious of his deeds, I hear them say
None but a GEORGE could be more vile than they. (63-66)

Reflective of strong contemporary dislike for the king, Freneau joins in tearing down the British monarch as a means of encouraging patriotism and instilling anti-British sentiment that he felt on a personal level. Placing George III on a historical scale with other men considered evil, reflects Freneau's use of the imagined past as it relates to his present. Ever cognizant of the evils of the British Empire, Freneau even brings up their international exploits in India under Lord Robert Clive from 1758 (Middlekauff 9): "... they ravaged India's climes before, / And carried death to Asia's utmost shore— / *Clive* was your envied slave, in avarice bold" (Freneau 107-109, poet's italics). Moving on to British General John Burgoyne (himself a poet and playwright), for whom

Freneau reserved 78 lines which dabble in gothic imagery, Freneau uses both his personal and his society's anti-British sentiment to create a literary reflection of the imagined present:

What murdering *tory* [sic] now relieves your grief,
Or plans new conquests for his favourite chief;
Designs still dark employ that ruffian race,
Beasts of your choosing, and our own disgrace,
So vile a crew the world ne'er saw before,
And grant, ye pitying heavens, it may no more:
If ghosts from hell infest our poisoned air,
Those ghosts have entered their base bodies here
Murder and blood is still their dear delight—
Scream round their roofs, ye ravens of the night!
Whene'er they wed, may demons and despair,
And grief and woe, and blackest night be there;
Fiends leagued from hell the nuptial lamp display,
Swift to perdition light them on their way,
Round the wide world their devilish squadron chace,
To find no realm, that grants one resting place. (147-162, poet's italics)

Quoted at length to illustrate the passionate anti-British tone that runs throughout the poem, Freneau's imagery demonstrates his ready absorption and use of multiple modes used to engage the imagined present, reflecting classic cultural touchstones of the Bible and Milton, while also engaging the gothic. Recalling Timothy Dwight and Phillis Wheatley's use of Biblical imagery, Freneau, himself a deist, recognized the literary power of mirroring and appropriating imagery in lines that ring with chilling ideas of ghosts and hell, grief and woe, perdition and Tory, all woven together in a discussion of a British general at the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Freneau suggests that the British will continue their global domination and that America is just one place among many that the British crown will continue to oppress if his countrymen do not defend themselves: "[r]ound the wide world their devilish squadron chace" (161). Freneau also suggests that Loyalists who remain in America should "... with loyal hearts retire, / ... / And with yourselves let *John Burgoyne* retire / To reign the monarch, whom your hearts admire" (185, 188-189, poet's italics). These last lines on Burgoyne seem rather mild compared to the lengthy

passage quoted above, but reflect Freneau's desire to see the British expelled from America while also hinting that Freneau is not concerned with the presence of monarchy in the rest of the world, as long as he is not subjected to it. Telling the British what they can do with themselves, they can "retire," Freneau's poem both draws from and reinforces his contemporary society's desire for political independence in a way that is not only entertaining but also relevant through its use of spiritual imagery and its discussion of contemporary issues and germane people, i.e., British generals. Overall the poem may seem surprisingly emphatic and a bit bombastic, but nonetheless considering that it was composed in the early years of the war (1778), the poem reflects Freneau's and the early American public's passion for freedom from England.

Speaking of the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Freneau remarks, "Britain, at last to arrest your lawless hand, / Rises the genius of a generous land, / Our injured rights bright Gallia's prince defends" (191-193). Bent on contrasting the two nations, Freneau implies that America will bring justice to Britain's "lawless hand," assuming that Freneau's contemporary America is capable of dispensing justice. In Freneau's poem America is not only just, but generous and capable of directing itself apart from its colonizer to whom it is now resistant. Yet this generous land is still weak, in need of France's aid and assistance in defense, ironically receiving aid from a monarch to defend itself against a monarchy. Freneau demonstrates, knowingly or not, the paradoxical nature of the early American nation, a paradox Phillis Wheatley and many others well knew. Yet Freneau is also noting to his readers the necessity for international, transatlantic warfare needed to secure America's freedom, suggesting that he recognized the need to assist the American cause, and that nationalistic verse such as his own was, though necessary in its own right, not in and of itself sufficient to sustain the American nation. In part this poem not only reflects the American cause in the early years of the war, it

also serves as a summary of the progress culturally that the nation was making as a nation in war, toward independence that was sustainable not only politically, but culturally as well. Freneau earned the title of “Poet of the American Revolution” not just because of his passionate patriotism, but also because he used his verse to not only record and reflect on the war and its consequences, but also because he wrote verse that captured the imagined present of the American Revolution so well. Freneau, like other poets who made adept use of the imagined present, connected with contemporary readers and continued to reflect their present long after that present became the American past.

Freneau’s “America Independent” encapsulates the poet’s, and the nation’s, anti-British sentiment along with contemporary events and persons of the war, reflecting an appropriation of the present and its re-articulation through the imagined present. The present is translated through the poet’s imagination and his or her metamorphosis of those persons and events that are relevant to the poem’s topic are filtered through the imagination and end up as poetic or literary expressions of the present in ways that connect with readers rather than being purely constructs of the imagination. While it may be argued that all poetry draws in some way from the past, present, or future, the use of the imagined present, and past, demonstrate the ability of poets to incorporate history and/ or their current cultural milieu into a poetics that is pertinent to their contemporary readers, for whom the imagined past provides a history to draw present identity from, and for whom the imagined present holds an immediate relevancy because of its historical currency. Recognizing this deconstructs afflatus to a confluence of literary and historical trends while also recognizing the role of the human imagination as the creative spark rather than the Muses of old Europe. The imagined future, on the other hand, reflects an imagined alternative to the present that typically either embraces the hopeful or the apocalyptic, though in the case of

early America, the former was far more prevalent. The imagined present works between the imagined past as a source of history and place that provides precedent for the present, and the imagined future typically concerns itself most often with optimistic prophecies. This positioning allows for poets such as Freneau to work thoroughly with their contemporary society's environments in ways that both recognize the past and hint at the future. For example, in the passage quoted above, Freneau suggests within the context of his imagined present, drawing heavily on the reality of the transatlantic nature of the Revolutionary War, that, with the aid of France, "the genius of a generous land" (192) will indeed finally end the "lawless" acts of Britain, approximately five years before the end of the war. In this sense, operating within the imagined present necessitates recognizing the historical past and suggesting a future at the same time. For Freneau to write about the Revolutionary War through the imagined present necessitates implicit acknowledgment of the historical past as a precedent for current events seen through the imagined present. Concurrently, the imagined present has the potential to discuss an imagined future, much as Dwight and Barlow do in their epics that focus primarily on the imagined past. The use of the imagined present and the imagined future become ways of replacing religious (i.e., Biblical) prophecy in a cultural context, readers may switch from following religious predictions and re-place their faith in cultural and literary contexts in a manner that provides subscribers to literature a humanistic replacement. This reflects a broader cultural shift which Freneau, as a deist, exercises with his own use of the imagined present as a means of accessing American nationalism. Additionally, Joel Barlow's personal move away from traditional Christianity is reflected in the increasing secularization of his epic narratives between *The Vision* and *The Columbiad*. Moving between the imagined past, present, and future as poems such as Barlow and Dwight's epics do through their contemporary cultural references

(i.e., mentioning Revolutionary War heroes or artists) demonstrates that the imagined present is an essential touchstone for poets in the early America republic. This may be because the tumultuousness of the era was such that accessing the imagined present was essential for establishing a sense of stability through literature: the imagined past, present, and future all permit for idealized versions of these times to be accessible to readers; with the imagined present providing a perspective that demonstrates to readers the potential to see their unsettled present in an imaginative and literary perspective that could, by virtue of its accessing contemporary events and its immediate relevancy through this use of the imagined present, provide an alternative and potentially hopeful, as in the case of Freneau's "America Independent," ideal of contemporary events. This suggests the usefulness of the imagined present in establishing a sense of literary nationalism.

Freneau's use of the imagined present is nationalistic not only in his hopeful perspective, but also in its willingness to provide a poet's perspective on current events, all from an unapologetically patriotic point of view. His negative tone when discussing the British, such as his section on Burgoyne, suggests that Freneau is using the British Other to push back against the colonizing power through the imagined present that is inherently infused with his personal biases in favor of the developing nation. The imagined present is an ideal plane on which to demonstrate literary nationalism because the imagined present's use of contemporary events, especially when infused with patriotic fervor (e.g., Dwight, Freneau), presents the opportunity for a text incorporating the imagined present to serve as a basis for imagined literary community through connecting diverse readers with current events, which because of their recent nature are readily accessible to a larger audience as re-articulated through the imagined present. The imagined present has the potential for serving as a more relevant basis than the imagined past in

terms of building a readership into an imagined community, specifically one which is focused on nationalistic events such as the Revolutionary War. Efficient use of the imagined present allows a poet to forcefully communicate his or her message to readers through the imagined present in a manner that impresses on their readers both the relevancy of the covered topic, but also constitutes an extension of social and cultural forces outside of the poem, thereby creating a cycle in which one element (i.e., the poem or cultural forces) reinforces the other. Freneau's use of the imagined present in "America Independent" does just this, it reinforces anti-British social sentiments and furthers a pro-American outlook in regards to the outcome of the war, while at the same time by virtue of those two actions, constructing a sense of American literary nationalism through fostering imagined community around and through the text of the poem, all through the use of the imagined present as a vehicle for Freneau's nationalistic views of the struggling nation.

While France "... calmly viewed the tumult from afar" (225), America, though appreciative of France's aid, stands strong by itself: "... Truth herself can say / We bore the heat and danger of the day" (223-224). Freneau is insistent in 1778 that America has not only handled the stress of the war, but also survived its "heat and danger." Moving to speak to the popular knowledge of the war's events, Freneau then comments on the murder of Jane McCrea, "See, yonder lies, all breathless, cold and pale, / Drenched in her gore, *Lavinia* of the vale ... / The cruel Indian seized her life away" (241-243, poet's italics). Freneau footnotes line 242 noting to his reader that he is referring to McCrea, and directing the reader to non-specific "histories of the revolutionary [sic] war" (247). Evert Duyckinck remarks in his collection of Freneau's patriotic poetry, *Poems Relating to the American Revolution* (1865), that this is "[a]n allusion to Miss Jane McCrea, whose murder by a party of Burgoyne's Indians, in the vicinity of Fort Edward,

was one of the tragic incidents of the war, which, with the feeling of horror it created, called forth also much romantic sympathy” (52). Freneau does not use McCrea’s life as a means of generating “romantic sympathy,” but rather the fact that her death occurred the year prior to the initial appearance of “America Independent,” and that McCrea was a person whose death would have encouraged anti-British and pro-American attitudes among readers. Freneau insists that “[t]his *deed* alone our just revenge would claim, / Did not ten thousand more your sons defame” (245-246, poet’s italics). It is the death of McCrea and those like her who have been “defamed” through the actions of the British and their allies which Freneau reminds his readers of as America sought its independence. To fight this war is to fight in memory of the martyrs who, like McCrea, perished because of British tyranny. Freneau’s move is similar to Dwight’s in *The Conquest* when the latter poet inserted brief references to Revolutionary War heroes within his narrative of the Biblical story. Freneau’s reference here to Native Americans, a subject he frequently visited in a variety of ways throughout his literary oeuvre, is interesting since it is within the context of the Native Americans being British allies, rather than the typical poetic use of Native Americans during this time, both broadly in the literary zeitgeist and within the context of Freneau’s works, which typically utilized Native Americans as a source of American national identity. Freneau’s Native American reference here reinforces the generally negative images of Indians outside of their use as a sources of national identity for Euro-Americans. Freneau does not specify which tribe her murderer is from, the person being described as just “the cruel Indian” (243), demonstrating the ready use of stereotypes typically used of Native Americans during this time.

Freneau then moves to recount the war’s effects on families: “From every eye distils the frequent tear, / From every mouth some doleful tale I hear! / Some mourn a father, brother,

husband, friend” (251-253). Recalling the heavy toll that individuals were paying in the war as early as 1778, Freneau’s use of pathos works in a similar fashion to his reference to the murdered McCrea; her death and the loss of so many loved ones not only memorializes those who lost their lives, but also works to engage contemporary events in a manner that builds imagined community. Community is built around the loss of life that serves as a sacrifice for the building of a nation; deaths demonstrate and inspire nationalism to readers who very well may have either directly faced death themselves, or who might have lost loved ones to the war. This use of death as a means to demonstrate nationalism suggests Freneau intentionally decided to include these elements for the specific purpose of showing readers both the cost of the American Revolution as well as the purpose of the war, to prevent future deaths at the hands of British tyranny. Listing generic roles of those who have died, a move similar to his generic use of the word “Indian” a few lines earlier, Freneau positions the list of those affected as broadly as possible in order to make the poem as accessible and relatable to as many readers as possible. The imagined present is used to make the poem accessible to a wide contemporary readership.

Next Freneau briefly references a British prison ship: “Some mourn, imprisoned in their native land, / In sickly ships what numerous hosts confined / At once their lives and liberties resigned” (254-256). “America Independent” was originally composed in August of 1778 (Pattee 278). Freneau’s prescience here foreshadows his own experience of being imprisoned aboard a ship in 1780 (Pattee xxx-xxxiv), an event which inspired a poem unimaginatively entitled “The British Prison Ship” which recounts his experiences as a British prisoner. In “America Independent” Freneau shows his awareness of the overcrowding and potential for sicknesses to spread among crowded inmates as he declares that “[a]t once their lives and liberties [are] resigned,” suggesting that life and liberty are inextricably linked and that British oppression

threatens both. Those who are in prison are “imprisoned in their native land,” suggesting that this is indeed, after only fighting for two years, already a “native land,” presumably by birth. Freneau connotes that America is its own identity separate from the colonizing power, and that its citizens, despite the country’s struggle for independence, already consider America their “native land,” a reference by which Freneau accesses and replicates his contemporary political climate through the imagined present in a move that reinforces American independence. Warning Britain, Freneau describes the British as “[p]ests of mankind! remembrance shall recall / And paint these horrors to the view of all” (269-270). Not one to lose sight of his anti-tyranny motives, Freneau denigrates the British once again but also suggests that the events of the present, the murder of McCrea and the deaths of others in the war, will one day be a stain on the reputation of the British, a “remembrance” that Freneau enacts through this poem by his cataloging of both specific (i.e., the murder of McCrea) and generalized atrocities for which he cites the British as responsible. American nationalism for Freneau is a sense of collective identity which he fosters through accessing the imagined present in a way that demonstrates the evils facing the new nation in their struggle for freedom as Freneau presents the new nation with an identity against which to construct its own sense of nationhood: implicatively British tyranny is not what America will demonstrate to its own citizens and it is against this oppression that Americans fight to be independent. As a deist, Freneau’s vision of American nationalism is disjunctive to Dwight’s and Wheatley’s conceptualizations of nationalism in that Freneau prefers to draw from current events in shaping a nationalistic poetics rather than relying on Biblical bases for his literary nationalism. Freneau’s use of the imagined present, then, most closely resembles Barlow’s in “The Hasty Pudding,” though clearly with a more grave perspective than

Barlow, though Barlow could also offer sober poems as demonstrated through his epics and the later “Advice to a Raven In Russia.”

Freneau’s “America Independent” builds a sense of American nationalism starting with the title, the subtitle of which reads “AND HER EVERLASTING DELIVERANCE FROM BRITISH TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION” (241, poet’s capitalization), leaving little room in the reader’s imagination as to the direction of the poem. In this Freneau does not disappoint his readers’ expectations as he uses the imagined present throughout the poem to remind his readers of the necessity for “deliverance” from the British Empire. Britain is set to reap the consequences of its oppression, according to Freneau: “O’er Britain’s isle a thousand woes impend” (275). These consequences are already taking place, Britain is now “[t]oo weak to conquer, govern, or defend, / To liberty she holds pretended claim— / The substance we enjoy, and they the name” (276-278). Here Freneau posits the primary contrast between America and its colonizer, one is weakened and the other grows stronger, one claims to have liberty but only knows it as a concept, the other actually enjoys this liberty. This distinction between the word and the reality of the word suggests the malleability of the imagined present as a means of accessing and considering this difference, with the express purpose of demonstrating that such a distinction exists in reality, thereby weakening the British narrative of control over the colonies and strengthening the American cause. Yet Freneau does not prove this distinction except by demonstrating British oppression in the colonies; “America Independent” only proves its argument against the British (i.e., Britain only knows the name of liberty but not its reality) through suggesting that Britain’s treatment of its colonies must parallel the treatment of its own citizens, something which Freneau apparently feels no burden to prove. Despite the ravages of the war raging about him and his readers, Freneau suggests that liberty is already a reality in

America, at the expense of ignoring those who were consistently disenfranchised, for whom Freneau has no recognition of the irony under which they suffered, all the more ironic given his preoccupation in the poem with the travesties of British oppression.

Moving from the imagined present into the ever-present imagined future, Freneau speaks to America: “Thus shalt thou gain a triumph more divine— / To thee belongs a second golden reign, / Thine is the empire o’er a peaceful main” (306-308). The idea of empire here was void of most negative connotations in this era, obviously, and Freneau sees no contradiction between establishing America as an “empire” and the negative characteristics of the British establishment and the potential for America to mimic Britain in the future. This will be an empire of contrasts to the British, an empire which will replace its colonizer. The “second reign” of which Freneau writes conceives of America as a replacement for Britain, a successor through the “triumph more divine” to rule over North America and the “peaceful main” which is now peaceful only through the elimination of British rule. American democracy becomes more divine than the divine right of Britain’s king as Americans fight to “gain” their liberty through “triumph” in the war. The country moves toward a day when they will “[c]rush the proud tyrant who becomes their foe, / And future times shall own your struggles blest, / And future years enjoy perpetual rest” (310-312). America is fighting not just for itself in the moment of the late 18th century, but rather also fighting for a future that will globally recognize the American present of the Revolutionary War as “blest,” the fight for freedom is “blest” because it is “divine” (306). These are generic terms that do not inherently necessitate Christian spirituality, but which do hint at spirituality, if only a humanistic spirituality of faith in the progress of mankind. The war in America is not just for the American colonies to experience nationhood, but also an investment of blood and tears that will yield nationalistic dividends of “perpetual rest” as the country moves forward once the war is

over into a promised peace and prosperity. These “future times” offer a hope to look forward to during the present struggles through death and destruction; Freneau offers the imagined present and imagined future not simply as a prophecy of success for the present endeavors, but also to stabilize the hope of readers who might be discouraged by the direction of the war, whether broadly on a national scale or personally, through the death of a loved one. Offering an alternative future interacts with the imagined present in a way that stabilizes the tumultuousness of the present with a promised imagined future that declares that there are reasons for the present state of affairs. Freneau’s use of the imagined future, like those who often use the imagined past, is to affect his readers through the imagined present by the way in which the imagined future legitimizes the present, both the imagined present and contemporary reality. Freneau follows this promised blissful future with an urge for his fellow Americans to soldier on:

Americans! revenge your country’s wrongs;
To you the honor of this deed belongs,
Your arms did once this sinking land sustain,
And saved those climes where freedom yet must reign—
Your bleeding soil this ardent task demands,
Expel yon’ thieves from these polluted lands,
Expect no peace till haughty Britain yields (313-319).

Maintaining his anti-British sentiment through encouraging the ongoing war, Freneau moves to finish the poem on an inspirational note while still recognizing that there are places “where freedom yet must reign[;]” the war is not over because the cause is not finished, liberty must be brought to still further places in the colonies. “American Independent” encourages contemporary audiences to continue fighting the war not just for themselves, but for others who also experience the persecution of British tyranny. To do this will allow for the promised future, but only with the continuation of sacrifice through war in the present: resistance to and expulsion of the “haughty British” through this “ardent task” will “save” those lands that still need liberty, then

and only then will peace reign. America, to be independent, requires this kind of patriotic inspiration to make sure that it continues enduring the stresses of war.

Reminding his readers of the stress required by the war, Freneau remarks, “[y]our injured country groans while yet they stay, / Attend her groans, and force their hosts away” (327-328). In the poem’s last stanza Freneau renews his over-arching theme and maintains a consistent message of American oppression at the hands of the British, and the resultant necessity of combating that oppression through the use of force in order to free the new nation from its oppressor. Ending on a hopeful note, however, Freneau reminds his readers of the opportunities that the imagined future affords fellow patriots in their current war. America remains, “[r]emote from princes, bishops, lords, and kings, / Those fancied gods, who, famed through every shore, / Mankind have fashioned, and, like fools, adore” (336-338 poet’s italics). America’s political system will presumably insulate it from the corrupt influences of the power hierarchies of Europe, such as the presence of princes and kings, and the influence of religious leaders. More specifically, Freneau’s America will not permit these types of authority figures to gain influence and oppress citizens, thereby limiting, as implicatively has been done in Britain, citizens to the “name” of liberty rather than its “substance” (278). This limitation resulted not just in the denial of true liberty to British citizens across the main, but also within British colonies; hence the need for America to be independent. These authority figures have no real power, they are merely “fancied gods” rather than holding any divine substance or authority. Their origins, even that of the bishops Freneau suggests, is from other men, “[m]ankind have fashioned, and, like fools, adore,” sounding very much like a Biblical invective against idols (e.g., Isaiah 44:9-12).

Following Freneau’s inspiration, America will rise through its present situation to gain independence from Britain and then ascend in its own right to become a major world player: “[a]

glorious empire rises, bright and new!” (333), leaving America prosperous and ready to lead the world through trade, an idea on which Freneau concludes the poem: “... through our soil the streams of plenty flow, / And o’er the main we spread the trading sail, / Wafting the produce of the rural vale” (340-342). Certain that the American environment will produce economic excess, Freneau assures his readers again that their struggle in the present will result in a prosperous future that will launch American trading ships across the ocean to carry away the success of its farmers to a global market. The imagined present, then, for Freneau at least in “America Independent,” is hopeful because of the promise of the imagined future, and because America will not only reject the government of the British, but also their political system and culture (e.g., kings and bishops) will not be allowed to influence the American present. The Revolutionary War is a blood-filled affair as Freneau notes with his references to the imagined present, an imagined present that was painfully real to those who lost loved ones in the war. Rather than being a source of bitterness, these deaths become, in Freneau’s use of the imagined present, sources of inspiration in the fight for liberty, their lives becoming martyrs for the cause of freedom and the absence of British rule.

The Anarchiad’s Chaotic Present

Appearing between 1786 and 1787 in the *New Haven Gazette, and the Connecticut Magazine*, *The Anarchiad* was authored by David Humphreys, Joel Barlow, John Trumbull, and Lemuel Hopkins (Bottorff vi). The poem was presented as extracts from a recently uncovered poetic epic discovered in America, having survived to the present tumultuous age of the early republic from an ancient era which also, interestingly enough to *The Anarchiad*’s readers, was eerily relevant to contemporary events. William Bottorff notes that the presentation of the fictitious discovery attended authentic archeological discoveries in the same time: “[t]he original

publication of *The Anarchiad* was facilitated not only by the imagination and talent of its four principals, but by certain archeological discoveries in the Old Northwest Territory that gave them the cover needed for their ruse” (xi). Responding to contemporary events allowed the authors (by author is meant the idea of the singular author presented in the text of *The Anarchiad*, and by authors is meant the collective of poets who actually wrote the piece) to create an imagined present that paralleled recent discoveries and to appropriate the context of those events to relate to the present political environment of the day. Like Phillis Wheatley’s use of the ancient Biblical past in “Goliath of Gath” to relate to her readers through the imagined present, the authors of *The Anarchiad* relate an ancient past, this one obviously fictional, to contemporary events in ways that made it clear to their readers the necessity of listening to the voices found within this poem. The poets presented the text of the poem through twelve intermittent installments in the newspaper, the full text not appearing together as one unified piece until the 1861 edition edited by Luther G. Riggs, with the 1967 Bottorff edition of Riggs’s edition being the next iteration of the text (Bottorff vi, xi). *The Anarchiad* was presented as fragments rather than substantial portions, a logical choice given the space limitations of newspapers as the conclusion to the third installment notes (Riggs 17). Presenting only fragments also provides a convenient excuse for the poets not having to readily produce any substantial amount of an actual epic as Barlow would soon do through *The Vision of Columbus*. Each section appeared successively numbered under the title of “American Antiquities...” with the first section being an introduction to the efforts that would follow, including a small portion of the translation. Most sections of the poem appear with the aid of introductory comments generally to enlighten the reader on that passage’s context within the poem as a whole. This analysis will primarily focus on the use of these introductory notes in their relationship to the imagined present which the

poets create throughout *The Anarchiad*. Through these introductory notes the poets create an imagined present that allows them to, like Wheatley and others who used the imagined past, connect with their readers through the imagined present. Unlike Wheatley, however, the authors of *The Anarchiad* lack the sublimity that they, at times, successfully imitate but do not realize throughout the project as a whole; their political focus unfortunately gets in the way of literary subtlety that, while effective perhaps in their contemporary society, may be at fault for the rarity of future editions of the text. That being said, the poem's relevancy is noted by Bottorff (vi-x), who remarks that there is a validity to "[t]he notion that *The Anarchiad* may have affected public opinion in 1787" (viii). That was clearly the authors' goals as they actively used the imagined present to discuss relevant topics in the beginning of America's transition from under the Articles of Confederation to rule under the Constitution.

The first installment of *The Anarchiad*, appearing on October 26, 1786, serves as an introduction to the project which the poets claim to have discovered and prepared for presentation, though the text is presented as being the product of a sole writer: "I have the felicity to belong to a society of critics and antiquarians, who have made it their business and delight, for some years past, to investigate the ancient as well as natural history of America" (3). The author's claim, for he is not the poet in this context of an antiquarian who is presenting the text of the epic as a historic curiosity that happenstance makes inevitably relevant to contemporary politics, posits that first there is a society of educated persons interested in an apparently deeper history to America than the establishment of Native American tribes and the eventual establishment of European colonies. The author is one of their number, suggesting that the young country is populated with those capable of exploring the historical past from a scholarly perspective, his "business and delight" being to uncover and "investigate the ancient as well as

natural history of America.” He then goes on to list some of the discoveries of his fellow antiquarians which include an interesting catfish and an apparently ageless hermit, before he establishes the context of his own project. Speaking to the newspaper’s readers, the author remarks that “[i]t has happily fallen to my lot to communicate, through the medium of your paper, a recent discovery still more valuable to the republic of letters” (4). Recognizing the context in which he is writing, a part of the “republic of letters” here contextualized in a newspaper item entitled “American Antiquities,” suggests his recognition of the role of the republican form of government, not just the intellectual community connoted by the term, to the new nation, echoing to present-day readers from an ancient past whose continual relevance will subsequently be demonstrated throughout the poem. Moreover, this is a “recent discovery” that, like Freneau and other poets utilizing the imagined present, demonstrates the author’s concern with contemporary events as necessary for accessing in order to communicate effectively through the imagined present to connect with audiences who were themselves effectively becoming imagined communities through sharing the imagined present through literary experiences such as *The Anarchiad*.

The author then relates the discovery process of the text, supposing that it had been discovered among other ancient artifacts: “Happening myself to come upon the spot immediately after this treasure had been discovered, I was permitted to take possession of it, in the name and for the use of our society” (4). Underscoring his intentions on using the text before fully recovering and translating it suggests that the authors, quite imagined here as there was no indication in the text of *The Anarchiad* of authorial identity, intended to present readers with the relevancy of the text prior to reading its content. The desire to use the text for contemporary society through making it relevant demonstrates, through the imagined discovery of a fictitious

text, and its declared value to that society prior to consumption, that American readers in the late 18th century were willing to accept use of the imagined present in its relevancy to the construction of American national identity. American readers accepted the imagined present precisely because it was relevant, or could be made relevant through critical apparatuses attached to the text as the prefatory notes that accompany most of the issues of *The Anarchiad* provide. Here the author suggests that he must inevitably find the discovered text relevant as he possessed it “in the name and for the use of our society,” noting not only that the text belongs implicitly to his entire society as a national treasure, but also it is a text relevant “for the use of our society,” which use will become apparent as the text is partially published in succeeding newspaper installments. The author does not reveal the exact use of the text for his society, but *The Anarchiad*'s consistent references to contemporary events (i.e., Shay's rebellion), presumably whets the readers' appetites for more of the text to be discovered. Implicatively then, *The Anarchiad* is a ready-made part of American literature and culture; like other instances of the imagined past such as Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan*, the ancient epic becomes part of a literary past providing contemporary poets a deep poetic tradition on which to build a contemporary and patriotic American poetics that will both reflect and generate American nationalism. Speaking to his readers as part of “our society” articulates not only to the role of literature to build imagined community, but also to sustain it; the poets presume that the readers of this newspaper share not only a national identity as Americans, but also now are part of a shared imagined community through consumption of their text across the geographic expanse covered through the circulation of the newspaper. The author goes on to remark that, “[a]mongst these relics of antiquity I was overjoyed to find a folio manuscript which appeared to contain an epic poem, complete; and as I am passionately fond of poetry, ancient as well as modern, I set

myself instantly to cleanse it from the extraneous concretions with which it was in some parts enveloped, defaced and rendered illegible” (4-5). As one of “these relics of antiquity,” *The Anarchiad* is now made relevant to the imagined present, representing a literary creation of an ancient people, an interest Joel Barlow would mimic in his use of the Incan civilization in his own epic poems. The author, though, maintains a necessary ambiguity in his introduction of the poem, an ambiguity made necessary given that only selections would be presented to the public to avoid the impossible action of presenting the whole of a non-existent epic poem. The uncovered folio “appears” to contain an epic just as the newly formed group of colonies appears to be a nation, and the incomplete nature of the poem and its focus on the chaotic nature of an earlier people parallels the contemporary unsettled times of the new American nation. Linking the past to the present, the author’s (the author is singular in the text despite the plurality of those involved) love for poetry provides the bridge which brings readers into the imagination of an ancient author, though that imagination is blurred and denied the reader by virtue of “extraneous concretions” which also, in the authors’ perspective, blur the potential direction of the country from its proper course of action. Current events such as minor rebellions and unstable currencies threaten the fabric of the nation from within as threats to liberty equal to the threat of external forces just vanquished in the late war. The present, and the future, of the country remain both “defaced and rendered illegible” and therefore in need of deliverance, in need of being cleared up through a way out of the current situation and brought into the light of a more settled society with a stronger government to counter the threats of anarchy. Presenting the text as only partially legible provides the opportunity to deny the reading public the opportunity to ever view the complete version of the epic, as does presenting the translated selections in the context of a newspaper, “[a]s it would swell this paper beyond the limits” (5). Presenting selections, the

totality of the available verse of *The Anarchiad*, allows the poets to mold the direction of their selections to those ideas which are immediately relevant, as publication in a newspaper also implies an immediate currency to the selections; these are “historical” but also immediately relevant to the reading public, along with other current events found in the newspaper. For the readers’ benefit the author has “cleansed” the text as best he can in order to relate this ancient epic to contemporary readers, an action that denotes the power of editorship over a text in the construction of literary nationalisms. This cleansing is accomplished, “[b]y means of a chemic preparation, which is made use of for restoring oil paintings, I soon accomplished the desirable object. It was then I found it was called THE ANARCHIAD, a Poem on the restoration of Chaos and substantial Night, in twenty-four books” (5, author’s capitalization). Concern for art, and the availability of a “chemic preparation” suggests a familiarity with art in the Americas, and the need for restoration of paintings suggests the availability of American cultural productions, such as those of Benjamin West who found mention in Dwight’s *The Conquest of Canaan* (Book 3.45) as well as Joel Barlow’s *The Vision of Columbus* (Book 7) and *The Columbiad* (8.587). The author possesses the ability to clean up the found text precisely because American cultural productions are numerous enough to necessitate the ready availability of substances used in the restoration of paintings, either those of American or colonial artists whose work was generated in the New World, or used for paintings brought over from Europe. While this may seem a minor detail, its implications are that American cultural productions are noticeable in quality or at the least in quantity, while the desire and ability to restore these paintings suggests the merit of preserving American paintings of quality. The title of the poem is then revealed, and noted as divided into twenty-four books, twice the number of issues in which the actual publication would take place, with the first of the published pieces primarily being the introduction. Whether or not

the authors intended to mimic the number of their own issues to the number of books included in the fictitious epic is unknown, though their subtitle, “a Poem on the restoration of Chaos and substantial Night” clearly indicated their view on the state of contemporary America, while also recalling Milton. The poets here introduce the message of the poem through its title, a story of a nation in disorder and under “substantial night” that necessitated remedying in order to prevent “the restoration of Chaos” that appeared impending for the new nation.

The introduction then posits that, in a reverse of Shields’ myth of Aeneas, a reversal in poetic influences that *The Anarchiad* maintained: “I might also add, that it appears, from incontestable proofs, that this work was well known to the ancients, and that, as it is the most perfect, it has undoubtedly been the model for all subsequent epic productions. Perhaps, in a future essay, I shall attempt to prove that Homer, Virgil, and Milton, have borrowed many of their capital beauties from it” (5). This idea of influence is furthered after quoting a passage from the poem, by the following statement concerning Pope: “I know not whether it is necessary to remark, in this place, what the critical reader will probably have already observed, that the celebrated English poet, Mr. Pope, has proven himself a noted plagiarist, by copying the preceding ideas, and even couplets almost entire, into his famous poem called “The Dunciad”” (7). The authors’ insistence on suggesting the influence of an ancient American text on ancient and modern poets whose works were highly influential in the early American literary republic suggests a desire to bring the origins of poetical archetypes back to America, the origins of particularly influential texts themselves are resultant from originally American influences, and consequently American literature has a deep tradition whose influence is perpetuated through European sources in a reversal of the commonplace complaint of American verse being derivative of European literary traditions. This American epic, “as it is the most perfect, it has

undoubtedly been the model for all subsequent epic productions,” thereby relieved American poets and authors from the burden of the accusatory condemnations of derivativeness and imitation by linking those texts and authors from among whom the American authors are influenced by suggesting that these European sources are in fact derivative from an American source. Despite the author’s proposed “future essay” in which he would presumably prove this broad assertion, no such essay appeared.

Moving on, the author states that he “shall cite a few lines from the eighth book, which is denominated the Book of Vision. So lively are the descriptions following the images, so familiar and present is every object placed to our view, that the reader will, I dare say, be as much astonished as I have been myself, to find that the poet who lived so many centuries ago should have described with such amazing precision events that happened in our own times” (5). Recalling Barlow’s *The Vision of Columbus* and *The Columbiad*, as well as Dwight’s vision of America in Book 10 of *The Conquest of Canaan*, the vision trope is utilized to bring *The Anarchiad* in line with other American poems as well as to provide an excuse for an ancient epic’s “amazing precision” in relationship to contemporary American societal issues which the epic addresses. Drawing on the trope of using the past to discuss the present, *The Anarchiad*’s translator suggests that the ancient poem is relevant to contemporary American society because its author directly foresaw the turmoil that his newspaper readers witnessed around them, this vision from the past of the future is America in the imagined present, a rather convoluted but understandable use of the past given other contemporary epics’ use of the ancient imagined past. The bard’s vision of “events that have happened in our own times” now is relevant and the poem is not just an exploration of an ancient culture, but rather a vision of an imagined present in America. This imagined present, as the author and Riggs note and Riggs’ appendices make

evident, notes which readers contemporary to the poem's original publication may have found unnecessary, serves as a re-articulation of what was already going on in contemporary American society through an ancient lens, one whose fictitious nature necessitated the use of the cover of an ancient epic in order to express political opinions that, like many instances of political expressions of the times, appeared sans the actual author's name (i.e., *The Federalist Papers*). Mimicking Barlow's use of the vision trope, the author continues describing the text as taking place when "[t]he prophetic bard seems to have taken for the point of vision one of the lofty mountains of America, and to have caused, by his magic invocations, the years of futurity to pass before him" (5-6). The text positions the ancient poet on the American landscape and provided him through "magic invocations," a vision of "the years of futurity" which are now the American present. Rooting of the visional experience in the American landscape suggests to the reader that the events are not only appearing first on American soil, but are indeed consequently linked to the current American experience as the author draws from the land to secure an initial sense of identity for the fictional bard and his poetic vision of the American future. This suggests that the imagined present itself is not mere happenstance, but rather the product of an old vision which held roots both in an early form of American literature as well as the American landscape. These two elements become linked through the modern printing of the extracts in a contemporary newspaper where they intertwine and reflect the trend in early American literature to draw a sense of cultural, and then subsequently national, literary identity from the landscape of America, such as in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* or James Fennimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*.

The Anarchiad's positioning of contemporary America represents the imagined present as transformed through the imagination and wit of poets who understood the necessity of imagining

the present through an American lens, rather than say, Dwight's use of ancient Hebrew history. The author then remarks "that several other extracts from these curious manuscripts will be published, should the preceding specimen meet with the applause which I am confident it merits. The blessings of paper money and confusion, as now experienced in Rhode Island, are predicted in the most awful and beautiful manner" (7). Speaking to the paper money crises which occupied the early nation, on which Riggs provides an informative appendix, the author reminds his readers of the immediate relevancy of the text which he will present to his readers, having already referenced Shay's Rebellion in the "preceding specimen" from the poem. After signing off from his article, the author includes a brief post script remarking that "[t]he several printers in Massachusetts are requested to republish this, for the benefit of their kind customers" (7, italics in original). In the days before the Associated Press, the authors recognized and promoted the value of the common practice of newspapers freely reprinting from one another in an effort to spread the effects of their ostensibly political endeavor; the more readers the more influence potentially for their mock-epic, which pushed for a stronger government, a Federalist tenet which may have caused Barlow regret later in life: "[g]iven his evolving Jeffersonian views on political issues, Barlow must have looked back in dismay at having fallen in with such future hardcore Federalists as David Humphreys, ... and John Trumbull ... Barlow clearly chose the side of political stability in 1786" (Hill 9). Regardless of Barlow's personal future thoughts on his participation in *The Anarchiad*, the authors in 1786 hoped that their text would have widespread influence on their readers and thereby affect the course of the American nation.

In the second issue of "American Antiquities" the writer speaks more directly to the imagined present, suggesting that, "[t]hough I have not been able to decipher all the lines of the Vision which evidently alluded to the beautiful scenes of paper money and confusion, now so

gloriously displayed in Rhode Island; yet I thought I ought not to delay to gratify the Connecticut readers with a fragment of the speech which the old Anarch makes to Beelzebub, for the purpose of persuading him to come over and help his faithful friends in our Macedonia” (8), inserting a brief reference to Acts 16:9-10 in which Paul experiences a vision directing him to go to Macedonia to preach the gospel. The author then continues describing the progress of chaos in the country, “since his affairs were in so thriving a posture in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, that his zealous and indefatigable substitutes and apostles might carry them to perfection without any further assistance from him” (8). Relating the ancient vision to America, the author makes it clear that the text of the newly-discovered epic is applicable to the tumultuous events of the new nation; in fact the ancient bard predicts these events as the result not of divine appointment but rather the result of the work of Anarch and Beelzebub, both of whose names carry negative connotations with the former’s meaning obvious and referential to the epic’s subtitle of “Chaos and substantial Night” (5), and the latter’s a Biblical name for Satan. Referring briefly to Paul’s vision in the Book of Acts, the authors reverse the idea of the Biblical vision by positing a reversal of the Christianizing missionary efforts of the Biblical story and leaving the scenario with a darker perspective, while also suggesting that the current events of the time have a negative spiritual connotation. Anarch desires Beelzebub himself to come to Connecticut since “his zealous and indefatigable substitutes and apostles might carry them to perfection without any further assistance from him,” suggesting that the events in Massachusetts and Rhode Island are the results of those in league with the devil. As Timothy Dwight is not an author of this poem, this may be interpreted figuratively. The implication is that recent events are the result of destructive elements which will only spread, and that those who support the actions of the role of paper money (Rhode Island) or the efforts of Daniel Shays and his sympathizers (Massachusetts)

are now elements headed to Connecticut, where *The Anarchiad* originally appeared. Presumably these elements will continue to spread over the entire country, though readers of the “American Antiquities” column would at the very least see that these events were really the result of a long-ago prophetic poetic vision, one that could only be averted through the strengthening of the central government then operating under the Articles of Confederation. Anarch’s plea is for a reverse of salvation (in relationship to the Pauline allegory), a road to social and political perdition that will be accessed if things are left to go as they currently are going in the republic.

Following the selected translation from the epic, the author concludes that issue with further remarks: “I have found, by that part of the manuscript which is still legible, that the poet progresses, agreeably to the rules of his art, in unfolding the catastrophe, by predicting that a majority should be persuaded, by the power of intrigues and sophistry, to refuse a compliance with the *requisitions of Congress*” (11, author’s italics). This ancient American author “progresses, agreeably to the rules of his art,” providing contemporary American poets a precedent on which to continue building a national literature that will sustain what is, at present, an unstable sense of national identity which, with its current troubles, is unsettled and on its way, according to this vision, to being even more unstable. The authors hold little hope for their reading citizens, suggesting that “a majority should be persuaded, by the power of intrigues and sophistry” to rebel against the orders of Congress, thus creating political instability that reflects a deeper social instability at work in the country. This instability provided Daniel Shays with the opportunity and inspiration to rebel against a government itself recently in rebellion against the British, as well as inspiration for a group of poets to reflect their imagined present through an ancient poetic vision in order to counter the confusion of the country with a mirror image of itself in the fictional epic with the hopes of inspiring a reaction against the rise of anarchy. The

authors are also concurrently condemning those who would promote the issuance of paper money and supporters of a decentralized government as promoters of “intrigues and sophistry” in an effort to discredit those with whom the authors disagree. Falling for these deceptions leads to the society in the ancient vision to conclude “that a determination should be formed, and announced to the world, that we will not pay the interest on our foreign or domestic debts— that we should furnish nothing for the support of the federal government— *that we should withdraw ourselves from the Union*— that all government should be prostrated in the dust— that *mobs, conventions, and anarchy*, should prevail for a limited time, and then— ...” (11, author’s italics). With the citizenship withdrawing its support from the government, and then “withdraw[ing] ourselves from the Union,” anarchy is inevitable as the government falls to the rise of “mobs, conventions, and anarchy” in a move that places conventions along the same plane as mobs in order to underscore the author’s views that even organized groups can have the same effects on the political organization of a society as a mob whose lawlessness can only be countered through an intentional push toward a stronger federal government. The author limits his remarks on the epic, suggesting that the poem demonstrates that this lawlessness will progress for a time, and implicatively through his tone he leaves his readership with the idea that perhaps there will be a reversal of this negative trend of politically centrifugal movements, though concluding his summary before leaving his readers with anything definite; this was, after all, only the second of twelve issues. The author then moves away from summarizing the epic and returns to his own observations on the course of the verse: “But I draw the curtain; the picture is too melancholy to be viewed by a patriot eye without prompting the tear of sensibility, and forcing the sigh of sorrow, that THE GLORIOUS TEMPLE OF LIBERTY and happiness which had been erected in these ends of the earth, for an asylum to suffering humanity, should so soon be dissolved” (11-

12, author's capitalization). The forces at work, through mobs and conventions alike, threaten to "[prompt] the tear of sensibility, and [force] the sigh of sorrow" among those who possess "a patriot eye," pictures which the author withholds from his audience because there is no need to show further depictions of the downfall of the country, given the evidence which the author has found legible from the recovered text. Though America is construed as a fane of Freedom, it "should so soon be dissolved" under the political stresses which the vision demonstrates and which *The Anarchiad's* readers would be quick to associate with the events of their own times since the authors leave little to the imagination. This is their use of the imagined present through closely paralleling contemporary political and social events and construing them through use of the imagined present by seeing their contemporary society through the prophecy of a feigned ancient epic. Presenting a sense of nationalism that implicatively invoked the need for a stronger federal government in order to both promote their own political views (Barlow later excepted), as well as in order to present a reaction to the tumultuousness of present events such as confusion provided through the issuance of paper monies and the rebelliousness of farmers, *The Anarchiad's* disjunctive nationalism is one of the most overtly politically engaged uses of the imagined present in its time. Creating part mock-epic, part satire, the authors work to blend genres in order to forcefully utilize the imagined present to clearly demonstrate to their readership that they, as a supposed singular antiquarian, were fully cognizant of the course of events in their time, as well as to propose the need for alternatives to the current of current events in late 18th century America. Through installments in a newspaper, *The Anarchiad* also captured readers' attention through paralleling a trend in archeological discoveries that had also been appearing alongside the flow of other recent news. The author then concludes the second installment with a brief quote from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and another postscript.

The third installment begins by once again addressing the perceived negative consequences of the use of paper money, as opposed to specie: “For it will scarcely be denied, in any part of the United States, that paper money, in an unfunded and depreciating condition, is happily calculated to introduce the long expected scenes of misrule, dishonesty, and perdition” (13). As one of the main targets of the authors of *The Anarchiad*, the role of paper money in its replacement of specie is seen by the ancient bard as a major source for the eventual “misrule, dishonesty, and perdition” that appears to now be consuming the early American republic. The authors assume that, through newspaper reprinting, their message so thinly cloaked under the guise of an ancient epic, is going through out all of the country and that its influence is therefore widespread. The authors then work to position their text in the reader’s imagination, hinting that the project which readers are seeing in the newspaper is the result of the work of more than one person, an idea which was counter-substantiated in the first installment of “American Antiquities” (Riggs 4-5) where the implication is that a singular scholar is at work on the text. This is of interest given that the text is known to be authored by several poets rather than one: “The society of critics and antiquarians ... publicly disclaim all title to any merit in these productions, except that of assiduity in deciphering and preparing them for publication, they would advise the several printers on the continent to peruse them attentively, and to publish at least such pieces as may be applicable to their particular States” (14). Working once again to establish the credibility of the text, the introduction here makes a move necessary to either substantiate the claims that the presented text is ancient, or to over-emphasize that point in order to undermine it, and thereby reinforce the relevancy of the mock-epic to current events by, with a wink to the reader, suggesting the ancient nature of the text all the while presenting selections that make it clear that such an ancient text could not possibly be accurate to contemporary events

without being fabricated in some degree. The enjoyableness of *The Anarchiad* lies precisely in this move to appropriate the imagined present to present a text as ancient that is clearly contemporary, in order to present a sense of the very disjunctive nature of the late 18th century American republic. But under the current guise as the presentation of “critics and antiquarians” instead of the production of witty poets, the discoverers of the text disavow any knowledge of the actions related to the “productions,” the epic’s text, but here they wink again at the reader with precisely the fact that these poetic selections have been carefully produced in order to capture the attention of the reading public.

As “productions” these selections of verse with their introductory and occasional concluding remarks have been carefully designed and tuned to the frequency of current events in order to maximize the relevancy, and thereby popularity and influence, of the text. In order to insure these results, the authors have also suggested in their publication that other newspapers outside of the state of Connecticut, where *The Anarchiad* originally appeared, take selections from the publications which are deemed most “applicable to their particular States,” thereby suggesting the widespread applicability of *The Anarchiad*’s message to states beyond those already mentioned by the authors in the poem and its accompanying critical analyses. The authors self-reflexively suggests that they will, for the sake of the country, keep up their hard work in introducing this ancient poem to contemporary readers: “The society who are, will henceforward prosecute their research with redoubled diligence, only thinking it necessary to engage, on their part, that nothing shall appear sanctioned by them, unfavorable to freedom, literature, or morality” (14). The extraction is then summarized as Anarch addressing “a council of war, consisting of his compeers, his general officers, and counselors of state” (14). This society, however, has indicated its direction in analysis of the text; they suggest that they will

operate editorial control over the text in order to make sure that as they “prosecute their research,” they will do so “only thinking it necessary to engage, on their part, that nothing shall appear sanctioned by them, unfavorable to freedom, literature, or morality.” Barlow, Hopkins, Humphreys, and Trumbull suggest that they will present the text as it is, but that anything in that text that appears to be counter to “freedom, literature, or morality,” will not be “sanctioned by them” though it may indeed appear. This provides an excuse to introduce scenarios in which freedom may be threatened, for example by Anarch and his forces and the evils of paper money, while at the same time providing the excuse that while such material may appear, it does not materialize with their “sanction,” thereby rationalizing the ability of epic to in fact present material that may make some readers uncomfortable. Equating literature with freedom and morality underscores the cultural and social value of literature in early American society, as a humanistic alternative to the verse of religious teachers such as Dwight, and as an expression of the development of American literary nationalism. While the poem itself acts the part of a political pamphlet, it also demonstrates and creates American literary culture, with its political elements consequently promoting a particular brand of Federalist nationalist ideology. Literature implicatively has the power here to not only be comparable to morality and freedom, but also to be both expression and promoter of both of these ideas as well. In this sense, literature can not only reflect, but also produce, imagined communities that move beyond just being audiences of a particular text through being collectively influenced toward a sense of morality, in the case of *The Anarchiad* a political morality, and a greater understanding of America’s newly-won freedom. It also suggests that the authors will selectively influence their readership through only showing approval of that which substantiates their political aims, rather than presenting the epic as the exclusive result of disinterested academic work. At the same time, the authors promote

their text's substance and its relevancy to current events by promoting not only a literature congruent with early American ideals of morality and freedom, but also through working against those social elements they saw as unfit with their vision of America (i.e., Shay's Rebellion).

The third issue's concluding comments acknowledge that the author is directed by his society in some of the content selected for publication in the newspaper. The author then digresses on how the epic depicts those who use paper currency: "[t]hese good people are specified individually [in the unpublished pieces of the epic], in proportion to the sums deposited [of paper money for the payment of debts], as proper to be captains over tens, over fifties, over hundreds, and over thousands, whenever the army shall be raised for the support of anarchy" (17). With the Revolutionary War recently over and the social atmosphere of the nation even more unsettled with recent events, the suggestion of an army being put together for another revolution was not a distant possibility, and the idea that those who supported what is seen by the authors as a destabilizing force are potential leaders in this social breakdown. Here the imagined present effectively draws the reader's attention to the points of the authors in their move to validate a need for a stronger government. The issues addressed are not merely current events; these could be events that lead to the anarchy of the United States, "whenever the army shall be raised for the support of anarchy, or whenever that new state, (whereof the rumor runs so rife on earth,) *the State of Confusion*, shall be properly organized, and admitted into the confederacy" (17, author's italics). There a sense of the inevitability of the future of anarchy, it is a matter of "whenever the army shall be raised" rather than if such an army can be cobbled together; the rebellion of Daniel Shays demonstrated the ease with which that could occur. Admitting to the Union the "State of Confusion," painlessly punning on the idea of the state as a political entity and as a condition of being, allows the disorder of "confusion" to become "properly organized"

and joined to the Confederacy of the United States. Underscoring the weakness of the Articles of Confederation, the authors aim at the inadequacies of the current form of the American government, a move which some have considered influential on the development of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, though there is no definite conclusion concerning that potential influence (Bottorff vii-viii, Hill 9). Nonetheless the authors maintain that the disorder they present in the ancient vision is immediately accessible in the current events of the time, and as they discussed quite unimagined events such as the controversies of paper money and rebellion that are presented as a fulfilled prophecy from ancient times, their implications are that “the army ... for the support of anarchy” might also be a near reality for readers to witness. The fragility of the confederacy is demonstrated not only through the imagined present, filtering current events through fictional ancient prophecy, but also by the potential future developments that the authors foresaw if their readers did not take hold of the lessons the poem suggested. Though only a “rumor,” the potential for further disorder in the nation to be admitted to the Union was, for the authors at least, a very real possibility.

Concluding the issue, the author mentions, apparently in unpublished portions of the epic, those leaders who are seen as oppositional to holding back the roll of the tide of this potential anarchy: “[t]he characters of the Judges of the Supreme Court, of the Governors, Green and Bowen, the Generals, Varnum and Miller, President Manning, Dr. Hitchcock, the Colonels Sherburne and Olney, the officers of the late army, with a long catalogue of names, (comprising all the honest men of the State,) are represented as the antipodes of the preceding” (17), concluding dramatically with a reference to I Kings 19:18: “[t]hese are the thousands who have never bowed their knee to Baal...” (17). Presenting authority figures such as Supreme Court judges and generals, the authors suggest that on the side of reason are those already in positions

of knowledge and authority, and that they are consequently not on the side of those elements seen as negative; the authority figures are presumably against paper money and the social ills which the authors resist through their writings. This number includes those “officers of the late army” who will counter the army of anarchy that is on the rise, while also suggesting the need for armed forces to maintain order, as was the case in the late Shay’s Rebellion. Also present is “a long catalogue of names, (comprising all the honest men of the State,)” since according to the authors, all the dishonest men of the state are busy promoting paper money. The authors’ side is presented as the side of those persons who are upstanding in order to demonstrate that even the positive resolution to the problems seen in the poetic vision is also presented by the ancient bard; it is these who are “antipodes of the preceding” who offer through strong government the salvation necessary to counter portended anarchy. These men are “honest” in contrast to those whom the authors oppose, and they are also “men of the State” in that not only have they worked for various aspects of the state, but they also fully support the established state. The authors then reference the story of Elijah in the Bible when the prophet is told by God, during his feelings of being alone in a tumultuous and sinful nation, that there are many more than himself who have resisted the false god Baal: “[t]hese are the thousands who have never bowed their knee to Baal, and who have never sacrificed their honor or their honesty at the shrine of Paper Money” (17). Conflating the fictitious ancient vision’s take on current events with a Biblical story is, as seen in Timothy Dwight and Phillis Wheatley’s poetry, part of the larger literary culture of the time, though in *The Anarchiad* that conflation is on a smaller scale than others. Yet the authors make an interesting move in that the conflation of their social and political aims with a Biblical story is at the expense of minimizing the Biblical narrative in favor of their own narrative of working against paper money. This is in contrast to others such as Dwight who position the importance of

Biblical narrative in poems in which it appears as a priority over other messages, which tend to become secondary if only in percentage of the text in relationship to that portion of the text which is devoted to Biblical material (or in Dwight's case of *The Conquest of Canaan*, extra-Biblical). For *The Anarchiad*, this reference to the prophet Elijah signals that they feel that their position is one that appears to be isolated in relationship to larger cultural shifts within their society, the move toward paper money leaves them feeling as if they are an ideological minority, an idea they attempt to counter in an move to validate the legitimacy of their arguments against paper money, on their side are "all the honest men of the State." This includes those who have not "bowed their knee to Baal" who is found in the "shrine of Paper Money," suggesting to their readership that the role of paper money is itself also a spiritual issue, though one that has been largely politicized outside of the context of theology and manifested as an expression of a social idolatry rather than a spiritual idolatry. This shift in meaning reflects the larger societal move toward secularity at this time, and relevant given Joel Barlow's gradual personal transformation toward deism, which along with his evolving political views helped end his friendship with Timothy Dwight. While seemingly insignificant, shifting the meaning of a Biblical story into a story wherein paper money replaces Baal, and those who endorse the use of paper money are thereby subscribers to an idol, demonizes those who oppose the authors' views and suggests to readers that American literature is shifting right before their eyes. The shift toward an increasing secularity in literature demonstrated through syncretic literary modes that politicize social and religious imagery into a singular narrative that prioritizes the secular, social, or political (in the case of *The Anarchiad*, all three) narratives and that de-prioritizes the religious, is a necessary shift beneath the social and literary norms as a precedent to the American Renaissance, a shift away from the poetics of Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor toward the poetics of Emerson,

Thoreau, and Whitman. The poets of the early national era, then, are transitional in more than terms of moving from colonialism and into a developing nationhood, but also transitional in a larger move within poetics in North America, reflecting and creating disjunctive visions for the nascent nationalism of the American republic. The poets are also playing on the well-known Biblical statement that “the love of money is the root of all evil” (I Timothy 6:10, KJV) by suggesting that supporters are worshipping at paper money’s shrine, at which they have implicatively “sacrificed their honor or their honesty,” further emphasizing the authors’ belief that relying on paper money fails to reflect the country’s best interests. While history suggests that this motive for *The Anarchiad*’s authors significantly depreciated with the rise in use of paper money, their efforts in 1786 and 1787 capture a picture of their perception of the urgency of the issue at the time, an issue important enough to enshrine as one of the main targets of their epic poem.

The fourth installment of *The Anarchiad* recounts a battle between Anarch and Hesper over the fate of the future. Leaving readers only with concluding remarks, the author comments that “[t]he society of critics and antiquarians cannot sufficiently express their regrets, upon finding the sequel of this description so much defaced that they are not able to decide the issue of this astonishing conflict. The fragments still legible are truly sublime. And we have reason to conjecture that the combat ended with some disadvantage to the old Anarch” (24). Whenever they are in need of not producing any part of the fictional epic, a claim to the illegibility of the text suffices to dismiss any lack of content, though the poets have no problem complimenting their existent work: “[t]he fragments still legible are truly sublime,” as the published extracts are meant to indicate, though given the rather limited afterlife of *The Anarchiad* after its initial appearance, this claim is suspect. However, the authors indicate that they are uncertain about the

future of their society, as in the epic's battle, with the future remaining illegible though hopeful. Their hope is based on seeing the promoters of paper money losing a battle, suggesting that the poem and its introductory and concluding remarks are the substance of the force of their argument against the social forces the authors oppose. Use of the imagined present becomes, for the authors of *The Anarchiad*, the substance of argument; the literary force of an epic, and an ancient one at that, becomes the method by which they attempt to affect social and cultural change. The substance of their argument is not so much of interest in the scope of this project as is the fact that the authors utilized the imagined present in order to communicate their disjunctive vision for the American nation through poetry, along with its critical additions. These additions themselves become part of the poem, especially since they originated with the same authors who wrote the verse. The concluding and introductory remarks interact with the text in a way that makes clear to readers the relevancy both of the issues the authors address, as well as the substance of the verse, and its ancient prophecies of America's present. Intertwining two elements, prose and poetry become one poem which explores the imagined present through the eyes of Barlow, Hopkins, Humphreys, and Trumbull. The critical appendages both situated and guided contemporary readers through positioning the poem as extracts from an ancient and, at times, illegible epic poem. Providing more than summary, these introductions and occasional conclusions assisted readers while also providing the authors the opportunity to make the direction of their writing clear to the audience. *The Anarchiad's* relevancy is reliant on this positioning by the authors in order to not only present an imagined present, but to enact an imagined present as well, as the prose portions of the poem represent the present "critics and antiquarians" who are busy at work on the text in order to communicate it to readers, a work

occurring contemporary to publication, whose appearances are themselves acts of the imagined present.

For the fifth installment, which is described as part of other writings discovered in the same place as the ancient epic, the authors position their production in relationship to long standing poetic traditions: “[s]ongs on love, conviviality, martial achievements, and imperial glory, are common to all nations. The composition of such songs as tend to excite the feelings of patriotism, has been deemed an object of no small importance” (25). It is this object which the poets reflect from long ago to their contemporary readers who, the authors hope, will be inspired with “feelings of patriotism” and the right view on controversial subjects. This “object of no small importance” suggests that the poetic project of *The Anarchiad* is its own form of self-validation, for the purpose of this project beyond its social and political endeavors is also an attempt through the mock-heroic, to create an American poem that, while dissimilar to the scope of other epics such as Dwight’s *The Conquest of Canaan* and Barlow’s *The Vision of Columbus*, serves as a form of the American epic, one that will lead to a future “imperial glory” for America if it addresses the issues the authors find as pressing in their society. This poem, then, is part of the effort to make America great: “[i]f Americans could be taught to revere themselves; if they could be made to realize their consequence, in the scale of existence, so far from being desperate in their situation, the inhabitants of such a country, under such circumstances for happiness, might be considered as the peculiar favorites of heaven, and actors on the most conspicuous theater that ever was allotted to mankind” (25-26). Attempting to move their readers from observes of the contemporary American scene to being one of the “actors” in the scene of the present by motivating readers with the idea that America plays a significant role in the fate of the world, the authors position their poem as part of this nationalistic project. Not only is *The*

Anarchiad addressing contemporary issues and working within a framework of the imagined present and imagined past, it also functions as part of a larger cultural move toward an American nationalism that will raise the status of America in part by raising Americans' expectations of and for themselves by "realiz[ing] their consequence" and consequently acting on that sense of destiny that must be inevitable to those who see themselves "as the peculiar favorites of heaven" in "the most conspicuous theater that ever was allotted to mankind," the United States. Drawing on the Shakespearean metaphor of the world as a theater, the authors position themselves as playwrights whose poetic drama will, they hope, play out for the benefit of the nation and themselves. Recognizing the position of America in a global setting also merits the authors' attention to suggesting not only divine blessing for the country, but also the idea that America is "conspicuous" because of its political experiments as a relatively unique form of government at the time. Asserting Americans "as the peculiar favorites of heaven" works within a long-standing tradition of conflating American national identity with Providential blessing and direction, a move that complicates the earlier discussed use of the Biblical story of Elijah, showing that religion was not abandoned by the poets at this time, but rather appropriated once again, as in the story just mentioned, for nationalistic purposes. A move clearly not unique to its time or since, the poets suggest that if they are the "favorites of heaven," there must be others who are not, either because those who are not have embraced the social ills which *The Anarchiad* opposes, or because they are British. The content of the next selection is then summarized for the reader, a song celebrating America. On this the authors comment, "[s]hould the *taste* of their countrymen, in general, be uncorrupted, as they flatter themselves it is, they expect this song will be introduced into most of the polite circles in the United States. The *literati* have often lamented that America could boast of but few original songs, worthy its imperial dignity" (26, author's

italics). Hoping that their fellow citizens have an “uncorrupted” taste, uncorrupted by the evils of paper money and European influences, the authors express the hope that their text will circulate far beyond the confines of the newspaper page and into the more educated social circles of the country. America, according to the “literati,” possesses “but few original songs, worthy its imperial dignity,” suggesting the need for the authors to create texts which will fill that cultural void through verse that will actively demonstrate the ability of American culture to produce that which is relative to the perceived status that America holds in the view of the authors, a status that, as seen, is relatively high. *The Anarchiad* attempts to place itself as one of the “few original songs” through its claim to ancient status and its use of contemporary events as a means of communicating both through the imagined present and as a source for the imagined present. The text attempts to celebrate America’s “imperial dignity” by providing a source for that dignity through an ancient prophecy, a dignity that will see America through the tumultuous times of the 1780s. Concluding the introduction, the authors remark, “[i]t is expected, if the success of the following should be in proportion to its merits, other compositions of a similar nature may yet be discovered. In the meantime, until the public mind shall be known, no further gratification of the same kind will be offered” (26). Again there is a wink to the reader through the remark that if that issue’s content is found favorable to readers, then “other compositions of a similar nature may yet be discovered,” leaving open the possibility that future installments of “American Antiquities” may appear which follow suit in suiting the public’s taste. Signaling the reflexive nature of newspapers when readers engage with its content through communicating with its publishers and authors, *The Anarchiad* is presented by its authors as a text which is responsive to the desires of its imagined reading community, a move that positions *The Anarchiad* as unique among early American poetic projects which were typically presented as static, excepting for

revised editions issued by their authors, which did not always leave open room for reader contribution to subsequent variations and expansions of the text. Both Philip Freneau and Joel Barlow revised or expanded their poems over time, but not necessarily at the expressed desire of the reading public, as the authors of the mock-ancient, mock-epic suggest as a possibility for their own poem. *The Anarchiad* is an evolving text whose legible portions will only vary as much as the authors desire or need it to, depending on the currents of current events and the desires of their reading community.

Numbers six through ten primarily have introductions preoccupied with summaries of their extracts, with number eight focused particularly on attacking William Williams, stylized William Wimble throughout the poem. Riggs devotes one appendix to discussing the targeting of William Williams by *The Anarchiad*'s poets; Williams served "through different periods in a long term of political service, [in which] he held numerous offices of honor and trust in the gift of the people" (104). The wits' assault on Williams was not the only piece to appear in print attacking Williams (Riggs 105-120), positioning this issue of "American Antiquities" as addressing through satire a specific individual as opposed to the primary focus of other issues, which was on larger issues. Here the poets suggest to the reading public their ability and willingness to engage in individualized political attacks, demonstrating that the imagined present could be used in addressing general issues as well as engaging particulars, even to the point of attacking disliked political figures. This move underscores the adaptability of the imagined present as an avenue for expressing and building disjunctive visions of nationalism as it provides the opportunity to use literature, namely satire and mock-epic, to actively engage with contemporary people and events in ways that allow for those people and events covered in the poem to become part of the literary project themselves, though in the case of Williams, quite

unwillingly and unwittingly. This also occurs in the imagined past when, for example, in Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan*, the poet interjects various Revolutionary War heroes into a narrative of the ancient Hebrews conquering Canaan in order to make the text relevant to his contemporary readers and to emphasize the nationalistic project which his epic had become.

Issue ten, appearing on May 24, 1787 near the beginning of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, summarizes its selection from the ancient epic: "by what is legible at the close of the poem, appears to establish the Anarch in his dominion of the new world, Hesper, with a solicitude and energy becoming his high station and the importance of the subject, makes his last solemn address to his principal counselors and sages, whom he has convened at Philadelphia" (54). In an effort to motivate those in the Constitutional Convention, the poets suggest that their actions are the product of an ancient prophetic epic, and that they are there under the bidding of Hesper who is in opposition to Anarch(y). In light of the tumultuousness of recent years, the Constitutional Convention has the ability to redirect history by steering the nation away from dissolution despite the direction of recent events which "appears to establish the Anarch in his dominion of the new world," something the wits wanted their readers to take into account, especially if they happened to be delegates to that Convention. The future is uncertain, despite the predictions of the ancient bard writing from contemporary Connecticut, given that the authors suggest that not all of the story is legible; what they published here is "what is legible at the close of the poem," meaning that the entire end is not clear, as it certainly was in May of 1787. Yet the tone is hopeful given that Hesper's speech is "to his principal counselors and sages, whom he has convened at Philadelphia," signaling to readers the respected nature of those gathering delegates who are "principal counselors and sages;" their work will be guided by wisdom and will work against the present course of Anarch(y). Leaving little room to

the reader's imagination, the poem's convening occurs conveniently in Philadelphia, with which readers would associate the Convention. Showing their support for the Convention, the authors posit this event as the work of Hesper and, despite the lack of clarity in the future, "the importance of the subject" merits the poem's, and readers', attention to the progression of events in order to direct the public to the challenging environment and the necessity of moving the nation forward away from Shay's Rebellion and other challenges.

The eleventh and penultimate installment of "American Antiquities," titled "THE LAND OF ANNIHILATION" (64, authors' capitalization), provides a selection from the 17th Book of *The Anarchiad* and begins with a brief discussion of various mythologies concerning the underworld and spirit world since "[the] critics are agreed that the intervention of gods, demons, and other supernatural agents, is absolutely necessary in epic poetry. The works of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, are indebted to this machinery for their brightest ornaments" (64). *The Anarchiad* is not alone in exploring the supernatural; it too "could not be deficient in this necessary ornament" (65). Continuing the move made in the first installment of "American Antiquities," the author suggests the influence of ancient North American culture on European influences (Riggs 5). While other parts of the poem have been found illegible, "[t]he society of critics and antiquarians have successfully deciphered the Seventeenth Book of THE ANARCHIAD, in which the poet makes a descent into the infernal regions. It is curious to observe how closely he has been followed (as, indeed, might be naturally expected) by Homer, Virgil, and their successors in modern ages" (65, author's capitalization). It might be noted that in the first issue of "American Antiquities" when the authors suggested that *The Anarchiad* held influence on other well-known poetic epics, that Milton was mentioned along with Homer and Virgil. But in the eleventh installment, Milton is dropped from the second list of poets, though

included in the first as quoted above. One possible explanation is that during the political processes that were taking place in the development of the American governmental system, the role of ancient Greek and Roman cultures was increasingly relevant to political developments, and therefore merited inclusion again in the project. Regardless of the reason for dropping Milton, perhaps the author forgot him in the moment of writing, the argument once again suggests that an American text held influence on European literary traditions before European texts influenced contemporary American literature, thereby suggesting that the latter hierarchy of influence is simply an influence of ancient American literary culture on contemporary American literary culture, filtered through, rather than originating from, European sources. The eleventh installment's concern with "a descent into the infernal regions" which the society has "successfully deciphered" through use of the imagined present, demonstrates the authors' ability to decipher for their readers the "infernal" state of affairs in contemporary America, and the necessity of countering this "descent" with a more optimistic vision found through the Constitutional Convention.

In the twelfth and final installment of "American Antiquities," the authors again provide extracts from the 17th Book of *The Anarchiad*, as the ancient poet's journey "progress[es] through the shades, the Bard is attended by an ancient seer, the MERLIN of the West, who explains to him the nature of the country, and the character of its inhabitants" (71, author's capitalization). This "account of the various regions and circles ... has in many parts been copied by the famous Italian poet, *Dante*" (71, author's italics), which the contemporary authors then use to support the idea that this American poem influenced both Dante and Virgil. Making this ancient subterranean journey and vision applicable to 18th century American readers, the authors next declare "[t]hat part of the Book which we shall now transcribe, contains the description of

many illustrious personages who were to make their appearance on earth, both in Europe and America, in the eighteenth century from the Christian era” (71-72). Making the text increasingly relevant to contemporary readers by suggesting that the bard has foreseen not just events, but specific people as well, positions the poem as an oracular text which speaks more broadly than to just the American cultural experience, going so far as to also include historical European individuals. Trans-historical and trans-cultural, *The Anarchiad* offers readers its own version of history for contemporary American readers. On his journey, the ancient bard “beholds, with admiration, the souls of those learned sages to whom we are since indebted for the discovery that in this part of the globe ... that man has wonderfully degenerated in courage, activity, and other marks of virility; and that “*America has never produced one good Poet, one able Mathematician, or one man of Genius in one single Art, or one single Science,*”” (72, author’s italics), which the authors then identify as a quote from Abbe Raynal and for which Riggs attaches an explanatory footnote to contextualize the Frenchman’s statement. The ancient poet admires those who have regarded the people of North America, along with the animal and plant life (Riggs 72), as inferior to those found in Europe, thereby reiterating long-held ideas about the “degenerated” nature of the American continents. Doing this positions the ancient seer among those who do not see America as holding any significant potential, as a nation worthy of falling to the rule of the current incarnation of Anarch, here construed as the social forces behind Shay’s Rebellion and the move toward paper money as a viable currency. *The Anarchiad* is meant to motivate its readers to action in favor of the positions supported by the author, rather than being presented as merely the publication of an ancient text for the sake of historical interest. The poem also suggests that Raynal’s quote is not valid by the poem’s very existence; Raynal’s words appear here, ironically, with the appearance of extracts from an epic poem, the work of

four contemporary poets, thereby negating the substance, at least as far as concerns poets, of the quote. Even Americans would support the assertion of a lack of talent in America, when “the seer took occasion to inform the bard how remarkable some of his own countrymen would become, for being the humble copyists and echoes of these transatlantic imitators ...” one of whom, identified as Robert Morris by Riggs, “should arise in process of time, who, never having enjoyed, the superior advantage of perusing that astonishing work of genius, THE ANARCHIAD, or any other American poem, should dogmatically decide, in his capacity of Senator, that America never had produced a good poet” (76-77, author’s capitalization). Riggs footnotes this quote with a remark on Robert Morris who “had traduced American genius, in the Assembly of that State [Pennsylvania], by endorsing the assertion of M. Raynal” (76). The authors echo the commonplace criticism of American writers as imitative by reinforcing that idea, but here ironically through a criticism of an American critical of American literature; the critic is himself the imitator rather than the writers, whose apparent absences from the cultural scene are contradicted by the authors of “American Antiquities” through their self-referential remark on *The Anarchiad* along with “any other American poem,” here possibly referring to works by Joel Barlow, Lemuel Hopkins, David Humphreys, and John Trumbull among others. American critics of American literature are the ones who are imitative, while the presence of poems such as *The Anarchiad*, “that astonishing work of genius,” belie the claims of those such as Raynal and his “transatlantic imitator” Robert Morris. The authors have a very high view of American poetry, in part because they are poets and apparently good patriots as well, because they suggest that if Morris should see their own poem here, “or any other American poem,” that this will affirm that America has indeed “produced a good poet.”

The ancient bard's subterranean tour includes, "[t]he next group of souls who pass in review, [which] consists of those wise civilians who have generously wasted such fountains of ink in endeavoring to instruct poor America in her own history and politics" (80). These "wise civilians" are not really wise since they "have generously wasted such fountains of ink" in their efforts to "instruct," efforts that have failed in the eyes of the authors. Contained below the earth, these critics and instructors of America are implicatively in a type of hell because their criticisms and observations of America have proved incorrect. Those who oppose the optimism of American nationalism are listed as though they have failed, which in the eyes of the authors is certainly true. It is the authors of *The Anarchiad* who are now those who "instruct poor America in her own history and politics," which has been part of the endeavor to begin with, along with the desire to influence contemporary political processes in favor of a stronger government. *The Anarchiad* provides Americans with a deep "history" that, like Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan*, suggests a deeper cultural past on which to construct the present, a past on which to build a sense of identity and to draw cultural and literary motifs from. The tumultuousness of the ancient past, seen through the extracts of the poem, also suggests to contemporary American readers the possibility that their own republic is frail. With references to Shay's Rebellion and the troubles of paper money, the authors also "instruct" their nation in "politics" which others have effectively failed to do in the eyes of the authors. *The Anarchiad* is in part a text intended to counter the effects of European critics of America by providing an alternative cultural history from which to draw, one that the authors posit to precede, and be a source for, influential European authors such as Virgil and Homer. In doing so, *The Anarchiad* is positioned as a prime mover of texts and cultural influences, thereby weakening American critics of American literary culture as imitative.

The final prose commentary in *The Anarchiad* summarizes its following verse selection: “[i]n the next department appear the souls of those European historians and biographers who have amused their readers with many fairy tales, the scenes of which they have had the complaisance to lay in America. We are sorry the length of this number prevents our enlarging upon this part of the Book. The seer enters into a detail of their falsehoods, with great accuracy and minuteness” (81). The author then relates two specific texts whose inaccuracies the ancient bard is said to have engaged, before, “[h]e concludes with the following sublime address to his shade, which has been closely copied by Pope, in one of his smaller poems” (81). Following these comments, the authors conclude their final episode of “American Antiquities,” and consequently the text of *The Anarchiad*. Insuring that they are thorough, the authors suggest the eternal damnation of those who have misrepresented America and used it as a place to set their “fairy tales” weighed down with “falsehoods,” of which there are too many for the authors to present to their readers in the confines of a newspaper. It is their purpose here, within the space they do have, to underscore that European depictions of American culture and citizens are inaccurate and therefore untrustworthy, necessitating for readers who want accurate depictions to look in American texts, with *The Anarchiad* providing a starting point for redeeming the perceived truth of the imagined American present from the perceived falsity of European versions of the imagined present. The authors focus specifically on those who are “European historians and biographers” to undermine the perspective of types of texts which are typically factual, thereby destabilizing the works of European authors as reliable sources, at least for American readers, for information on the American nation and its histories and biographies; in the unpublished portions of the poem here referred to, the authors inform readers that the seer who is guiding the bard on his tour focuses specifically on a history of Connecticut and another

history of the Revolutionary War, with its allegedly fictional content concerning George Washington (Riggs 81). Focusing on a history of the Revolutionary War indicates a desire to have narrative control over the details of such an important and foundational American experience, namely the fight for independence and self-government, the latter basis being one which was of particular concern to the authors of *The Anarchiad* as they addressed the issues, already mentioned, that they saw as threatening that ability to continue effectively self-governing their nation. Discrediting what they see as European inaccuracies concerning the American nation, the authors direct their own fictional epic to establishing an American cultural precedent that not only positions American culture as prior to, and influential on, European thinkers, but also one that is depicted incorrectly by European sources, the latter reason working to discredit European authors and thereby establish a greater sense of credibility, and originality, to American authors and their productions. This is done with irony given the hints the authors drop to their readers to indicate that the substance of “American Antiquities” is fictional itself, rather than based off an authentic archeological discovery as the text positions itself. The authors conclude with a selection of verse that just happens, in part, to have been imitated by Pope, whose influence on early American poets has been widely observed, including influence on John Trumbull (Bowden 17), Philip Freneau (Leary 22-24), and Phillis Wheatley (Shields, *Wheatley's Poetics* 11-13). Once again suggesting the foundational role of an ancient American poetics for European literary traditions, the authors conclude their work in verse, fitting given that the text of *The Anarchiad* is an epic poem; though the introductory and concluding, and in the final installment of the text, the interjected prose paragraphs, connect these selections of verse together and make them cogent for contemporary readers. As a mock-epic poem, *The Anarchiad*

appeared in an era when several poets were attempting to create not just an epic poem, but more specifically *the* great American epic.

It is not clear whether any more editions were planned beyond the twelve installments that appeared between 1786 and 1787, perhaps the course of the Constitutional Convention alleviated the authors' fears at the time to inspire the ancient bard to stop foreseeing the imagined American present. Nonetheless, its appearance at a time the nation was experiencing a great deal of unsettling cultural and social movements seems to be reflective in the poem's title with its clear echo of the idea of anarchy. This seems fitting given that its next appearance was in 1861 as America entered the Civil War, and then with its second appearance in print in 1967, as the nation moved deeper into involvement in Vietnam. In 1786 and 1787 the country was just finding its footing politically, and *The Anarchiad's* appearance and contributions to the political discussions of the era signal the ability of the American literary scene to adeptly respond to its contemporary culture through use of the imagined present, as well as the ability to use literature to engage with the evolving political scene in ways that reached readers throughout the nation via newspapers and the encouragement for newspapers to republish the pieces, which would have occurred regardless of the encouragement. *The Anarchiad's* appearance as a serial in a newspaper underscores the effectiveness of using the imagined present in literature. By responding to recent social events, the authors could not only entertain their readers but also communicate with them on subjects that could be read about in nearby columns, thereby presenting a literary text that was not only reflective of the current zeitgeist, but also responsive to that cultural environment. Use of the imagined present allows for this flexibility in application of the poem, and the serial nature of its publication permitted the poets to navigate their endeavor

through the changing of the times and to control their narrative as a means of maintaining the relevancy of their text to readers.

The imagined present, as seen, can draw from the imagined past, as the examples of Wheatley's "Goliath of Gath" and *The Anarchiad* make clear, while the imagined past may interject elements from the imagined present, with Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan* demonstrating this use of the present when discussing the past. The inter-relationship between the imagined past and the imagined present is that these two elements can draw freely from each other, while the imagined future is typically focused on just potential futures, provided within the context of an imagined present, though there are times when the imagined future is presented within the context of an imagined past, such as occurs in Joel Barlow's *The Vision of Columbus*. This interconnectedness of the imagined past and imagined future with the imagined present suggests that the imagined present is always of most importance to the author, of the three principal chronotopes considered in this study. Use of the imagined present is essential for authors to connect with their readers through use of the immediate relevancy of the present re-conceptualized from reality into the imagined present; that is the present is reflected and reoriented through the imagination and leaves the present fundamentally different than it is outside of the imagined present; the same is also true relative to the imagined past and the imagined future. Seeking to lift the nation above its present obstacles, poets utilized the imagined future to suggest to their readers a secular hopefulness in the potential of the nation to become greater than it was, to rise above its disorder and challenges. The imagined future also appeared in late 18th and early 19th century American poetry as the nation navigated its way from British rule, through the troubled 1780s, and on into the nineteenth century, now guided by the newly written Constitution.

5. THE IMAGINED AMERICAN FUTURE

The imagined future represents the most commonly discussed of the three chronotopes presented in this study; the imagined future presents itself as the most forceful of all three areas of past, present, and future. Use of the imagined past allows authors to delve into events and persons of the past in order to create literature that connects readers with a deeper past than they would otherwise experience. This allows for the development of a sense of history which readers can identify with and call their own, in part because the text appears by an author of their own nationality, so that trans-cultural and trans-historical writings inherently become linked to the time and culture in which they appear, regardless of geographical or temporal distance. John Shields' idea of *translatio cultus* is relevant here as ideas from, in Shields concept, the Old World become rearticulated in the New World, though I expand this across all available times and cultures. In *The Anarchiad*, the contemporary text becomes an imagined articulation that appears to be based on an actual culture from another time period. The imagined present provides authors with the ability to use their contemporary environment in ways that connect with readers through a sense of the immediate applicability of their content; the imagined present not only reflects, but also rearticulates the contemporary zeitgeist. That the imagined present appears within the movement of a culture, makes texts using the imagined present part of that present, part of the cultural environment which it draws from. The imagined present can both comment on and challenge contemporary events, especially when used in a political fashion. The

imagined present can also be combined with the imagined future in order to present a contemporary environment that possesses a future rooted in its present; that is, the imagined present can easily transition into the imagined future.

The imagined future uses a basis in the present to present a purely speculative, usually hopeful, idea of the potential future of the nation. This basis is often presented as uncomplicated, providing an idea of future glory and success which contemporary readers may look forward to regardless of the troubles of the past or the trials of the present. The imagined future found a readily receptive audience in late 18th century America and into the early 19th century as well. Poets such as Philip Freneau, Phillis Wheatley, and Timothy Dwight, among many others, contributed to what has collectively become known as “the Rising Glory of America” genre (Wood 547), which John McWilliams has called “oratorical prophecy” (Elliot 159), which proliferated from, to borrow loosely R.W.B. Lewis’ term, “the hopeful party” (27) in early America. In terms of nationalism, the imagined future provides authors the opportunity to present readers with visions of success and glory which support the efforts of the present in the establishment and building of America, as well as provide blueprints for the future of the nation, whether meant simply to provide hope for a better future, or as a road map for national success. As blueprints, these visions of future glory essentially became poetic manifest destinies pushing the nation forward, or at least those who read the poem. Given the constant push for national expansion in the late 18th century and onward, poets of these rising glory poems reflected elements of their culture, and then gave literary expressions to these desires, similar to the way in which poets both reflect and respond to contemporary events through the imagined present.

The imagined future was often stylized as a vision, which implies a spiritual element to the poems’ content, a humanistic, or at times divine, prophecy that embodies a tone akin to those

found in sacred texts. Providing a sense of authority to the tone of the poems through use of this spiritual implication suggests that the futures seen on the poems' pages offer positive outcomes to the contemporary trajectory of the nation. Rising glory poems offer visions as necessary results of hard work or divine intervention. These poems are often focused exclusively on positive futures alone, with little hint at the struggles the nation would face ahead as it moved away from the Revolutionary War. There are at least two reasons for this, the first and most pragmatic is that readers of the new nation would most likely only want to see texts that reinforced their hopeful views of the country, and a prediction of future greatness would make the recent sacrifices of the war appear worth the future glory promised for the nation. The second reason that authors chose positive views was to demonstrate their patriotism through optimistic visions that affirmed the purpose of the nation as beyond merely winning independence from Britain. In order to do so, suggesting a successful future provided readers with something to look forward to, a sense of hopefulness not only for themselves as individuals, but also as a collective imagined community. Several poets constructed rising glory of America poems, including Philip Freneau, Phillis Wheatley, and Timothy Dwight in a second, and final, epic poem.

Freneau's Rising, Glorious America

The most famous of the rising glory poems is "The Rising Glory of America," a poem originally composed by Henry Hugh Brackenridge and Philip Freneau for their graduation from Princeton in 1771, though Freneau eventually edited the poem to reflect only his authorship (Pattee xx-xxi). Fred Lewis Pattee, Freneau's definitive editor of the early twentieth century, remarks: "The "Rising Glory" had been written conjointly by Brackenridge and Freneau. Although the former was given on the Commencement programme full credit for the exercise, it was surely Freneau who conceived the work and who gave it its strength and high literary value"

(xxi). Brackenridge later suggested that his own contribution to the original poem of 1771 was limited: “Brackenridge in later years confessed to his son that “on his part it was a task of labor, while the verse of his associate flowed spontaneously” (Pattee xxi). The poem was printed in Philadelphia the following year, and in 1786 Freneau isolated his own portion for publication in the first edition of his works” (Pattee xxi). Freneau’s later edits to “The Rising Glory of America” made it “practically a new poem” (Pattee xxi), and like Pattee’s edition of Freneau’s poetry, this study will draw from the 1809 collection of Freneau’s poetry in order to insure use of a later edition of the poem. Subtitled “[b]eing part of a Dialogue pronounced on a public occasion” (Freneau 66), “The Rising Glory of America” follows a conversation between several characters: Acasto, Eugenio, and Leander, who at times dryly cover a host of topics related to the American continents and the American nation. The argument is provided here to offer a brief summary of the poem: “The subject proposed—The discovery of America by Columbus—A philosophical enquiry into the origin of the savages of America— The first planters from Europe— Causes of their migration to America—The difficulties they encountered from the jealousy of the natives— Agriculture descanted on—Commerce and navigation—Science—” and not forgetting the focus of the poem’s title, “Future Prospects of British usurpation, tyranny, and devastation on this side the Atlantic—The more comfortable one of Independence, Liberty, and Peace—Conclusion” (66). Like several of Freneau’s poems, Native Americans play a role in the American nation, but primarily here as relevant to America’s past, though this is covered over in part with a euphemistic suggestion that it was “jealousy” which served as a source for early tensions between Native Americans and European settlers. Like Dwight’s and Barlow’s works, Freneau does not focus exclusively on the future of the nation, instead touching on the imagined past as a way to both provide more subject matter for his poem, as well as to

contextualize the past from which the country will rise, thereby providing an imagined historical past to the nation. More specifically, as in Joel Barlow's *The Columbiad*, there is an inquiry concerning the history of the North American continent, suggesting the deep need in contemporary American society in the late 18th century to establish an imagined American past as a predicate for producing an imagined future. And like Timothy Dwight in *Greenfield Hill*, Freneau acknowledges the importance of agriculture to the establishment of a successful present. Covering the recent Revolutionary War allowed Freneau to make his 1771 poem more contemporary in later versions, and then to suggest the future of "Independence, Liberty, and Peace" in order to provide an optimistic future for the nation.

While Freneau relies on Christian imagery throughout the poem, he intentionally creates a tension in the dialogue between Eugenio and Leander which underscores Freneau's spiritual and philosophical development, a relevant concern given his deistic beliefs alongside some use of Christian imagery. Early in the poem Eugenio suggests a Biblical explanation for the presence of Native Americans, linking Native Americans with the story of Peleg in which the earth's continents were divided (Genesis 10:25), asserting that the Biblical story, though not his addition to it, is from "the Hebrew seer's unerring pen" (63). Leander counters this assertion of "unerring" with describing Eugenio's ideas as "sophistry" before going into a lengthy alternative suggestion divorced from any religious views. At first this may appear minor, but it emphasizes that Freneau, though finding Christian imagery useful as a poet, did not subscribe to those beliefs as a deist. Providing a rebuttal to Eugenio's assertion of Christian faith not only offers Freneau an opportunity to disassociate with Christianity while still using religious imagery, it also introduces a poetic counter-narrative to authors such as Dwight's openly expressed Christian faith. This counter-narrative suggests a naturalistic line of reason based off migration and even

the idea of lost sailors as the source of Native Americans (104-117). The poem's discussion moves past this and onward in history to cover European immigration to the New World. Eventually Freneau also references George Washington briefly, remarking that "[a] WASHINGTON among our sons of fame / Will rise conspicuous as the morning star / Among the inferior lights" (204-206, poet's capitalization). George Washington's appearance here, though not as prominent as in Dwight's dedication to *The Conquest of Canaan*, illustrates one of the ways in which Freneau transitioned the poem from a discussion of the American past into its present in order to bring the reader along a journey through the establishment of the nation. Next the poet contrasts America to its European motherlands. In contrast to Europe's behavior, Freneau declares that "... we boast no feats / Of cruelty like Europe's murdering breed— / Our milder epithet is merciful" (221-223). Prioritizing a glorification of America, and an improvement over historical facts, Freneau here completely ignores the role of African American slavery and Native American genocide, preferring as most of his contemporary readers would have, to view the new nation as "merciful" rather than its far more complicated reality, though he takes time to mention "Spain's more rapacious tribes" (228). Continuing his glorification of the American present, Freneau praises Benjamin Franklin: "...even now we boast / A *Franklin*, prince of all philosophy, / A genius piercing as the electric fire" (324-326, poet's italics). Freneau then declares Franklin is "the rival" (328) of Britain's Newton and goes on, perhaps presumptuously, to boast "[t]his is the land of every joyous sound, / Of liberty and life, sweet liberty!" (329-330). America, even in the late 18th and early 19th centuries did not have to wait until generations had passed, Freneau implies, for it to make manifest a vision of a rising glory; that glory was already being raised through the members of the nation such as Franklin who could compete on an intellectual plain with some of the world's historically greatest thinkers.

Additionally, the country was already fully equipped to go forward in time and succeed because it was, unlike European nations, a nation that experienced the “joyous sound” that comes from “...liberty and life, sweet liberty! / Without whose aid the noblest genius fails, / And Science irretrievably must die” (330-332). The presence of liberty leads to life, and this allows for the flourishing of an intellectual present that will allow America to excel, both with men such as the “prince of all philosophy,” Franklin would have agreed, to “the noblest genius” and “Science,” without which the nation cannot progress. In contrast to Timothy Dwight’s religious humanism, that saw the necessity of combining Christianity and hard work, Freneau sees political liberty as the basis on which the nation has already succeeded, and on which the nation may build its future. Liberty provides the social milieu in which those with intellectual powers may move forward in their thinking and concurrently propel American science and society forward. Freneau’s deistic humanism combines the power of humanism and nature (through man’s understanding of science) to build the future of the nation into a prosperous country, apart from Dwight’s Christianity.

America’s future begins to take shape as the poem turns from the present to the centuries ahead: “And time anticipates, when we shall spread / Dominion from the north and south, and west, / Far from the Atlantic to Pacific shores” (340-342). Foreseeing continental expansion, Freneau predicts the “spreading” of American “[d]ominion” across North America, from ocean to shining ocean. The rise of America necessitated some goal to reach, a future “glory” to achieve, which for Freneau was the expansion of learning through science which would progressively lead to an expansion of the nation’s territory, as the poem progresses toward a distinctly Christianized millennial time similar to Dwight’s vision. For Freneau, however, that millennial period will not be dominated by the reign of Jesus Christ, but rather by human

progress. Providing an end in a vision of the future is essential for poets who incorporate the imagined future in that if there is no end goal, the vision would be unmanageable because it would possess no terminal parameters, excepting the limits of the author's imagination. The imagined future, perhaps the most plastic of imagined chronotopes, presents authors with the ability to mold a future for their readers who might not otherwise consider what the future holds for themselves individually, much less the collective future of the imagined community of a nation. For those who recently came through the Revolutionary War, the promise of a glorious future provided perspective on the sacrifices which the war extracted from Americans. As an imagined chronotope, the future glory of America could have been anything which Freneau desired, dismal or hopeful, prosperous or economically depressed, but sensitive to his readers' expectations, or overly optimistic himself as he was wont to be concerning his literary career, Freneau presents readers with a hopeful and economically successful future for the nation that is meant to demonstrate the validity of the recent war efforts as well as to instill a hope in readers concerning the future direction of their country. Like *The Anarchiad*, Freneau's initial edited version which removed Brackenridge's contributions, appeared in 1786, a time of cultural and political turmoil when the nation began transitioning away from the relative governmental instability under the Articles of Confederation and the social instability exemplified through Shay's Rebellion. Freneau's vision of the future of America, discussed below, is distinctly Christianized, that is it strongly echoes Christian eschatological millennial ideas. While this does not reflect Freneau's personal beliefs, it indicates that he was sensitive to the popularity of Christian imagery in discussing the future and willing to expand his imagery in order to more fully explore his own sense of poetic creativity. Concurrently, use of Christian imagery reflects Freneau's desire to connect to his contemporary readers, many of whom were either Christian or

very familiar with Christian imagery. By drawing on familiar themes, Freneau accesses the imagined community of the nation by connecting with readers in terms that would have been familiar to them, as opposed to drawing as deeply from, for example, Native American religious imagery. This evidences Freneau's understanding of his readership as not merely an audience, but also as an imagined community. By drawing from themes and motifs familiar to his readers, Freneau not only responds to his cultural milieu, he furthers this milieu by perpetuating the millennial theme, with the slight against Biblical inerrancy cited earlier in the conversation between Eugenio and Leander undermining the theology behind this millennial theme, while not dismissing the idea of a future time of peace. While still maintaining the Christian imagery of a millennial future, that future for Freneau is a way to connect with his readers within the imagined community of Christianity as Christian imagery provides a bridge between his literary vision for the future of the United States and a readership already familiar with Christian theology. The imagined future becomes the connection between these two disjunctive systems of belief, Freneau's deism and his readers' Christianity, or in the case of some readers, those at the very least familiar with Christian ideas. The imagined future reflects on and incorporates, at least some of, the theological diversity of early America while also providing a future that grows beyond an exclusively Christian tradition, despite the poem's appearance to the contrary in its concluding stanzas. Through the ability of authors to use the imagined future to not only encompass different perspectives, but also to provide a future goal to work toward, the imagined future demonstrates flexibility. Unlike the imagined past or imagined present, the imagined future provides an opportunity to suggest an eventual unity to diverse religious and philosophical views in a future time that also displaces the weight of finding cultural common ground on which to build national unity from the present and into an indefinite time in the future. The imagined

future can also, but not necessarily always, excuse present struggles, though as Dwight demonstrates in *Greenfield Hill*, the United States had several issues such as slavery and the mistreatment of Native Americans to address before it would be capable of moving forward. The imagined future can be used to forgive the present actions of a society by providing an absolution of a glorious future, persecutions and discriminations can be rationalized as steps toward a peaceful time in the future when such things will not occur, without addressing their occurrence in the present. The imagined future excuses the present by focusing not on grim contemporary realities, but rather on the glorious future promised if the author ignores present challenges. These challenges can also be ignored for the sake of drawing readers' attention away from the present in order to suggest a need to move forward, or to provide a hope that there is something better than the present, whether that hope is an afterlife or a successful nation.

For Freneau, the imagined future will consist of peace and prosperity experienced through his perspective on the Christian millennial kingdom, drawing from the story of a New Jerusalem found in the Book of Revelation: "And when a train of rolling years are past, / ... / A new Jerusalem, sent down from heaven, / Shall grace our happy earth,— perhaps this land" (436-439). As with most who predict the future, Freneau's timeframe is necessarily ambiguous, though here he implies that with time it will come to pass. Dwight, on the other hand, suggests that certain things are necessary for a successful future to take place, including addressing social sins and hard work. But "The Rising Glory of America" takes its cue from Revelation 21 by suggesting that the heavenly city of New Jerusalem will descend to the earth at the advent of a hopeful future. Harkening back to the Puritan myth of the New World as a new Eden, Freneau briefly suggests that America may itself be the site of the New Jerusalem. Given America's being "...the land of every joyous sound, / Of liberty and life, sweet liberty!" (329-330), it would

only be inevitable for Freneau in his prophecy of a “rising glory” for America to suggest that America might be the place where the heavenly city descends. Freneau’s American New Jerusalem takes on a distinctly Biblical tone by declaring that “[m]yriads of saints, with their immortal king [i.e., Christ], / To live and reign on earth a thousand years, / Thence called *Millennium, ...*” (441-443, poet’s italics). In Protestant theology the saints would encompass all those identified as Christians; Freneau also unmistakably refers to Christ by mentioning the “immortal king,” though he subtly does not capitalize king in an indication of not agreeing with the substance of the theology and scripture behind the Biblical symbolism he incorporates. By using Christian imagery and the theme of an ideal millennium, Freneau uses Christian imagery not with the purpose of endorsing this belief system, but rather to appropriate the idea of a future time of peace and prosperity that would be readily accessible to the imaginations of his readers. Rather than promoting Christianity, Freneau does not explicitly name Christ as the king in line 441, though there is no one else it could logically be in the context of Freneau’s Christian imagery; the poet uses this imagery as a way to describe a future which America might experience in its future glory, rather than taking a distinct theological position. As noted previously in the discussion of Eugenio and Leander’s exchange, the statements of this poem occur in the context of a conversation in which diverse views are expressed. Given Freneau’s deism, it must be supposed that that which he places in the conversation reflects to some degree his perspective on the nation so that, while certain views such as Christian eschatology find their way into the poem, this occurs in part because of the cultural popularity of such motifs rather than the author’s personal subscription to them. While certainly many authors such as Timothy Dwight and Phillis Wheatley were personally committed to Christianity and reflect their faith in

their works, other poets such as Freneau used Christian imagery out of convenience rather than agreement with those views.

While he positions his use of Christian imagery within a Biblical context (“So sung the exiled seer in Patmos isle” (437), i.e., John the Revelator), the overall trajectory of the concluding stanza is not toward a Christian millennium, but rather toward a future of human perfection. Christian imagery plays an important role in developing this idea when Freneau goes on to declare that “... Paradise anew / Shall flourish, by no second Adam lost,” (443-444). Unlike the first Eden, here “[n]o dangerous tree with deadly fruit shall grow, / No tempting serpent to allure the soul / From native innocence...” (445-447). There will be a restitution of “native innocence” without the threat of corruption through temptation as “[a]nother *Canaan* shall excel the old” (448, poet’s italics), an idea with which Dwight would undoubtedly agree. This future will include no more disease (lines 459-460), prosperous agriculture (lines 462-463), and a lack of storms (lines 464-465). More than all of this, however, Freneau states that the future will mean that “[t]he fiercer passions of the human breast / Shall kindle up to deeds of death no more, / But all subside in universal peace...” (466-468). With all the elements of the natural world in a harmonious state, Freneau finds that it is human nature’s restoration to a prelapsarian state of spiritual tranquility that will lead to “deeds of death no more,” and consequently “universal peace.” This peace is given with the context of the earlier Christian imagery and while its appearance is predicated on Christian eschatology, the application of this peace to the rest of the world quietly becomes disconnected from religion in the poem with the disappearance of Christian imagery from the remaining lines of the stanza. While the first part of the concluding stanza is preoccupied with Christian imagery, Freneau finishes the stanza, and poem, with a generic prosperous peaceful future, one that finds itself preoccupied with the well-

being of humankind rather than spiritual matters. The influence of Freneau's deistic humanism comes through in the final lines of the poem by showing a future absent the Christian imagery used earlier in the stanza in an effort to redirect his readers' attention to the optimistic future which America faces. This optimism will be global, "[a]nd such AMERICA at last shall have / When ages, yet to come, have run their round, / And future years of bliss remain" (470-472, poet's capitalization). The glories of the Millennial reign remain despite appearing as one of the "ages" which have "run their round." This provides Freneau's readers who do not subscribe to Christian theology with a vision for the future that, while including a millennial reign of Christ, moves past that and supposes an ideal world passing on into indefinite "future years of bliss" that are not inherently the continuation of Christian eschatology. Through this subversive idealization of the future that includes an appropriation of Christian theology, Freneau presents his vision for the future of the American nation as one that includes, but is not limited to, religion as a means of achieving national success. Unlike Dwight and Barlow, Freneau does not suggest an eventual one world government in which the United States is subsumed, but rather a world in which the nation moves forward while retaining its national identity. "The Rising Glory of America" was a seminal poem for its time, initially prophesying the rise of the nation several years prior to the American Revolution, with later iterations of the poem combining Christianity and Freneau's deism in subtle ways that painted a picture of an America that would be successful given enough time. Freneau's disjunctive nationalism sees the future of the country as unique, he suggests that the New Jerusalem could appear here, based in part on past mythologies such as seeing America as the new Eden, and the country as part of a prosperous human future in which the nation experiences "future years of bliss" along with the rest of the globe, while still possessing its own sense of national identity.

Wheatley's America

Like other contemporary poets, Phillis Wheatley also engaged in envisioning an American future through “Liberty and Peace, A Poem” which appeared in 1784 under her married surname of Peters. Vincent Carretta remarks that the poem “is a celebration of the Peace of Paris that Congress ratified in January 1784. Not surprisingly given its subject, the poem exudes joy and optimism” (183). This “optimism” is for the future of the American nation, and like Wheatley’s implicative hopes for freedom from slavery in her poem to Washington, there is an implicit understanding that “Liberty and Peace” will not only include “peace” for the country, but also “liberty” for all of its residents. The poem’s celebratory purpose shows that Wheatley still held, even within a year of her death, the hope that freedom would spread beyond its initial political parameters and that international peace would give rise to an internal peace. John Shields, briefly quoting line 22 of “Liberty and Peace,” remarks that Wheatley’s “purpose in this poem is not to pursue an analytical explication of the politics which did in fact play a decisive role in the eventual American success. What she hopes to accomplish in “Liberty and Peace” is to present impassioned reinforcement of America’s efforts to pick itself up from the rubble of war and subsequently to move toward the establishment of “new-born Rome,” a new country out of the ashes” (*Wheatley's Poetics* 105). Shields’ accurate observation speaks to the direction of “Liberty and Peace” as a poem concerned not only with celebrating the present peace, but also looking forward to an imagined American future that, like other contemporary poets, expressed a full optimism concerning the future.

Wheatley commences the poem in an exuberance fitting the occasion: “LO! Freedom comes. Th’ prescient Muse foretold, / All eyes th’ accomplish’d Prophecy behold:” (1-2 poet’s capitalization). After this she quotes from her earlier “To His Excellency General Washington”

(Carretta 183), with lines 3 and 4 of “Liberty and Peace” quoted from lines 9 and 10 of the poem to Washington. By this Wheatley hints to her readers that the muse of “Liberty and Peace” may not be one of the classical nine, but rather Wheatley herself. Quoting “To His Excellency General Washington” creates a link between these poems, the one from 1775 near the beginning of the Revolutionary War and the other as a concluding celebratory verse. In her poem to Washington, Wheatley boldly declares, “Celestial choir! enthron’d in realms of light / Columbia’s scenes of glorious toils I write. / While freedom’s cause her anxious breast alarms” (1-3). Here Wheatley refers to the Muses but then declares that it is she who writes this poem, “[w]hile freedom’s cause her anxious breast alarms,” suggesting that the “her” is not only Columbia, but also Wheatley who desires “freedom’s cause” in a way that would free her from the discrimination of the late 18th century. The link between “To His Excellency General Washington” and “Liberty and Peace” then becomes stronger as both poems move in a similar thematic vein, both revolve around the wellbeing of America and serve as poetic bookends to the War. Wheatley’s “freedom’s cause” of the earlier poem becomes in the later poem the “Freedom” which “comes” now to the nation, which “[t]h’ prescient Muse foretold.” This muse is not of the classical nine, as indicated by the linking of the two poems together through thematic similarity and quotation, but rather Wheatley’s Muse is her Freedom. Briefly alluding to the Treaty of Paris of 1783, Wheatley remarks “[f]or now kind Heaven, indulgent to our Prayer, / In smiling *Peace* resolves the Din of *War*” (7-8, poet’s italics). Switching from her earlier classical allusion to the muses to a Christian Heaven, Wheatley subtly offers the perspective that the current peace is the result of divine intervention on behalf of the nation in response to “our Prayer,” with Wheatley joining in the same prayer of her fellow citizens regardless of their race or socioeconomic position. This allows Wheatley to ground her poem in the imagined present before progressing to the imagined future, which she does in the

following lines: “[f]ix’d in *Columbia* her illustrious Line, / And bids in thee her future Councils shine” (9-10, poet’s italics). Recognizing that the American future will require good government, presumably unlike that of the recently departed British, Wheatley invokes Peace as a necessary presence in the “future Councils” that will govern America; a peace that will also remain “[f]ix’d” throughout the American nation. Wheatley understands the value of having first peace, and then a stable government in place before the nation can succeed economically, a topic which Wheatley addresses despite her lifelong economic disadvantages.

Like Timothy Dwight and Philip Freneau, Wheatley’s contribution to the Rising Glory genre suggests that the future of the nation will be both peaceful and economically prosperous. America will have “[t]o every Realm her Portals open’d wide,” (11) which occurs as the nation “[r]eceives from each the full commercial Tide. / Each Art and Science now with rising Charms” (12-13). Envisioning a future in which America will have open borders in order to encourage trade, Wheatley recognizes the value of allowing international exchange to freely take place across the oceans, with trade coming from “every Realm,” and that this will concurrently continue to increase the productivity of other important cultural areas such as “art” and “science.” These two facets will necessarily be among the areas of society “rising” with the increase in economic trade that will result from peace and good government. Wheatley here acts as America’s “prescient Muse” (1), foretelling a future glory for the nation which initially enslaved her. Wheatley’s love of country is here exemplified, despite her earlier poems in which she indicated loyalty to Britain. As Shields observes, throughout “her oeuvre ... [Wheatley presents] enthusiastic endorsement for the American patriot cause” (*Wheatley’s Poetics* 96). This “endorsement” rests on the implicit hope she includes in her vision for the new nation, that it will eliminate slavery. Wheatley foresees America’s rise leading it to become a “... new-born *Rome* [which] shall give *Britannia* Law” (22,

poet's italics). This signals a shift from a perspective expressed in one of her much earlier poems, "America" from 1768, in which Wheatley expresses the expectation that America will become similar to its colonizer: "O Brittain See / By this, New England will increase like thee" (41-42). In 1768 Wheatley expressed the hope that the colonies would at least become on par with Britain economically if not politically, but by 1784 with the new nation establishing a representative democracy apart from the fetters of British rule and with the American cultural milieu alive with instability and hope for a better future, Wheatley reflects the national shift in tone. This is accomplished by suggesting that the power roles of colonizer and colonies will be turned over with America now possessing the ability to create laws which Britain will follow, while also positioning America as the new Rome, a logical conclusion at the time given the American society's looking to ancient Rome, as well as Greece, for part of the political philosophy relevant to the establishment of the American government. America, like Rome, also practiced slavery, though this does not seem to be part of Wheatley's allusion; on the contrary, her interest is in seeing America become a major world political power that will end slavery within its own borders. America's influence, like Rome's, will in Wheatley's vision continue to be influential for generations to come.

Not finished with dismissing England's former power, Wheatley's rhetoric reflects the passions of the recent war: "On *Albion's* Head the Curse to Tyrants due. / But thou appeas'd submit to Heaven's decree, / That bids this Realm of Freedom rival thee!" (28-30, poet's italics). Old England is now the subject of imprecations as a tyrant and under Divine correction for its rule of America; Albion must "submit to Heaven's decree" which demonstrates the superiority of the new American government, and its status as divinely appointed. "Heaven's decree" is that which "bids this Realm of Freedom [to] rival" England and this same divine rule implicatively also establishes America as the new Rome, the laws of which England must now submit to. Wheatley's Christianity

is conflated with her patriotism and, like Dwight, she envisions the United States as under divine guidance and protection, a source for spreading a more democratic form of government in resistance to the tyrants of the world, whether in palaces or plantations or very nice houses in Boston. America will “rival” England in that its presence as a second Rome will spread across the globe; the sun will never set on its influence. Wheatley’s identification of America with Rome as a predecessor and England as rival positions the United States as the seat of a new empire of, Wheatley hopes, liberty and justice for all. Wheatley then covers the Revolutionary War in lines 31-50 and celebrates the recent end of that war, drawing an analogy between the establishing of peace and the Second Coming of Christ: “From every Tongue celestial *Peace* resounds: / As from the East th’ illustrious King of Day, / With rising Radiance drives the Shades away” (52-54, poet’s italics). This peace is “celestial” and the association of Christ with light, he is the “King” rather than “king” here, is interwoven with the rising of the sun/Son of God, with Wheatley cleverly combining her Christian beliefs with natural imagery of a sunrise that drives away the darkness of the night and tyranny. Wheatley demonstrates her cognizance of the literary zeitgeist with use of Christian eschatological imagery used by other poets such as Freneau, though with a theological leaning closer to Dwight than Freneau. She also demonstrates her ability to skillfully use imagery from both classical and Christian sources throughout the poem, creating a poem in “Liberty and Peace” that connects with a wide swath of American readers with a timely topic and an optimistic vision for the imagined future. Wheatley’s “rising Radiance” also shines on America: “So Freedom comes array’d with Charms divine, / And in her Train Commerce and Plenty shine” (55-56). Echoing other “rising glory” poems, Wheatley assures her readers that despite the difficult economic times the nation faced immediately following the war, an issue also responded to in part by *The Anarchiad*, the imagined future with its dawning of “celestial Peace” would bring about a

change in circumstances; the nation would experience both commerce and plenty, with commerce resulting in prosperity. Earlier in the poem (lines 11-12), Wheatley prophesied this, but she reiterates this point in order to emphasize to her readers the hope she sees for the nation. Wheatley concludes her vision for the United States with the assertion that God will see to it that the nation goes forward in progress and prosperity:

Auspicious Heaven shall fill with fav'ring Gales,
Where e'er *Columbia* spreads her swelling Sails:
To every Realm shall *Peace* her Charms display,
And Heavenly *Freedom* spread her golden Ray. (61-64, poet's italics)

Drawing on the Ship of State analogy, Wheatley promises that it will be Heaven which directs the course of the nation, and that wherever America may go, favor and divine blessing will direct it. Similarly to Dwight and Freneau, Wheatley suggests a future global influence for America, as to “every Realm” America will deliver “Peace” and “her Charms” to demonstrate the Divine blessings that are on the country. Wheatley does not suggest an eventual subsuming of American identity into a globalized political system such as suggested by Barlow and Dwight. The Freedom that America possesses is from Heaven and it is this Divine American Freedom that will spread across the world as Wheatley suggests the new nation will rise from the ashes of war into a glorious future overseen by God. America will be prosperous and peaceful, a land of liberty and peace and poetry. While she only experienced a very limited liberty after her manumission in 1773 (Shields, *Romantics* 25), Wheatley’s poetry continues to speak over the nation as a suggested alternative to the disjunctive visions for the nation that were prevalent in her times and since.

Dwight’s “Prospect of the Future Happiness of America”

Appearing in 1794, *Greenfield Hill* provided an overview of the community of Fairfield, Connecticut, in the parish of Greenfield (Dwight 371), where Timothy Dwight served as minister before his replacement of Ezra Stiles as president of Yale in 1795, where Dwight served until his

death in 1817. The epic poem is divided into seven parts, and is shorter than his earlier *The Conquest of Canaan* (1785). Like *The Conquest*, Dwight dedicates *Greenfield Hill* to a political leader, here John Adams, then vice president under George Washington, the dedicatee of the first epic. In the poem's introduction, Dwight summarizes each section of the poem, describing the landscape (Part 1, "The Prospect"), the residents of the area (Part 2, "The Flourishing Village"), the destruction of the town of Fairfield by the British (Part 3, "The Burning of Fairfield"), the death of a group of Pequot Native Americans (Part 4, "The Destruction of the Pequods"), spiritual advice to the citizens (Part 5, "The Clergyman's Advice to the Villagers"), as well as practical advice on living successful lives (Part 6, "The Farmer's Advice to the Villagers"), concluding with hopes for the future success of the nation (Part 7, "The Vision, Or Prospect of the Future Happiness of America"). These sections work together to provide an overview of the necessary steps which Dwight saw as vital to the nation's imagined future success.

Dwight describes his purpose by remarking in the introduction that his poem is designed, "[t]o contribute to the innocent amusement of his countrymen, and to their improvement in manners, and in economical, political, and moral sentiments, is the object which the writer wishes to accomplish. As he is firmly persuaded, that his countrymen are furnished by Providence with as extensive and advantageous means of prosperity, as the world has hitherto seen, so he thinks it the duty and the interest of every citizen, to promote it, by all the means in his power" (372-373, spelling and type modernized). Attempting to provide a virtually holistic roadmap for his fellow citizens, and for their "innocent amusement," *Greenfield Hill* serves multiple purposes, both for entertainment as well as direction for Americans in almost every area of their life, as well as, in the final installment, a promised future glory for the nation, a rather fitting conclusion given Dwight's role as a minister. Dwight sees the project of his poem as

larger than himself, one that can be actively pursued by others who also play a role in the country: “it [is] the duty and the interest of every citizen, to promote it, by all the means in his power.” Engaging in this endeavor himself, Dwight here suggests that “every citizen” should also work toward the same goals listed here. Doing so will empower the nation to an “improvement” that will lift the country into its promised glorious future. But the precedent for this success in Dwight’s poem is that America can only become great if it builds in the areas listed in the poem’s introduction, if it follows advice mentioned throughout the poem. This includes a recognition of the role of Native Americans in America’s history and its present. In fact, Dwight calls on the Senate to acknowledge the difficulties of Native Americans; he instructs congressmen: “To see so far outspread the waste of man, / And ask “How fell the myriads, HEAVEN plac’d here!” / Reflect, be just, and feel for Indian woes severe” (4.349-351, poet’s capitalization). Challenging the dying Indian trope commonly used by other poets such as Freneau, Dwight pushes for national recognition of the oppression of Native Americans. Dwight calls for the nation to representatively, literally and metaphorically, “feel for Indian woes severe,” in order for the American nation to recognize and understand the depth of destruction which Native Americans experienced through the European discovery of North America and the establishment and expansion of the United States. Challenging the typical view of the day in which Native Americans were seen as conquerable nations whose disappearance into the horizon was necessary for national expansion, Dwight adds to the national narrative on Native Americans the idea that their geographical placement is divinely ordained, and therefore worthy of respect rather than elimination. He then suggests that the nation’s government, and consequently its citizens, including his readers, “[r]eflect, be just, and feel;” rather than dismiss Native Americans as incompatible with contemporary society. Calling his leaders and readers to reflect on the

challenges faced by Native Americans, he also calls for justice in recognition of the injustices faced by Indians, and to recognize the common humanity that binds all people together through feeling their “woes severe.” These are prerequisites, among other actions, necessary for the nation to move forward in the present, and thereby reach a glorious future.

Dwight also addresses slavery, which he calls “[t]he uncur’d gangrene of the reasoning mind” (2.256), describing slavery as “Supreme memorial of the world’s dread fall; / O slavery! laurel of the Infernal mind, / Proud Satan’s triumph over lost mankind!” (2.258-260). Dwight attacks slavery on two fronts, that of reason and that of faith. Referencing the Biblical story of the fall of mankind, which Milton so aptly poeticized, slavery is a reminder, in Dwight’s perspective that mankind is fallen from perfection, it stands out as the “supreme memorial” to the inter-generational perpetuation of sinfulness which he saw as inherent in all of humanity, but especially expressed through the institution of slavery. Calling slavery the “laurel of the Infernal mind” links both the institution of slavery and its propagators to the Biblical source of the downfall of humanity, Satan. It is also proof in Dwight’s eyes of the victory that Satan has over mankind, that humans would enslave one another, is the product of pride and the inherent sinfulness of mankind that Christianity teaches, a woe which Dwight provides the remedy for through his encouragement for a focus on Christianizing influences in Part 5. Together, the presence of slavery and the mistreatment of Native Americans represent moral obstacles to the nation’s ability to move forward. For Dwight, justice must be made the national standard, while those patterns of abuse and disenfranchisement which African Americans and Native Americans consistently experienced must be corrected. However, consistent with the majority in his era, Dwight stops short of suggesting political empowerment for African Americans and Native

Americans, presenting, for his time, progressive though complicated views on the future of the American nation.

Focusing on the economic, political, and moral environments of the nation, Dwight's poem moves forward in several areas, all of which he would have seen as essential to the future success of the country, for without solid political, economic, and moral values, the nation would, in Dwight's perspective as a Congregationalist minister, not be capable of succeeding in the long term. Dwight hints at his Calvinistic views, inherited in part from his grandfather Jonathan Edwards, when he remarks that the "extensive and advantageous means of prosperity" which America possesses is the result of Divine blessing. These "means of prosperity" must be cultivated and fostered within the nation if the country is to move into possessing their promised future, which begins to take place as the nations' readers consume and then act upon Dwight's advice. The future success of the country, for Dwight at least, is not the inevitable result of history occurring, but rather the premeditated and inspired attitude of focusing on the paths that lead to prosperity, paths that included introducing a greater, though not necessarily complete, sense of justice for African Americans and Native Americans. To reach this future "every citizen" must be involved, working together to build the nation up out of the destruction of the Revolutionary War.

The seventh part of *Greenfield Hill* broadly envisions the future of America and its success on the global scene, foreseeing a rise in many areas of American society, as well as prophesying America's global influence. The poet receives a vision of all the things that are yet to come, and thereby provides a blueprint for the future of America as it neared the beginning of the nineteenth century. Dwight declares, "[w]hat scenes of grandeur, and of beauty, glow. / It's noblest wonders here Creation spreads" (7.106-107). In America there are "scenes of grandeur,

and of beauty” which are in contrast to the absence of these elements elsewhere, for it is “here” where these “noblest wonders” are “spread,” with the implication that the landscape of Europe and elsewhere in the world offer no comparison. It is these “scenes” which Dwight recognizes as relevant to a sense of American national identity, for from the land not only is a geographical identity drawn, but also subsistence in an era that placed a large social responsibility on living off of the produce of the land, an idea seen in lines 119-120, discussed later. Further describing the landscape of America, the vision lists “[l]akes, where seas lie, and rivers, where they roll; / Landscapes, where Edens gild anew the ball, / And plains, and meads, where suns arise, and fall” (7.110-112). Dwight recognizes the role of the land in forming identity. The land is vital to the new country not only as a resource, but also as an integral part of the course of the nation, especially as demonstrated in line 110 where the importance of waterways to the new country as a way to move people and goods is mentioned, as well as the importance of seas for the later development of international trade. Like Charles Brockden Brown, and later James Fenimore Cooper, the land is not merely a backdrop against which the nation experiences growth and prosperity, but the landscape is also an actor in these stories, and in *Greenfield Hill*’s vision for the future of the nation. Dwight echoes the Puritan narrative of the New World as a new Garden of Eden, a place of redemption and renewal for people, describing America as a place where, and from which will go to the rest of the world, a new sense of purpose and direction. This is a move that brings narrative unity to this part of the poem by linking it with lines 631-664 which forecast the effects of the American nation on the future of the planet as a whole, discussed later in this chapter. America as Eden also fits with Dwight’s earlier vision of America in *The Conquest of Canaan*, in which he sees the new nation as enacting a contemporary reincarnation of the

Biblical narrative of the ancient Hebrews, thereby placing America as both directed and blessed by God.

America's landscape is blessed with a salubrious climate: "...[t]o these bright wonders, Nature's hand sublime / Has join'd the varied joys of circling clime" (7.113-114) which include "[w]inds [which] purest breathe; benignest seasons ... / ... double harvests [which] gild the bounteous soil / The choicest sweets, unnumber'd fruits" (7.115-117). The climate of America, like its landscape, is designed for the benefit of the American nation, possessing "varied joys" which support "double harvests" and "choicest sweets" for the consumption of citizens, as well as a source of economic prosperity; the soil is "gild[ed]" and "bounteous" for not only contemporary readers, but for posterity as well. America is a land waiting for cultivation, for American farmers to not be writing letters, but rather tilling the ground. The land is a source of wealth for the new nation, and the climate parallels this health in order to insure that the country possesses everything it needs to prosper in its landscape and environment. Dwight recognizes the value of farming to the new country whose existence was heavily dependent on agriculture in the late 18th century: "[g]ains of true gold pursue th' exploring plough, / Wealth, that endures, and good unbought with woe" (7.119-120). The "true gold" of agricultural projects are "pursued" through the hard work of farming, producing a "wealth, that endures" and a success without "woe;" this is Dwight's formula for a successful nation, hard work and use of the natural resources of the land, echoing Barlow's use of corn in "The Hasty Pudding" by using agriculture as a means of growing a sense of American national identity. Unlike Barlow, Dwight suggests agriculture not just as a means of cultural identity, but also as a source from which to build national wealth. This is a wealth that will last because it is renewable and not subject to exhaustion as in the case of precious metals, though Dwight also acknowledges the role of

mining when he remarks that “[w]ith richest ore, the useful mountains shine” (7.121), echoing the desires of earlier explorers and providing a premonition for later gold rushes in Georgia and, eventually, California. Dwight recognized that the resources of the land were diverse, plentiful at the time, and the key to building the American nation in the late 18th century. Additionally Dwight saw the economic, and hence national, value of the fishing industry, “[a]nd luscious treasures fill the teeming brine” (7.122) which, along with the prosperity of the land “[f]ell famine sickens, at th’ o’erflowing good, / And, hissing, flies the native land of food” (7.123-124). Food shortages are eliminated early in the prophecy in an effort to assuage readers’ immediate concerns for physical subsistence. Famine is anthropomorphized as a snake, recalling the earlier allegory of America as a new Garden of Eden, referred to earlier in line 111, in the Biblical account of which Satan possesses a snake in order to trick mankind into sin. This Eden, however, is blessed by God and is the “native land of food,” promising that the future will not face the challenges which earlier settlers faced. Setting this precedent is important because the whole of *Greenfield Hill* is concerned with providing a blueprint for the establishment of a successful nation, providing guidance in a multitude of societal aspects necessary for a prosperous country.

Dwight sees the economic future of the nation as based first on a consistent and flourishing food supply, leading to a nation that embraces a greater sense of economic equality: “How few the rich, or poor! how many bless’d! / O happy state! the state, by HEAVEN design’d / To rein, protect, employ, and bless mankind” (7.126-128, poet’s capitalization). Recognizing the inherent necessity of having widespread economic stability, there are few in either financial extreme, Dwight suggests that having a solid middle class is necessary to the long-term stability and prosperity of the nation; a nation divided on economic grounds will not be a “happy state”

nor one that is “blessed,” but rather one that struggles to maintain stability. A nation not divided by significant economic barriers comes only when there are few persons either rich or poor, and this is, according to Dwight, the state of society that is “by HEAVEN design’d,” suggesting that nations where there is either extreme poverty or wealth are not divinely ordained, and that there is, in fact, a divinely-inspired design for society that transcends the current status quo of the American republic. Economic prosperity, then, would be evenly distributed and this would allow for the country as a whole to prosper, along with hard work and divine blessings. These divine blessings include a good government’s “rein” that will also “protect” and “employ” citizens. Dwight’s Federalism was, apparently here, very extensive. Initially it appears that Dwight is not necessarily interested in erasing economic extremes, but rather in minimizing their affect on society as the presence of such polarizing positions could hamper the nation’s ability to move forward. Hinting at an economic utopian future, the poet suggests that in the future, America will be a place “[w]here none are slaves, or lords; but all are men: / No nuisant drones purloin the earner’s food; / But each man’s labour swells the common good” (7.136-138). Here Dwight erases the economic extremes, the future nation having progressed through the poem from having “few ... rich, or poor” (7.126), to complete economic equality where “all are men” with the absence of both slavery and economically dominant individuals from society. Presenting the idea that “all are men” also implies that African Americans, with the elimination of slavery, would eventually gain equality, though once again Dwight stops short of suggesting an immediate economic and political empowerment for African Americans; these will come, he believes, but only in the future beyond his lifetime.

Declaring that men will work for “the common good” and will be free from those who are merely “nuisant drones,” those who take from society but do not contribute, Dwight’s

envisioned future for America appears in contemporary political terminology, socialist, though in the late 18th century this would have been aptly perceived as utopian. This is fitting since Dwight, as a minister, believed in the eventual Millennial Reign of Christ, whose rule on earth is promised with an absence of evil influences (Revelation 20:1-6). Interestingly though, Dwight suggests this economic equality not as direct divine intervention, but rather as the ideal result of a society founded on Christianity, explored in Part 5 of *Greenfield Hill*, leaving open the role of human progress in, concurrently with Christianity, the progress of society in a form of religious humanism. The perfect future for the nation is represented as the result of collective work and effort from across the nation which must, as a precedent, eliminate slavery and establish a society wherein “all are men,” regardless of race or prior economic status. Without progressing socially, the nation cannot move forward economically, and thereby enter a utopian future that is not necessarily the disappearance of societal struggles, but rather a stage of state that results from a progression of struggles.

Contrasting America’s progress with the rise and fall of other ancient nations, Dwight mentions Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Rome (7.259- 266), all of which were familiar to contemporary readers through histories and Biblical stories, with both Egypt and Babylon holding spiritual significance in Christian typology, primarily with negative connotations. While Greek and Roman culture and political thought were influential on the formation of the American political system, Dwight’s depiction of these and the other empires is overwhelmingly negative, suggesting that America will not be like them; Dwight describes the Egyptian pyramids as the “tomb[s] of folly” (7.260) and Rome as “haughty” (7.265), while the other nations are also similarly disparaged. Dwight’s comparison of the United States to the ancient Hebrews, as covered in *The Conquest of Canaan*, is not mentioned here, nor is the contemporary fascination

with the ancient explored, as appeared by the hands of Barlow and Trumbull among others in *The Anarchiad*, in which an ancient nation's epic appeared to foretell America in the 1780s. Dwight rejects the ability of ancient nations, outside of his previous epic, to speak to the current course of events in the nation, and especially to serve as precedents for the future of America. Dwight's disjunctive nationalism is that of a religious humanism that sees the rise of the United States as enacting a necessary break with the cultural precedents of ancient empires, and as a nation which will rise because of hard work, coupled with the end of slavery and a recognition of the wrongs committed against African Americans and Native Americans, along with divine blessing on the nation. Unlike the ancient empires mentioned, now all in ruins as empires are wont to become, as Ozymandias' statue knew all too well, America is described as a place where: "... nobler wonders of the world shall rise; / Far other empire here mankind surprize" (7.267-268). Having previously referred to the Babylonian Gardens (7.261), one of the wonders of the ancient world, Dwight suggests that the American Garden of Eden, with its productive environment, will be more impressive, more "noble," than the accomplishments of the entire ancient world. In America an empire will rise, one that will "surprize" all of humankind, beyond the reach of those ancient empires that now lie in memory and ruins. Dwight does not consider the possibility here that his nation could end up in a future list of collapsed countries in the poem of a future poet of a distant land, all in an effort to sustain the hopeful message of this section of the poem. This is perhaps the "surprize" that the poet envisions, that America as an empire will outlast its ancient competitors and, as the end of *Greenfield Hill* suggests, becomes the pattern of success for the rest of the planet.

Creating an architectural metaphor, Dwight asserts that America will be "[o]f orders pure, that ask no Grecian name, / A new born structure here ascend to fame. / The base, shall

knowledge, choice, and freedom, form” (7.269-271). Responding to the widespread influence of Greek culture and political thought on the formation of the American political structure of the late 18th century, Dwight suggests through both of his epics the influence of Christian thought on government; the United States need not allow itself to be influenced by an ancient, pagan nation. Recognizing the newness of the American political system to the world, while also ignoring the influence of ancient and modern European political thought, America is described as “new born” and on its way to a future of “fame,” in part because it is a nation formed on “knowledge, choice, and freedom.” Elements such as these contribute to the country’s differences with ancient empires with which Dwight contrasts America; his nation is empowered with liberties and knowledge which the ancients implicatively did not possess, and thereby America will outlast these countries. The “structure” of the country, however, requires these bases in order to “ascend” into a future glory past the remnants of the past, an ascension that will only occur, in Dwight’s eyes, if his blueprint of advice is followed. The imagined future is successful and accessible, but only if it is achieved through certain steps that must be taken for the country to move from its present into its future. With “no Grecian name,” the nation is built as metaphorical “[u]npattern’d columns, union’d States ascend; / Combining arches, virtuous manners bend; / Of balanc’d powers, proportion’d stories rise” (7.273-275). The body politic and ship of state are forgotten here in favor of the nation as a building, one that includes architectural features as metaphors of the various aspects of government and society that are required for the building to be fully constructed, including the support of the states in union together in order to support the structure of the nation. The columns are “[u]npattern’d” to make them dissimilar to Greek and Roman culture, whose empires are listed here among the fallen nations; to allow for the influence of these pagan lands would not be acceptable to Dwight, instead they would be like albatrosses

around the neck of the nation with their classical and un-Christian cultures serving to bring the nation away from the Christian values which Dwight promoted throughout his careers as minister, and then as president of Yale University. With no unity between the states, the nation will collapse, and without the support of “virtuous manners,” the arches of the building will not hold up, underscoring the necessity of moral education in order to insure that the nation’s youth are raised with cultural values conducive to continuing the nation beyond the limits of those fallen empires already mentioned. Recognizing the flexibility of the values of the nation over time, these manners will “bend,” which means they must be bent by influencers, such as Dwight through this poem. Speaking to the development of the balance of powers, Dwight notes that aesthetic unity and structural integrity are insured by the balance of powers. Though unity and proper virtue may be had in the nation, the political structure of the nation has an overarching influence on the direction of the nation, the means by which a nation avoids the “tottering freedom” (7.264) of Greece, and the “pride of haughty empire” (7.265) found in Rome. Together these elements combine to allow the American nation to “ascend” and the “stories rise” above the ruins of ancient empires, including Babylon’s “pageant of a day” (7.262). While *The Anarchiad* spoke from the perspective of an ancient empire to the America of the present, here Dwight focuses on suggesting that ancient nations possess only faults to be avoided rather than cultures to be imitated; the past in *Greenfield Hill* is a textbook on the failings of other nations rather than a source of contemporary cultural identity. The “stories” of the nation are many though, necessitating not only a strong building to uphold the weight of the nation, but also “stories” which need poets and authors to tell them, a cultural space that Dwight fulfilled through his forays into epic poetry.

In a curious move, after just having dismissed several ancient empires for their degenerative cultures, Dwight suggests that America, as it rises to tower over all of the nations of old, is itself a new Babel, the Biblical tower which people built in an effort to reach heaven. The Biblical account, found in Genesis 11, includes that all people in the world at that time spoke the same language, and that God decided to disrupt their building project by introducing different languages, thereby resulting in disunity. Given Dwight's earlier religious humanism, which synthesizes humanistic faith and religious imagery as a source for building the nation, it is not surprising that he chooses a Biblical reference that includes worldwide unity, but curious in that the end of the Biblical story is one of disorder, a collapse into social confusion and, ultimately, an unfinished building: "Like Babel's dome, intended for the skies; / One speech, one soul, to every builder given, / And the tall summit shrouded high in heaven" (7.276-278). Dwight recognizes the lack of the tower's completion; it was "intended for the skies" but never reached there. So why is the nation like an uncompleted building project that falls apart due to a lack of unity? Dwight modifies the Biblical story because of his religious humanism; unlike the people of the Biblical Babel, and unlike "haughty Rome" (7.265), Dwight sees the future of the nation as one that will, instead of failing, reach upwards as a continuous building project that will differ from the empires of the past because it will be based on his blueprint for society. More specifically, Dwight sees the future success of the American nation as based on Christian values; he believes that its future is sustainable, millennial even. This project is not inevitable, and it has prerequisites such as humane treatment of those discriminated against, and includes the elimination of slavery. By introducing the analogy of Babel, Dwight offers a caveat to the otherwise optimistic outlook of Part 7; while America is "intended for the skies," it may, like Babel, result in disorder and national collapse just as quickly if it becomes like the culture of the

ancient peoples listed in this stanza. Dwight foresees unity for the nation, “[o]ne speech, one soul, to every builder given,” envisioning the necessity of citizens working together to build the nation. But like the Biblical story, Dwight sees the American project as reaching as a “tall summit shrouded high in heaven,” a project that reaches a height far above the ancient and fallen empires of the rest of the world. The future of America, then, while hopeful, is uncertain and based off of several variables such as “knowledge, choice, and freedom” (7.271), “union’d States” (7.273), “virtuous manners” (7.274), and “balanc’d powers” (7.275). If these persist, with a social basis in Christianity, then the American nation will prosper; but if they disappear, Dwight suggests, American unity will fall apart as people begin speaking different cultural languages that are incompatible with each other, thus reflecting the Biblical account of Babel. The imagined American future for Dwight, while optimistic, is also “shrouded high in heaven.”

His perspective, however, is that the nation will successfully ascend on the world scene, surpassing both Babel and Babylon, Greece and Rome. Not only will America be successful, but it will also become a source of progress for the rest of the world. As America rises, other parts of the globe take note, including Europe, Asia, and Africa (lines 304, 305, and 306 respectively). Moving from the Old Testament, Dwight then talks of Jesus Christ’s resurrection, the source of salvation in Christian theology: “As, from the tomb, when great MESSIAH rose, / Heaven bloom’d with joy, and Earth forgot her woes, / ... / Thus, thro’ all climes, shall Freedom’s bliss extend” (7.307-308, 311, poet’s capitalization). Linking the rise of America with the resurrection of the Christian Savior, Dwight offers his readers not only a source for the Christian principles provided as a basis on which to construct the nation in order to insure a successful national future, but also as a source of salvation. America, like Christ, rises and offers hope to all those around. America is now salvific through its adoption of Dwight’s religious humanism, it offers to

the world a similar affect as Christ on world history, and the nation could be the Babel that will not fall. “Freedom’s bliss” will go throughout the earth and raise the hopes of the nations, with America serving as the source of this phenomenon. As freedom spreads, it will “[t]he world renew, and death, and bondage, end; / All nations quicken with th’ ecstatic power, / And one redemption reach to every shore” (7.312-314). While Dwight focuses on freedom and salvation offered through Christ, he also links this offer of salvation to America as a saviour to the world, by positioning this otherwise religious message in the context of a vision of the future success of the American nation. Dwight’s religious humanism is more subtle here, offering lines that echo scripture, but doing so in an American context. There are at least two ways to view this passage. Dwight may see America as a source for sending out missionaries to the rest of the world, and thereby see “one redemption reach to every shore,” or it may be that the American nation is a redemption itself, it is a source of “freedom,” a Providential endeavor designed to enlighten the world. If the latter is so, then Dwight suggests here the global reach of the nation, an idea he comes back to at the end of Part 7. America will affect “[a]ll nations” and “every shore” as its message of political freedom spreads like Christianity in the ancient world. This positions America as a land of paradox, and why, in part, America must eliminate slavery if it is to end bondage (7.312) in the rest of the world. Given Dwight’s insistence on spreading Christian values as a means of insuring the future success of America, Dwight also presents America’s politically salvific powers to the rest of the world as based on the spiritually salvific power he sees in Christ, linking the redemptive abilities of the former with the latter in a synthesis typical of the religious humanism which he explores throughout *Greenfield Hill*. Spiritual salvation becomes a precedent and empowerment for political salvation, as individual spiritual experiences becomes the basis for collective political salvation.

Dwight's vision for America is as a self-sustaining nation that will move away from its colonizing influences: "[h]ere wealth, from private misery wrench'd no more, / To grace proud pomp, and swell a monarch's store" (7.347-348). This "private misery" can not only be read by Dwight's contemporaries as slavery of African Americans, but also colonial political enslavement that motivated the formation of the American nation to begin with. The extraction of wealth for the benefit of the colonizing land from its colonial periphery stretched the limits of the nation as an imagined community beyond a sustainable state, and Dwight responds to this after the Revolution with a perspective which validated, unnecessarily to his readers, the basis for the war as a fight against the enslavement of Britain, paralleling the popular analogy of America as ancient Israel leaving the slavery of Egypt-Britain used in *The Conquest of Canaan*. Rather than the nation's wealth being used to "swell a monarch's store," Dwight sees the nation's wealth as benefiting the entire country which, as a republic, has no need for the "proud pomp" of European powers. Americans will work together for the prosperity and posterity of the nation, as "[f]or public bliss, from public hands, shall flow, / And patriot works from patriot feelings grow" (7.351-352). Unlike the challenges faced by a nation under a monarch (7.348), America possesses "public bliss" rather than "private misery" (7.347) and its government is, supposedly at this point in time, using its power as "public hands" for the benefit of the citizenship as a whole, rather than building the wealth of a king. This provides another basis for the American nation as a self-sustaining project, "[a]nd patriot works from patriot feelings grow [;]" as people work together for the good of the country, they become more invested in the American project and thereby increase their personal levels of patriotism. This in turn inspires further "patriot works" in a seemingly never-ending story of patriotism begetting patriotism as the country moves blissfully on in "public bliss" toward the end of history. Dwight's vision is

not a panacea for contemporary societal stress, but rather a guide into the coming years through the promise of national improvement on the bases of Dwight's instructions. For Dwight this represents the ideal state of America, as a country that continually moves forward in prosperity and national success, away from the tyranny of monarchy and toward the optimism of a nation following his advice. This future success is not accidental, as he consistently makes evident throughout the poem, but is instead the result of "patriot works" that reinforce Dwight's Christian and Federalist values.

Cognizant of the changes in American society's economic and political systems, Dwight also cautions his country about caring for the environment: "[r]edress the ravage of encroaching clime, / Change the sad curse, rebuild the waste of time" (7.479-480). Here Dwight seems to be concerned with two factors, both entropy and the affect of man on the environment. Though unaware of climate change on a global scale, the increasing American population and its economic uses of the environment demonstrated to Dwight the ability of society to negatively affect the natural world, which given Dwight's earlier celebration of using natural resources for the benefit of society, he would not have opposed. Nonetheless, Dwight cautions his contemporary readers that in order to assure the future success of the nation, attention must be given to the state of the environment, along with the state of their souls and government. Awareness is an initially necessary response, but the environment also necessitates "[r]edress" for "the ravage of the encroaching clime," though Dwight offers no direct actions that might counteract the negative effects of human activity in the natural world. Fighting the effects of "the sad curse" requires action, though the curse for Dwight may be the curse of sin on humankind. As a Christian, Dwight would have seen the ideas of death and decay entering the world after the fall of mankind into sin, the curse of sin affects all creation. This is why, in part, Dwight also

sees America as a new Eden that will one day cover the entire globe (7.111); the curse of sin can be countered through Dwight's religious humanism which provides both individual and collective salvation, allowing Americans to "rebuild the waste of time" by moving forward economically, politically, spiritually, and individually. This will, in turn, lead to a lengthening of life spans: "[p]rotract man's date, bid age with verdure bloom, / And strew with flowers the journey to the tomb" (7.481-482). Dwight not only suggests the hope of lengthening life, he also hints that improving the environment will make life as a whole better, life's "journey to the tomb" will be ameliorated with the benefits of nature as a counter to the "sad curse" (7.480) of sin. The nation will consequently benefit as the quality of life improves with a recognition of, and response to, the contemporary course of the environment.

Dwight then predicts the rising nature of American cultural productions by desecrating, with no absence of self-awareness, "rising bards [who] ascend the steep of fame" (7.483), suggesting that American poetry will compare to Homer and Milton (7.483-492). He also suggests the success of American visual artists such as painters (7.493-504), referring to John Trumbull the painter (7.504), as well as home-grown musicians (7.505-512). All of these cultural advancements will be, however, subordinated in importance to moral concerns: "[b]ut chief, my sons shall Moral science trace, / Man's nature, duties, dignity, and place" (7.513-514). Concern is also given, again, to the balance of political powers: "... balanc'd powers, in just gradation, prove / The means of order, freedom, peace, and love, / Of bliss, at home, of homage fair, abroad" (7.519-521). While the long-term success of the nation is dependent on following Dwight's religious humanism, its immediate political and social stability are linked to the balance of powers within the government. Cultural "order," political "freedom," social "peace," and interpersonal "love" all flow from the fountain of a well-balanced government; the building

is in order (7.273-275) and this order provides stability to the nation in the present, allowing it then to ascend toward the ideals held out by Dwight as the end result of following his plans for America. This order will also provide “bliss” in the nation and “homage” from other countries, securing America’s population both tranquility at home and respect among other nations, suggesting an ideal state in which the country is at rest with no threat of disorder at home or “abroad.” While the role of Providential blessing is given, Dwight’s emphasis on religious humanism suggests a strong push toward, but not a complete embrace of, relying on human efforts to secure the future of the nation as the country worked to bring “[j]ustice to man, and piety to God” (7.522). Dwight’s disjunctive nationalism is designed to direct the nation along a course of religious humanism which he felt would lead the country away from its youth and into a maturity that would become an example to the rest of the world.

Dwight then enters into a description of what the country will look like once this transition takes effect. America will be prosperous in the sense that it will not necessarily possess exorbitant quantities of wealth, but rather that it will possess a surplus of goods above those required to meet basic needs. Without this sense of balance, needs are met but not necessarily all desires are fulfilled, then the country risks falling away from its principles and collapsing into the tumult that appeared to be taking over the country in the 1780s. Balance is necessary in Dwight’s eyes so that the nation falls neither into famine and disorder, or pride at the excess of wealth. It is then his earlier vision of a predominate economic equality (7.136-138) finds expression in greater detail:

For here, alike to want, and wealth, allied,
Plac’d in the mean, ’twixt poverty and pride,
The goal, where faithful virtue most is found,
The goal, where strong temptations least abound,
Nor sloth benumbs, nor luxury betrays,
Nor splendour awes, nor lures to dangerous ways,

Where the poor boldly tell their woes severe,
Fear no neglect, and find the mingling tear,
From civil toils, cabals, and party-heat,
My sacred clerks spontaneous shall retreat;
To others leave to others what is given,
And shine, the mere ambassadors of HEAVEN;
Spread truth, build virtue, sorrow soothe, and pain,
And rear primæval piety again. (7.545-558, poet's capitalization)

Dwight's vision of prosperity for America is a holistic prosperity; physical needs are satisfied as are spiritual and moral needs. America has neither too little, nor too much, and it is "twixt poverty and pride" that allows for "faithful virtue" to be "found" and thereby provides the country a moral basis on which to build its future. Linking the economic state of the country with its morality, Dwight suggests that an economic middle ground will provide the best opportunity for the nation. He also spiritualizes economic power, suggesting that in times of excess there is more temptation, because it is when there is neither plenty nor want that "strong temptations least abound." As a Congregationalist minister, Dwight's underlying argument in *Greenfield Hill* is that if America is to succeed, it must first be based on Christianity, an idea which many but certainly not all of his contemporaries would have agreed with in principle. It is with this perspective that he posits his religious humanism, and if this is forgotten, Dwight reminds his readers near the conclusion of the final part of the epic, America will not last in the long term. This religious humanism also requires the hard work and dedication of his readers. "The goal," Dwight suggests, is for the nation to be in a place free from the entanglements that might betray the success of the nation; America needs to become a place where no "sloth benumbs, nor luxury betrays, / Nor splendour awes, nor lures to dangerous ways," suggesting that economic extremes can either numb readers to, or "betray" them from, realities greater than economic circumstances, such as spiritual and moral planes. Being "awed" by excess may "lure" readers away from the social and religious principles with which Dwight faithfully sought to instruct his readers, and

thereby the nation, throughout his epic. The most didactic of the poets studied here, Dwight's sense of morality and his commitment to Christianity are reflected in his tempering optimism for America's future with moral cautions, recognitions that if the foundations of the country are damaged, so will be the future potential of the country. Conversely, if that foundation is strengthened, then America can become a political saviour to the rest of the world, lifted up through its diligent application of Dwight's religious humanism. America then becomes a land "[w]here the poor boldly tell their woes severe, / Fear no neglect, and find the mingling tear" (7.551-552), echoing the earlier declaration of, "[h]ow few the rich, or poor! how many bless'd!" (7.126). Economic inequality, though not completely eliminated on the nation's journey into the future, nonetheless is ameliorated and those in need are provided for rather than ignored. As a minister one of Dwight's concerns was to be aware of the plight of the needy; consequently, he builds an awareness of the poor into the poem, because like other social ills, Dwight sees it as an injustice which must be remedied in order for the nation to effectively fulfill its Christian principles that Dwight assumes the nation will follow. Helping the poor with the hope that eventual prosperity will lift them from their lower economic position, Dwight's recurrent focus on their position within society within a section of the poem ostensibly dedicated to envisioning the future success of the nation suggests its importance to his view of America; the nation must focus on not only moving forward itself, but also assisting those who are disadvantaged.

In this same part of the poem, Dwight also addresses the penal system and suggests its reformation as well, linking it closely with the social position of the poor in 7.367-400: "[i]n this dread mansion, shall the culprit find / His country's laws, not just alone, but kind; / And fed, and clad, and lodg'd, with comfort, feel" (7.387-389). This is soon followed by the hope that America's "... scope shall Policy extend, / Nor to check crimes be still her single end. / Her hand

shall aid the poor, the sad console” (7.391-392). Addressing the treatment of those in the penal system by recognizing their right to not only justice, but also redemption necessitates “laws, not just alone, but kind.” Dwight’s linking of crime to poverty underscores both his recognition of the complexities of societal challenges as well as the multifaceted approach necessary for America in the late 18th century to move forward into a sustainable, and eventually successful, future. Dwight also reflects briefly on the social turmoil which the nation experienced in the 1770s and 1780s, mentioning that America’s future will include an escape “[f]rom civil toils, cabals, and party-heat,” which both reflected and perpetuated social and political divisions throughout the country. These divisions, seen publicly in argumentative exchanges on the pages of newspapers nationwide and reflected in the national literature (e.g., the political verse of Freneau and *The Anarchiad*), were impediments to the potential future of the nation. Keenly aware of the problems which America faced, Dwight maintains an overall optimistic vision for the future; America will rise “[a]nd shine, the mere ambassadors of HEAVEN; / Spread truth, build virtue, sorrow soothe, and pain, / And rear primæval piety again” (7.556-558). Recalling his earlier allusions to America as politically salvific for other nations, Dwight also sees America as engaging in spreading Christianity throughout the world along with its political and economic progress. The nation will be “ambassadors” of divine purposes, and they will not spread cultural imperialism, but rather “truth” and “virtue” as they assuage the troubles of the world. This is not for the sake alone of spreading American political ideals, but also with the goal of spreading Christianity; the nation’s people are “ambassadors” for a Heavenly kingdom who are seeking to restore “primæval piety again,” recalling Dwight’s earlier vision of the United States as a new Eden (7.111). The implication is that America, as an Eden once it enacts Dwight’s various instructions addressing social and economic justice, will be a source for restoring prelapsarian

spiritual unity with God: “Edens gild anew the ball” (7.111), spreading from America outward. This is the “primæval piety” which Dwight longs to see spread across the world, not just the American political and cultural systems. The future, for Dwight, is one in which America becomes “ambassadors” who spread Christianity as missionaries. America’s imagined future, in Dwight’s nationalistic Christianity manifested through his religious humanism, becomes one of a Christian nation dedicated to its own improvement and to the spread of Christianity.

Concurrent to the idea that Americans would spread their influence across the world as heaven-sent envoys, Dwight concludes *Greenfield Hill* by providing his final vision of America as a nation to which others travel in order to learn of its successes: “Here they shall learn what manners bliss assure; / What sway creates it, and what laws secure” (7.639-640). The rule of law, the manners, the “sway [that] creates it” all, is America’s application of Dwight’s directives, “secured” through the laws of man and God. This America will be, in effect, perfect as many areas of society grow: “Here they shall see an æra new of Fame, / Where science wreathes, and worth confers a name” (7.647-648). America’s “æra new of Fame” will be on display to the world and its attraction of people from nations across the world will be concurrent to its progress in the sciences which will, along with other factors already discussed, provide a new sense of worth for the nation and its citizens. Dwight’s optimistic vision in Part 7 may feel repetitive, for almost 666 lines (he stopped at 664) the progress of his vision for America progresses slowly, covering a variety of topics which he deemed necessary to address if the nation was going to move forward into a successful future. The course of this part of the poem, along with the rest of the poem, slowly builds to the final few stanzas that lay out what Dwight ultimately sees America as a part of: not just a blessed nation that influences the rest of the world, but more importantly for Dwight, a part of a larger divine plan for the world. While this sense of

providential purpose for America was not unique to his time or any since, Dwight's perspective is intertwined with an American nationalism that relies heavily on religious humanism that sees the work of the nation as partially dependent on man's efforts as well as God's blessings, and more specifically, obedience to Christianity's mandates, which he saw as relevant to working against slavery, altering the penal system, and alleviating the struggles of the poor. The imagined future promises an American nationalism that is prosperous, but also a nationalism that disappears into a mix of world cultures as the globe falls under one sense of identity, an idea similar to Barlow's secular vision for global unity in Book 10 of *The Columbiad* (paralleled in *The Vision of Columbus* Book 9).

The future for Dwight is one placidly perfect painting of peace and prosperity, pointing to the potential for pushing forward through his contemporary times ahead toward something more hopeful than a nation just settling into its relatively newly established government in the 1790s, and still facing centuries of challenges ahead, both within and without. Calling up oceanic imagery, Dwight remarks, "[f]rom yon blue wave, to that far distant shore, / Where suns decline, and evening oceans roar, / Their eyes shall view one free elective sway" (7.653-655). Dwight envisions American influence spreading from sea to shining sea across the globe, "that far distant shore," reaching across the oceans to spread its political model, so that everyone everywhere embraces electioneering as Americans do: "[t]heir eyes shall view one free elective sway." This implies the death of monarchies and aristocracies, "[w]here suns decline" suggesting these disappearances in light of an empire which boasted that no sun set on it, and the disappearance of dictatorial regimes. Rather, people will elect their officials with the "sway" of the majority of voters making decisions that are "free" from the undue influences of those forces which negate democratic principles. This imagery echoes Dwight's earlier discussion of missionary works to

be carried out by the American nation, whose efforts to Christianize the globe will witness "... one redemption reach to every shore" (7.314). Dwight sees the religious and political endeavors of the future of America as the same, with the spreading of religion preceding that of American political systems. The imagined future presents the opportunity for the expansion of American influence and for America to become a model for the world, setting up the American system in a context that adds weight to the contemporary cultural, social, and political decisions being made in the late 18th century, in light of the presumed future influence which Dwight foresees. The world will become one unified nation eventually as "[o]ne blood, one kindred, reach from sea to sea; / One language spread; one tide of manners run; / One scheme of science, and of morals one" (7.656-658). While recognizing the geographical and cultural diversity of the world (see 7.631-638), Dwight sees humankind as "[o]ne blood, one kindred" because of his Biblical understanding of history, which included the belief in Babel as a time when all of humanity were united through a common language and desire, to build a tower to heaven: "Like Babel's dome, intended for the skies; / One speech, one soul, to every builder given" (7.276-277). For Dwight, to possess the same language, the language of Christianity, provides "one soul" to everyone connected through that "language;" Christianity is "[o]ne language spread" (7.657) which allows for there to be "one tide of manners" in this newly united "one kindred" of those in the Christian faith. This "one language" is also important because, like in the story of Babel, it was a necessary prerequisite to national unity and national unity was a prerequisite for cultural progress (i.e., building the Tower of Babel). For the world to move forward, as was also true for America in the late 18th century implicatively, there must be a unity of language, not necessarily in terms of an actual language, but also in terms of similar ideas and perspectives on religion and government. As a Federalist, Dwight believed in a strong central government capable of leading the nation,

something that could not take place in an atmosphere of political division. Dwight's imagined American future is also concerned with his contemporary society, for America to move forward in the present, it must look to its future influence in the world which will, like America according to Dwight, become united. America must first find its own universal language, for Dwight the language of a Christianized Federalism, added to his religious humanism, which together provide the growing nation with a vision for the future, and the roadmap there. Suggesting worldwide influence in the future allows Dwight to suggest that the American nation must focus on its contemporary struggles, as well as face those areas it had not yet fully addressed, such as slavery. Dwight sees the spreading influence of his faith as carrying not just religious significance, but also cultural and social influence as people begin sharing common beliefs along with the same "manners," producing not just social and cultural unity, but political unity as well. This permits parallel movements within both "science" and "morals," which are now joined within their own respective spheres and leading toward ever-increasing progress. American progress, discussed earlier in the poem, serves as a precedent and example for the progress of the world outside of the United States, suggesting the importance of contemporary efforts to improve the nation.

The spreading of progress through every area of humanity, such as science and morals (7.658), will be based not so much on the political improvements made by the American scheme of government that will also hold global influence, but the primary foundation for the growth of progress will be "... God's own Word the structure, and the base, / One faith extend, one worship, and one praise" (7.659-660). This new world "structure" will, unlike Babel, stand because its "base" is "God's own Word," the Bible, and here by extension, Christianity. This is the deciding difference for Dwight between ancient Babel, the people of whom shared a common

language, and the future world he foresees, which will also possess “one language.” The difference between the endeavor of man (Babel) and the future of the United States in its globalized form is that their languages, or bases, are different; one the language of man (humanism), the other the Word of God, which coupled with human effort that Dwight presents throughout *Greenfield Hill*, becomes religious humanism. This is Dwight’s disjunctive nationalism, he sees the sustaining of the nation in the present, and its success in the imagined future, as inherently interwoven with the nation’s reliance on religious faith in order to address its contemporary wrongs and in order to inspire a national ethic that will instill patterns of success based on Christian principles, and consequently, become a source for the globalization of Christianity and American political systems. “God’s own Word” is both “structure, and the base” on which the new world will be built in order for it to be sustainable, and this will “[o]ne faith extend” as the world embraces the common language of Christianity.

As the poem moves toward its conclusion, Dwight attempts to show the diversity of areas unified at the end of America, as the nation becomes the world and the world becomes American in culture and society. Leaving his readers with millennial, but not apocalyptic, imagery, Dwight concludes *Greenfield Hill* with the image of a world that has become like America, but only if America has become like Dwight’s vision. This new society will experience an awakening as “[n]ew light, new glory, fire the general mind, / And peace, and freedom, re-illumine mankind” (7.663-664). With a single language the world will experience a restoration of Eden as “[n]ew light” and “new glory” are experienced under the ameliorating influences of Christianity, a millennial world takes shape under the rule not of Christ as suggested in the Bible, but rather the “free elective sway” (7.655) of the American political system on a worldwide scale, all votes being based on “God’s own Word” (7.659). As a reflection of Dwight’s religious humanism, his

theological beliefs become fused with humanism in an optimistically imagined future. This millennial Eden experiences prosperity as “peace, and freedom, re-illumine mankind” in the restoration of prelapsarian values which Dwight perceived to be taking place on a smaller scale in the early United States. Dwight’s imagined future became an opportunity to combine his political and religious beliefs into a single vision that served to direct the nation toward what he viewed as success. Recognizing the challenges that lay ahead, Dwight carefully positioned discussion of the mistreatment of Native Americans and African American slavery in order to suggest to his contemporary readers the necessity of addressing these cultural sins in order to move forward. For Dwight, America held the potential to become the next Eden the Puritans dreamed of, to become a world-wide influence that broke the chains of slavery to the evils of the past, moral and political, and to become, built on the foundation of Christianity and through the hard work of its citizens, a source of “peace, and freedom” that could “re-illumine mankind,” providing Dwight’s contemporary readers with not just a hope to look forward to, but also a pathway to follow.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the American Republic grew both in population and cultural productions in diverse efforts to answer the nation's own questions of self-identity and direction. Poets from across diverse political, gendered, theological, and racial perspectives sought to answer those questions in disjunctive ways by using both the imagined author and the text as an imagined community as the bases for building their respective visions for American national identity. With the text as an imagined community, authors constructed interconnected literary communities not only around specific texts, but also around particular ideas and visions for the American nation. These literary communities could be expanded (as in the case of Timothy Dwight through *The Conquest of Canaan* and then *Greenfield Hill*, by Joel Barlow through *The Vision of Columbus* and then *The Columbiad*, and Phillis Wheatley throughout her literary career from the 1760s through 1784) by the publication of further texts by the same author, thus extending the reach of influence of individual authors while simultaneously creating the author as an imagined entity. With both text and author the creations of the reading public's imagination, the ability to use these as avenues for communicating responses to, and visions for, the nation became an immediate potential reality with the publication of each new work. Whether as a single poem in a newspaper or a national epic, poetry became an opportunity to shape the nation in a unique way, unique to each author's vision of disjunctive nationalism juxtaposed against other concurrent literary, social, theological, and political views on the direction of the nation.

This juxtaposition becomes distinct as the various poetic expressions of the early republic are viewed alongside each other. The constructions of these poetic visions occur simultaneously to the use of the imagined past, the imagined present, and the imagined future as avenues for exploring and communicating a variety of alternative national paths as each poet sought to prioritize her or his own voice in the cacophony of a developing American literature. Part of the development of a larger American culture, the evolution of American literature as an artifact of the development of the American nation demonstrates the use of chronotopic applications of disjunctive nationalisms across time periods ranging from the deeply ancient (almost timeless in *The Anarchiad*) into the contemporary swirl of the political and cultural troubles of the early republic, and on into the (occasionally Millennial) infinite future of the nation. These applications came as responses to the call for a national literature, as well as responses to a society in a constantly fluctuating sense of national identity through struggling to win independence from the British, and to finding a contemporary sustainability in the face of challenges from within (i.e., Shay's Rebellion) and without (i.e., the Barbary Pirates).

The imagined past was used by such poets as Joel Barlow and Timothy Dwight as they established a deeper past for the American nation that went beyond colonial histories, suggesting that the nation's roots were at least as deep as those of European nations. This worked to legitimize current American cultural productions as the products of long-standing traditions and themes which were not exclusively based, as was so often the case of European and present-day accusations, on European literary traditions. In fact, this work to use an imagined American past is itself a way of constructing an American literary tradition that, despite drawing on Old World genres and forms, allows for an expansion of what John Shields has termed *translatio cultus*. Through observing the use of the imagined past, present, and future, this work has expanded on

Shields' idea to demonstrate that chronotopic applications were essential in the reworking of Old World stories in a New World context and that, rather than simply providing re-articulations of Old World ideas as Shields suggests, permitted early national American authors to respond to, and expand, visions of nationalism in the new Republic. The imagined present provided authors with the ability to readily demonstrate their responsiveness to the currents of culture by implementing poetic responses to current events that both responded to and reshaped contemporary events in ways that allowed those poets to appropriate the imagined present in the construction of disjunctive nationalisms. Joel Barlow, Philip Freneau, John Trumbull, and Phillis Wheatley, among others, responded to current events by using their literary talents to demonstrate the pliability of the present when left to a literary lens, suggesting to contemporary readers the relevancy not only of each author's voice specifically, but of the importance of literature more generally to the national experience. Poetry could not only communicate current events, it could also provide suggestions for responding to those present events while also demonstrating alternative views of the nation's progress as it slowly moved away from British tyranny and into an era of sustainable independence and peace. The imagined future allowed authors to adopt the role of national seer as many poets declared the future glories of the American nation politically, economically, and socially. These predictions were almost exclusively positive as no patriotic reader desired to read of a doomed America. But even within the promises of future glories, disjunctive nationalisms arose that ranged from the particular paths to arrive at the promised glorious future to the eventual state of the American nation, whether it would continue to maintain its own national and political identity (Freneau), or whether it would be subsumed within a larger one-world government (Barlow and Dwight). The bases for these nationalistic visions ranged from Christian eschatology to humanistic deism, but

almost always held forth the hope that the American nation would progress beyond the struggles of the late 18th century into a peaceful and prosperous future that presented America, and its governmental structure, as models for the rest of the globe. Use of the imagined future to predict a rising glory for the American nation became a way to encourage not only hope for the future, but also hope for the lived present. Imagining the future allowed poets to draw from the past, present, and the unforeseen future, such as in Barlow's *The Columbiad*, while also providing a time and place further away from the present that could be viewed as a goal toward which to move the nation. By presenting an ideal future for the nation, poets created cultural and literary precedents for the idea of Manifest Destiny, as was especially the case with poets possessing strong religious convictions, such as Timothy Dwight. Through the imagined past, imagined present, and the imagined future, poets of the early national period used their texts as imagined communities that created and responded to disjunctive nationalisms from diverse perspectives that reflected the disjunctive nature of the early American republic.

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