Michael Warner and others have characterized "circulation" as enabling a composition to address an audience of strangers who, by devoting attention to it, become its public. To examine Warner's notion critically, this essay traces the "re-circulation" of one eighteenth-century print to argue that, despite the seemingly stable surface imagery, the composition's migration across place, time, and medium affected the eventfulness and timeliness of its contingent meanings and the shifting terrain of its rhetorical usages. Re-circulation can be rhetorical in that it is both a response to an earlier version and a reshaping of it for other, sometimes overlapping audiences.

In April 1774, only months after the Boston Tea Party, a political print entitled "The able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught," portrayed British America as a female American Indian resisting sexual assault by British government officials (Figure 1). Circulated initially by the London Magazine, "The able Doctor" criticized Parliament's passage of the Boston Port Bill, which punished the city for destroying a fortune in tea. This was the first of five Parliamentary acts known today as the Coercive Acts or the Intolerable Acts. To judge from the rapid, wide circulation of "The able Doctor" in a series of almost identical reproductions,

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this pictorial composition was politically useful to print makers, publishers, and other partisans throughout the British Empire. Advocates re-circulated the pictorial composition in varied media to a range of audiences located throughout the empire in places as varied as Britain, Ireland, and the British colonies in America.

The composition of “The able Doctor” was widely known in eighteenth-century visual culture, to judge from its re-circulation in numerous publications throughout the British Empire. Versions of “The able Doctor” were published in contemporary magazines, almanacs, and broadsides, such as the London Magazine published in London, the Hibernian Magazine in Dublin, the Royal American Magazine in Boston, Freebetter’s New-England Almanack in New London, Connecticut, a political pamphlet entitled the Watchman’s Alarm in Salem, Massachusetts, and at least one large broadside produced in Philadelphia. During the war, versions of the pictorial composition recurred on powder horns. Today, one or another print from the series regularly illustrates a pivotal event in histories of the American Revolution. But, to my knowledge, nobody has traced the print’s circulation and re-circulation as a message.
touching diverse audiences throughout the British Empire during the eighteenth century.

This essay contributes to a rhetorical history of visual culture in that it provides the most comprehensive account of the poignant composition's extensive re-circulation. More important, the essay treats each re-circulation of the composition as an image maker's or publisher's active response to one or another of the earlier versions. By this means, partisans exercised a circumscribed degree of rhetorical agency in that they attempted to reshape a composition's contingent meanings for different audiences. Circulation is a much broader subject than re-circulation, because most public compositions circulate to audiences, but only a subset of them are selected by other advocates for reuse during a controversy.

"Rhetorical re-circulation" names a precise relationship among a body of remarkably similar compositions patterned deliberately after an earlier, almost identical composition. In contrast with the familiar term "motif," which ordinarily features a repetitive pictorial element across more than one composition, "re-circulation" concentrates on a series of works wherein the entire composition is so similar as to be almost identical. Of course, if a single motif constitutes the entire design in an initial composition and later derived versions (as in the case of Benjamin Franklin's woodcut, "JOIN, or DIE"), then the motif's reuse would also exemplify re-circulation. It may be helpful, moreover, to compare re-circulation with "appropriation," which Helene A. Shugart defines as "any instance in which means commonly associated with and/or perceived as belonging to another are used to further one's own ends." She emphasizes that appropriation entails the combined qualities of taking a work as "one's own" and its reuse to "challenge" the original user's work by imitation or borrowing of "meanings and experiences." In contrast, re-circulation foregrounds the public distribution of a work rather than any propertied claim to its ownership. Moreover, re-circulation is not necessarily adversarial. Re-circulation may be done for reasons ranging from solidarity to partisan opposition.¹

In this essay, I will discuss what may precisely be termed "rhetorical re-circulation" in that other image makers and publishers seize on an original image or work to refashion an almost identical composition's subsequent persuasive uses. Such partisans exercise a degree of rhetorical agency by reproducing, reframing, and redistributing it from other locations to attentive audiences under different circumstances, which were not necessarily anticipated by the original maker. Rhetorical re-circulation, wherein subsequent image makers reuse any earlier composition to influence audiences, could be applied to verbal, visual, or musical works alone or in combination. Sometimes such re-circulation of "The able Doctor" entailed minor modifications in the composition's design, such as the insertion of the word "TEA" or the omission of a character. More often, it involved supplying alternative and supplemental pictorial or verbal materials. On still other occasions, image makers employed an
altogether different medium, as when the composition was transferred onto
military equipment, whereon its material qualities and wartime uses impinged
on the inscribed, pictorial composition's altered meanings.

Rhetorical re-circulation is useful for studying the history of public affairs,
because attention to modifications across a series of apparently similar com-
positions makes it possible, through public documents, to trace communi-
cative patterns of active interaction with one or another of the earlier persuas-
ive efforts. This interaction with a composition may range from subversion
and partisan reversal to solidarity. A re-circulated print, for example, provides
visual evidence of a contemporaneous partisan's engagement with an earlier
composition, because the partisan has actively revised it for redistribution to
influence another, sometimes overlapping audience.

For each re-circulation of the pictorial composition, the circumstances in
the locations of subsequent, attentive audiences profoundly altered the picto-
rial composition's reception and visual consumption because of such factors
as the medium, other symbolic materials available to viewers in their locales,
and each community's existing systems of belief or ideologies. Extant evidence
for documenting the contingent meanings for interpreting or consuming the
re-circulated prints consists of both pictorial and verbal materials. This essay's
use of both sorts of materials might be easily misunderstood as depending on
the accompanying texts alone, because extensive textual evidence is available
for each version. However, each reproduction of the print itself will also be
considered as visual evidence of at least one viewer's interactions with one or
another of the earlier versions, to which each subsequent print must inevita-
bly refer, even when the reproduction addressed new audiences in substantially
different locales and communities. Minimally, subsequent image makers and
publishers needed to be aware of one or another of the earlier versions to make
each derivation. It is probable that many viewers in each locale knew of one
or more of the earlier print versions of "The able Doctor," because the London
Magazine circulated throughout the British Empire and beyond it to an interna-
tional readership. In certain instances, such as a broadside version printed
in Philadelphia, it is likely, though not certain, that print makers and publish-
ers presupposed that their viewers had already seen at least one earlier version,
because the rewording of the print's title could be understood as an American
response to British misdeeds featured in the original title.

For a combination of reasons, "The able Doctor" provides an example for
sketching some rhetorical considerations when visual rhetoric and public
address scholars endeavor to interpret visual evidence rhetorically—that is, as
symbolic instruments to influence the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of con-
temporaneous audiences, who, during controversies, actively participated in
the visual reception and consumption of re-circulated compositions in their
altered formats and varied cultural circumstances. First, "The able Doctor" was circulated and re-circulated repeatedly by different image makers and publishers on both sides of the Atlantic before a wide range of audiences with divergent political and economic perspectives on the Boston Port Bill. Second, those perspectives changed dramatically within a few months as Parliament passed additional, coercive laws soon after the original print's initial distribution. Third, the pictorial composition was reproduced in various media with different accompanying texts and images that coaxed revised interpretations of the slightly modified versions within each community.

In addition, an appreciation for the communicative uses of such visual evidence at the moment of their redistribution has ramifications for scholarship concerning what is variously called "public memory," "collective memory," and, in general, narrative history itself. As visual evidence, "The able Doctor" is routinely used to portray the Coercive Acts in histories of the American Revolution. However, despite the value of interpreting such prints rhetorically, historians have tended to devalue and sometimes misrepresent them. Phillip Davidson's monumental book, Propaganda and the American Revolution, 1763-1783, got almost every detail incorrect while identifying the figures in "The able Doctor." Davidson misidentified Lord Frederick North, who was the first minister in Parliament, as King George III. This difference matters for interpreting the visual evidence because, during the final stage of the revolutionary process, Americans shifted primary blame for their treatment from Parliament to the king. In addition, Davidson replaced the easily recognized image of Britannia with Liberty, another personification. Consequently, Davidson's classic book is probably the source of James Jasinski's impression that the woman designating Britannia in "The able Doctor" was "Liberty." It would be precise to note instead that Britannia's usual attributes of the liberty pole and cap conveyed this British value. Moreover, Davidson represented the female American Indian as a male. Consequently, he probably eliminated the portents of rape with its gender and sex-based ramifications in political culture. One of Paul Revere's biographers, Esther Forbes, fared no better in assessing his production of prints during 1774, among them his derived version of "The able Doctor." She asserted that his prints in 1774 were "less political" than in other years; however, one would be hard pressed to identify more overtly political prints than Revere's engravings in 1774 for the Royal American Magazine.

By foregrounding what I am calling the rhetorical re-circulation of a composition, this essay illustrates some possibilities for interpretation of visual evidence available to scholars in history, biography, public address, and visual rhetoric. In this respect, the essay could be viewed as responding to John Louis Lucaites's call for historians of visual culture like David Hackett Fischer to delve deeply into "more-focused studies that examine the particular rhetoric of
specific visual practices and phenomena as they implicate the public consciousness.” In what follows, I argue that pictorial compositions such as “The able Doctor” not only circulated among what Michael Warner and others before him have recently called “publics and counterpublics,” but were also actively reproduced, transformed, and appropriated by one image maker after another in their historical moments as partisans sought to influence beliefs and actions of their audiences. The circulation of pictorial compositions did not only constitute their audiences, as Warner has suggested. Rather, compositions were actively engaged and reshaped by the audiences when they formulated diverse and partisan perspectives on the visual rhetoric, as evidenced, in part, by subsequent rhetorical re-circulations. Sometimes audiences exercised a circumscribed degree of agency by redesigning and re-circulating derived versions of the composition, reshaping the message, on occasion literally recasting characters in it by reproducing it in deliberately altered contexts to suit local circumstances and concerns. The essay begins with a general discussion of circulation and rhetorical re-circulation in the discipline of communication. Then the essay provides an orientation to the pictorial composition produced in London and, subsequently, traces its re-circulation as the composition migrated to communities located in Ireland and British America.

**Circulation and Rhetorical Re-Circulation**

Michael Warner and others have characterized “circulation” as enabling a composition to address an audience of strangers who, by devoting attention to it, become its public. To examine Warner’s notion critically, this essay traces the re-circulation of one eighteenth-century print series to analyze its repetitive uses as addressed to varied audiences within the British Empire. Warner observes in *Publics and Counterpublics*, for instance, that there is a “kind of public that comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation.” Generalizing, he notes, “Anything that addresses a public is meant to undergo circulation. This helps us to understand why print, and the organization of markets for print, were historically so central in the development of the public sphere.” Warner adds, “Circulation also accounts for the way a public seems both internal and external to discourse, both notional and material. From the concrete experiences of a world in which available forms circulate, one projects a public.” With regard to the spoken word, he continues, “Public speech can have great urgency and intimate import. Yet we know that it was addressed not exactly to us but to the stranger we were until the moment we happened to be addressed by it.” More generally, there is an eventfulness and timeliness to the circulation of texts, as Warner recognizes: “The temporality of circulation is not continuous or indefinite; it is punctual.”
Circulation is a familiar term to scholars of visual rhetoric and public address. For example, circulation has been pivotal, if sometimes implicit, in scholarship by coauthors Janis L. Edwards and Carol K. Winkler, coauthors Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, and Cara A. Finnegan, who have used it to propose such key concepts as “representative form,” “iconicity,” and “image vernaculars.” These essays concentrate on how specific photographic images have become widely recognized through subsequent redistribution of an original photograph, sometimes in a range of additional visual media. Other recent essays by Ekaterina V. Haskins and by coauthors James J. Kimble and Lester C. Olson explore circulation’s ramifications for public memory through images in such media as postage stamps, shop posters, and digital or Internet technologies. Most public address and visual rhetoric scholarship on circulation mentioned thus far has focused on how the original message migrates through reproductions across time, place, and medium within U.S. culture, though occasionally, specific pictorial compositions have been traced as they move across regional, national, or imperial boundaries because of acts of appropriation. In contrast, sometimes the audience circulates rather than the composition. For instance, Diane S. Hope has examined the use of immense photographs called coloramas that were displayed in New York at Grand Central Terminal, where travelers would encounter one or another of them.

Beyond the discipline of communication, circulation has received attention in an expanding body of scholarship, which tends to be concerned with exploring the circulation of both messages and economic capital. By taking a relatively narrow focus here on the specific practice of re-circulating messages, I hope to intervene in a particular debate concerning Michael Warner’s characterization of circulation’s role in constituting audiences, a specific subject within a larger body of literature. What is distinctive about Warner’s treatment of circulation is his notion that a “public” or “counterpublic” is constituted by a message as it circulates within a culture. In his view, audiences—who are addressed or hailed by a circulating message—are constituted as “publics” by the very act of recognizing the text as meaningful to them. Attention to the composition as meaningful is necessary and sufficient to become its public. In this respect, Warner integrates Louis Althusser’s notion of interpellation along the lines that Maurice Charland and others have characterized as constitutive rhetoric.

Warner does not, however, amplify the feature that I wish to underscore in this essay, namely, diverse publishers’ and image makers’ circumscribed rhetorical agency by reshaping both the composition itself and its resituated meanings through their derived and re-circulated compositions addressed to subsequent audiences located elsewhere. This aspect of any public’s attention is undeveloped in Warner’s essay, though he does acknowledge that “texts,” which
"clamor at us," and "images," which "solicit our gaze," also "by no means render us passive." More generally, his focus on attention, however useful for defining a meaning of "public," could be extended by appreciation for the rich range of rhetorical motives, forms, and genres informing any public's attentiveness to compositions. Warner's essay does not expand much on the multiplicity of ways in which such audiences may engage the texts as meaningful—such as to reshape, subvert, redefine, reverse, or otherwise modify its range of meanings, sometimes examining it for such purposes as surveillance.\textsuperscript{14}

Re-circulation of a composition maintains a sharp focus on the publicness of each message's distribution and its new audience's constitution instead of, for example, adversarial or countering motives for its reuse, often characterized broadly in the study of visual rhetoric as appropriation.\textsuperscript{15} Unfortunately, with a few notable exceptions such as Shugar's essay, appropriation has also been used in such vague and ill-defined ways that it may include any and all reuse of materials for political communication, including even general treatment of the same subject matter or allusions to it.\textsuperscript{16} Re-circulation, in contrast, provides an accessible public basis for inquiry concerning producers' and audiences' reuses for the nearly identical compositions. Most important, critics and historians of visual culture can treat re-circulation of a composition as evidence of contemporaries' critical engagement in substantive responses to one or another of the earlier versions and its contingent meanings, despite similarities characterizing the composition.

Scholarship concerning rhetorical re-circulation entails examination of extant evidence detailing the varied reproductions in a genealogy for the series over time, place, and medium. In addition, it is necessary to explore evidence concerning each version's active reframing and repositioning in subsequent communication and commodities, its redistribution within communities in varied locales, and the subsequent audiences' active engagement with the images, which is seldom passive. Moreover, discerning varieties of public attention to messages entails appreciation for subsequent image makers' social roles and personal stakes in ongoing controversies, as well as their varied audiences' range of possible interpretations. Many viewers might have become overlapping audiences, or "publics," inasmuch as they may have also seen the original or another earlier version. Consequently, the viewers' reception and consumption of subsequent versions might be informed by one or another of the earlier works in the series. Still other viewers among the later publisher or image maker's audiences may have not viewed any earlier version in the series, having only the redesigned composition with its supplemental images and texts for understanding a re-circulated message.

In what follows, I trace the circulation and re-circulation of "The able Doctor" to notice and analyze its rhetorical uses as the print was actively reproduced and
redistributed to varied audiences within the British Empire. I will attend specifically to how the pictorial composition was relocated in its actively reconstructed relationship to other images and texts in media and locales differing significantly from each other. In doing so, I concentrate on how the pictorial composition’s movement across time, place, and medium, as it was reproduced by partisans again and again in attentive communities, affected the eventfulness and timeliness of its contingent meanings and the shifting terrain of its rhetorical usages, despite the seemingly stable surface imagery of the text. Viewers actively interacted with the composition in its relationship to other images and texts in the specific medium featuring it, and they brought their knowledge of fleeting, but consequential, political developments to each reproduction that viewers happened to encounter in their communities. Even though, today, the composition appears quite similar in the numerous, contemporaneous reproductions before the war, the supplemental resources and ideologies that viewers had available to them for understanding it varied remarkably at the time. Let us turn, then, to the original version of “The able Doctor,” which requires the most sustained attention here, since all subsequent works—both pictorial and verbal—depend on it at least partially, even though the original might be altogether absent to later viewers other than the publisher or image maker who reused it.

**London, April 1774**

The earliest of these prints was published in the *London Magazine* for April 1774 (Figure 1), where it illustrated a 20-page report of Parliament’s proceedings culminating in the Boston Port Bill, which punished the city of Boston for dumping huge quantities of tea into the harbor during mid-December 1773. In British America, tea had been taxed by Britain since the Townshend Duties of 1767, at which time tea had “ranked fourth behind cotton and woolens, linens, and ironware, among the mother country’s principal exports to her American colonies.” Imports to British America plummeted after the Townshend Duties, because colonists protested taxation without representation by refusing to purchase tea, resulting in large, deteriorating surpluses in the East India Company’s warehouses. The Parliament’s recent Tea Act in 1773 arranged for the company’s tea to be shipped directly to British America to reduce its cost while retaining the tax, making it possible for the now foundering company to compete with the price of smuggled tea from Holland. Within months, Boston responded with the now legendary Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773, when colonists disguised as American Indians dumped a fortune into Boston harbor.

“The able Doctor” was a relatively immediate response to the British legislation, which punished Boston by closing the city’s harbor, produced as it was days after the Boston Port Bill had been passed in March and before any
remaining Coercive Acts had even been introduced. According to Fredrick J. Hinkhouse's description of the British press at the time, "the London Magazine and the Monthly Review were friendly to the Americans," a generalization supported by the tenor of the print and articles accompanying it. The engraving’s organizational placement amplified both the inexpediency and injustice of the Boston Port Bill, because "The able Doctor" marked a transition from reportage on government proceedings and an abstract of the Boston Port Bill to subsequent articles, which indicted the Boston Port Bill as unwise and unjust.

The print visualized immediate British opposition to the legislation. The title page of the London Magazine described the engraving as a "Humourous Print of the ABLE DOCTOR." This initial version depicted prominent British ministers assaulting a lone American Indian woman representing British America. She has been pinned to the ground by Lord William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, wearing a wig and robes as lord chief justice. Towering above her, Lord North forced scalding tea down her throat. Meanwhile, Lord John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich, who supervised the British navy, peered up her cloth drape with a lustful grin, enacting the portents of rape, a pictorial metaphor portraying the planned naval blockade of Boston harbor as a sexual assault. To the right, Lord John Stuart, Earl of Bute, the much distrusted and despised Scottish leader, who had not been active in public political life for over a decade, stood in highland garb with his sword inscribed "Military Law" in his hand. Pistols protruded through his belt. Britannia, who was located behind the central figures and her familiar shield, turned her face away from the spectacle. Her ambiguous action might have expressed sympathy for the American Indian, or guilt and embarrassment at her public officials’ disgraceful conduct. To the left, male personifications of France and Spain, as suggested by their attire and the order of the Golden Fleece hanging from Spain’s neck, looked on with great interest as they contemplated the imperial struggle’s ramifications for commerce and international diplomacy.

There were three references to "Boston" in the pictorial composition. A document inscribed "Boston Port Bill" can be seen scrolled in Lord North’s pocket. In the background directly above it, the words "Boston cannonaded" were imprinted above a distant group of naval vessels and minute village spires. In the foreground, a tattered document was identified as "Boston Petition," an allusion presumably to the King’s and the Parliament’s refusal to hear petitions presented by Mr. William Bollan, a colonial agent representing Massachusetts, who, by the time of this engraving, had already published one of them under the title The Petition of Mr. Bollan, Agent for the Council of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, to the King in Council, dated January 26, 1774. The accompanying "Debates" in the London Magazine mentioned his feckless efforts to present yet another to
the Parliament (167).\textsuperscript{23} A torn petition reminded viewers that the British government had not honored even the most elementary practice of hearing from the accused before ascertaining guilt. Undeterred, Bollan again had the petition published in London.\textsuperscript{24} "The able Doctor" underscored the injustice of the Parliament's treatment of Boston in particular and British America in general, since the American Indian was a conventional symbol designating colonial America, as well as the Bostonians' disguise during the Boston Tea Party.

That Bollan presented the petitions was noteworthy, because his fellow colony agent representing Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin, had recently been disgraced before the British administration for having sent the private correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson and four of his relatives concerning public matters to Boston where, despite Franklin's expressed wishes, it had been published by Boston radicals. That dramatic spectacle, too, centered in Boston. Widely reprinted reports concerning the Boston Tea Party alternated over the ensuing weeks with stories concerning Franklin's denunciation in Britain, as these entwined controversies produced a chain of unsettling consequences: the publication of the correspondence led to Bostonian radicals' efforts to impeach Lieutenant-Governor Andrew Oliver followed by their petition for Governor Thomas Hutchinson's removal from office, thoroughly disrupting Massachusetts's government. Meanwhile, Franklin's performance was publicly denounced in England by Alexander Wedderburn, the solicitor general, followed by Franklin's dismissal as postmaster general. These entwined controversies lent support in Britain to Lord North's claims that Parliament should decisively engage the deteriorating situation in Boston, which he characterized as "the ringleader in all riots" and "the principal object of our attention for punishment" (168).

The print's reference to Lord North as an "able Doctor" was ironic in that he treated the American Indian with only tea and against her will, an analogy to the British government's foolishness in imagining that Americans could be forced to consume taxed tea and that, as a consequence, their disposition would improve. The print ridiculed North's measures as analogous to using tea to heal serious maladies threatening the constitution. Another pictorial irony was evident in the "able Doctor's" inability to get her to consume the tea, which she puked at his face. Some viewers may have recalled North's declaration in an opening address to Parliament during 1768 that he could not consider a repeal of the Townshend Duties "until he saw America prostrate at his feet."\textsuperscript{25} The print pictured that scenario. Subsequently, the December 1774 \textit{Town and Country Magazine} reminded its readers of the minister's infamous stance by referring to his earlier public declaration.\textsuperscript{26} That "The able Doctor" depended so heavily on irony suggests strongly that it was designed primarily to discredit an ineffectual administration and that the colonial issues provided a means to
do so. These basic figures recurred in almost all subsequent versions, except that one version omitted Bute’s character. Sometimes, the entire composition was reversed simply as a result of copying it during its reproduction.

In the print, no British leaders intervened in British America’s defense, which was consistent with the minimal opposition in Parliament to the Boston Port Bill. In Parliament, opposition to the Boston Port Bill was slight, but it introduced topics that recurred in the weeks and months that followed in both Britain and America. On Friday, March 25, “Governor Johnstone” commented, “I now venture to predict to this House, that the effect of the present bill must be productive of a general confederacy to resist the power of this country.” He unleashed an ad hominem assault on North: “It is irritating, tempting … ineffectual expedients, the abominations of an undecisive mind, incapable of comprehending the chain of consequences which must result from such a law” (180). The London Magazine reported Johnstone’s observation that, “It is in vain to say that Boston is more culpable than the other colonies; sending the ships from thence, and obliging them to return to England, is a more solemn and deliberate act of resistance than the outrage committed by persons in disguise in the night” (180–81).27

In London, most viewers’ attention to “The able Doctor” centered on the British officials’ lamentable conduct because of their power to enact British policy. Consequently, the public constituted by the print was primarily a loyal opposition who subscribed to the magazine. Their distance from the officials’ conduct was portrayed through Britannia’s reactions to the scene. The symbol designating British America as an American Indian in “The able Doctor” embodied the loyal opposition’s fears of an anticipated unity of British America in one personification. In London, viewers did not tend in their attention to this symbol, typically, to differentiate among the British American colonies, because the prevailing practice was to consider them together as possessions.28 In terms of classical genres for rhetoric, the print was fundamentally deliberative in ridiculing the inexpediency of a public policy, while drawing heavily on conventions associated with forensic rhetoric to condemn it morally as well.

**Dublin, May 1774**

Subsequently, the print was republished the next month in Dublin in the Hibernian Magazine for May 1774 (Figure 2).29 Produced by Alexander Walker for 40 years from February 1771 until December 1811 with slightly varying titles, this literary magazine was published in Dublin, Ireland, where it was printed by R. Gibson and others. The tenor of this literary magazine’s recent articles had been consistently sympathetic to the British colonies in America.30 “The able Doctor” was a reverse copy of the original from the London Magazine.
The able Doctor, or America swallowing the Bitter Draught.

Figure 2. "The able Doctor, or America swallowing the Bitter Draught." Interior, engraved magazine illustration. The *Hibernian Magazine or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge* 4 (May 1774): unnumbered page located between pages 282 and 283. Size: 3 3/4" × 5 7/8". Photograph courtesy of Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

The re-circulated print was placed between two pages of a poetic verse entitled "An Explanation of a Political Print of the Able Doctor, or America swallowing the Bitter Draught." This supplementary text instructed viewers to relate the verse to the accompanying pictorial composition:

> Behold America upon the ground,
> Whilst deadly foes the wretched maid surround;
> Law binds her arms, in Mansfield’s form contest;
> And Sandwich, blending violence and jest,
> With one hand holds her feet; and dares to lift
> With th’ other the oppressed maiden’s shift. ³¹

This is excerpted from a lengthy verse that not only identified the figures in the print for an Irish readership, but also detailed narrative actions, specified attitudes and relationships among characters, and ascribed motivations to them. The poem’s allusions to Sandwich’s “lustful grin” and “disgraceful passions” amplified the wickedness and seriousness of the officials’ behavior. ³²
In the poem, discrepancies between the British leaders and Britannia, who “turns aside her weeping eyes” in sympathy with “her daughter,” again suggested a chasm between the Parliament’s performance and the British people’s sentiments. Because of the imperial conflict’s international ramifications, “the Spaniard and the Frenchman joy to see/America deprived of Liberty” and they “must rejoice when Boston’s cannonaded.”

The Irish public, who had their own grievances with the British government, had a political and economic interest in imperial unrest between Parliament and the British colonies. As one Scotch-Irish emigre to British America observed concerning the recent 1773 Tea Act, “It plainly appears to us that it is the design of this present administration to serve us as they have our brethren in Ireland; first to raise a revenue from us sufficient to support a standing army, as well as placemen and pensioners, and then laugh at our calamities and glut themselves on our spoil (many of us in this town being eye witnesses of those cruel & remorseless enemies).” During the earlier Stamp Act controversy of 1765, parallels had been drawn between the predicament of the American colonies and Ireland with patriots in both regions rejecting the theory of the sovereignty of the Crown in Parliament, because neither region was represented in Parliament. Consequently, both the Irish and the British Americans were constantly on guard against encroachments and invasions of their rights and privileges by the Parliament’s expansive view of its authority over them.

In all, five Coercive Acts were passed, one at a time, beginning in the early spring and continuing into the summer of 1774. Among them the Quebec Bill, which went into effect on June 22 with its supportive ramifications for Catholics, inflamed dominant Protestant factions both in British America and Ireland. The Hibernian Magazine for August 1774, for instance, reported the “universal indignation, which seems to prevail through these kingdoms, at the sanction given to popery.” In British America, likewise, An Address to the People of Great-Britain, from the Delegates ... in General Congress, at Philadelphia, September 5, 1774, which was reprinted in Dublin in 1775 for an Irish readership, characterized Catholicism as “a religion that has deluged your island in blood, and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder and rebellion through every part of the world.” In general, Ireland was predominantly pro-American, even though Catholics “were mostly for King George as against the Whig opposition and the Philadelphia Congress,” wrote historian George Otto Trevelyan, adding that “throughout all the four Irish provinces, the coercion of New England was intensely distasteful to the public opinion of the governing classes.”

Because of the supplemental verses and existing ideologies in Ireland, Irish viewers of the re-circulated print probably interpreted British America’s treatment as a pictorial analogy to their own experiences and grievances in dealing
with Parliament. In this regard, the print promoted an Irish readership's active identification with British Americans. Consequently, the sexual assault, with which the supplementary verse begins, would have vitally occupied their attention to the print. In addition to having migrated to Dublin where "The able Doctor" appealed to pro-American Irish sympathizers, the engraving also was reproduced in Boston the following month, where the pictorial composition took on decidedly different significance to viewers residing in the recently disciplined colonial city. Whereas the British readership of the initial print probably identified with the representations of Parliament and Britannia, a juxtaposition encompassing ambivalence and disapproval toward their own government's conduct, and whereas the Irish viewers probably identified with the female American Indian as a target of Parliament's mistreatment, the Bostonians were identified with the American Indian woman resisting rape, and they had first-hand experiences with the Boston Port Bill's traumatic impact on their community's economic and political circumstances.

**Boston, June 1774**

In Boston, the *Royal American Magazine* re-circulated yet another version of "The able Doctor" as the frontispiece for the June issue (Figure 3). This was a copperplate engraving signed by Paul Revere, who printed 1,000 copies of it for Isaiah Thomas, the magazine's editor, who was also the publisher of the *Massachusetts Spy*. Thomas and Revere, who were Masons and Sons of Liberty, had collaborated together earlier on illustrations for almanacs and mastheads for Thomas's newspaper. Many of Revere's prints were copied from other sources, as Clarence S. Brigham has documented in *Paul Revere's Engravings*.

The differences between the two prints in the *London Magazine* and the *Royal American Magazine* were slight. Revere added the word "TEA" on the pot to eliminate a remote possibility that the doctor's treatment of the American Indian might be seen as beneficial. However, the print does not illustrate "Debates," as the *London Magazine* version had, nor does a note describe the print as "humorous," as had the *London Magazine*. Presumably Bostonians were not amused by the prospect of closing their harbor and, consequently, destroying their livelihoods and the town's economic prosperity. Announcements for the publication of the June issue appeared in the *Boston Evening Post* for August 8 and 15, 1774, suggesting that the issue was not circulated until two months after its imprinted date, long after the port had closed and the political situation in Boston had changed dramatically.

On June 1, the same day that former Governor Thomas Hutchinson departed Boston for exile in Britain, having been replaced in that office by General Thomas Gage, the harbor of Boston was formally closed. Church
Figure 3. “The able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught.” Interior magazine illustration engraved by Paul Revere, Royal American Magazine; or, Universal Repository of Instruction and Amusement 1 (June 1774): frontispiece opposite the title page for that month’s issue. Size: 3 3/4” × 5 7/8”. Photograph courtesy of the Department of Prints and Drawings, Library of Congress.

bells tolled in mourning the city’s fate. What had only been imagined at the time of the London Magazine version of “The able Doctor” was a lived experience among Bostonians before the print’s circulation in the Royal American Magazine, giving a physical presence to the devastating blockade for Bostonian viewers. The print’s depictions of military force—the inscribed sword, the protruding pistols, the overt violence—was embodied locally by having a British General appointed as the colony’s Governor, accompanied as he was by a standing army. Kenneth Silverman has suggested that, “With its threat of actual rape, the entry of troops made the image of violated rights not metaphorical but literal.” The able Doctor efficiently narrated these concerns, while providing a social and physical metaphor for grasping political and economic harms.

In Boston, the rape metaphor portraying the city’s political situation was readily available for organizing viewers’ perceptions of imperial issues because, according to Jasinski, “Nearly every oration commemorating the Boston massacre from 1771 until 1778 featured some reference to rape. Characterizing British action as rape helped sever whatever bonds of attachment remained between Britain and the American colonies.” The rape metaphor, he explained,
“helped define British actions as forms of seduction and sexual violence, justi-
fied militant colonial resistance to British aggression, and further legitimated intense, passionate, and highly emotional popular participation in political affairs.” In Boston, the magnitude of harms depicted in “The able Doctor” were amplified by political developments in the meantime, because the May issue reported two additional Coercive Acts that Parliament had passed since the London Magazine version. In Boston, news of these additional British acts circulated widely on broadsides.

Economics further magnified the dire political harms depicted in “The able Doctor” in the Royal American Magazine. Immediately after this frontispiece and the title page was Thomas’s editorial note explaining that, as one consequence of the Boston Port Bill, he needed to suspend the publication. Subsequent issues in July and August were published by Greenleaf’s Printing-Office after the designated months named in the issues. Decades later, Thomas wrote in The History of Printing in America, “In January, 1774, he [Thomas] began in Boston the publication of The Royal American Magazine; but the general distress and commotion in the town, occasioned by the operation of the act of the British parliament to blockade the port of Boston, obliged him to discontinue it before the expiration of the year, much to the injury of his pecuniary interests.” The editor’s economic predicament factored in his re-circulation of “The able Doctor.”

Pictorial ambiguity and obfuscation characterized the simple narrative portrayed in “The able Doctor,” because it omitted any indications that colonists had destroyed a fortune in tea, and because the print’s depiction of broad groupings (such as “Boston”) erased heartfelt differences in Bostonians’ perspectives. They were not united in blaming Parliament for destroying Boston’s commerce. On July 8, 1774, for instance, Bostonian Ann Hulton claimed, “There’s little prospect of Boston Port being Opend this Year. The Leaders of the Faction are only more unwearied, & are pursuing every measure to draw the People onto resistance, & to irritate Governmt more, & more and which probably will end in the total ruin of the Town & the Individuals.”

Differences of political perspective in Boston galvanized and widened after the Boston Tea Party. Newspaper accounts detailed those dramatic events for Bostonian readers, the most consequential of which was the Boston Gazette for December 20, 1773, because, subsequently, it was widely reprinted in British newspapers and magazines: “A number of brave & resolute men, determined to do all in their power to save their country from the ruin which their enemies had plotted, in less than four hours, emptied every chest of tea on board the three ships ... without the least damage done to the ships or any other property.” That account was reprinted during January in such prominent British magazines as the Gentleman’s Magazine, London Magazine, Scots Magazine, Town and Country Magazine, and Universal Magazine, all of which included a parenthetical
insert describing the “men” as “(Dressed like Mohawks or Indians)” to emphasize the disguises.52 Throughout the American colonies, patriots stressed the care taken to damage nothing but tea as evidence of how principled the action had been in respecting private property,53 whereas their critics throughout the empire portrayed the tea’s destruction as “high treason,” which is exactly what Bostonian Daniel Leonard called it pseudonymously as Massachusettensis.54

The narrative portrayed in “The able Doctor,” however, suggested no evidence of any conflict among Bostonians concerning the tea’s destruction, even though many Americans, including some Boston residents and such Patriots as Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, agreed that Boston deserved punishment of some sort. A town meeting in Marthfield, Massachusetts, resolved “That the late measure and proceedings in the town of Boston, in the detention and destruction of the teas belonging to the East India company, were illegal, unjust and of a dangerous tendency.”55 Despite evident disunity in Boston and criticism in nearby villages, re-circulation of “The able Doctor” projected a constitutive image of the town’s unified resistance. This imagined unity may have seemed more authoritative to those viewers who were aware of the original London version, because such unity had been recognized at the center of political power and privilege.

The narrative action portrayed in the print entailed strategic selection of key moments in relationship to contemporaneous political perspectives, which were changing as political actions unfolded in rapid succession.56 As one Coercive Act quickly followed another, five in all, the magnitude of the harms to commerce and politics in British America broadened, as did a growing sentiment among moderate and radical colonists that a Continental Congress was necessary to coordinate a united response to Parliament.57 In a letter to Thomas Pownall, written in Boston on August 17, 1774, Samuel Cooper wrote, “The Act for blockading the Port of Boston has been executed beyond the Rigor of the Act itself…. Our cause is regarded as a common one by all the Colonies. The most distant, the Carolinas and Virginia seem the most ardent.”58

In Boston, the fleet in Boston harbor—a remote, tiny detail in the distant background of “The able Doctor”—was at the forefront of consciousness. The print’s three references to “Boston” reinforced a local understanding of the sexual assault as an analogy for the British government’s mistreatment of the city, because the female American Indian in “The able Doctor” was an allusion to the Bostonians’ disguises during the tea’s destruction. Yet the American Indian’s image also regularly designated the British American colonies as a unified whole during the eighteenth century. This broader reference resonated elsewhere throughout British America as additional Coercive Acts affected more regions in America, as plans for the Congress in Philadelphia took public form, and as people throughout the entire region identified with the ramifications of the unprecedented assault on
what colonists considered their rights as English subjects. These factors contributed to the re-circulation of “The able Doctor” in multiple locations soon after the Boston version of “The able Doctor,” because the print was reproduced elsewhere in North America, though the chronological sequence is uncertain for the next two prints (which may be in reverse order). Rhetorical re-circulation of the print in Philadelphia and Salem addressed viewers to promote identification of all British America with the female American Indian, thereby constituting them as a public attentive to her implied fate. But the constitutive publics differed significantly in these urban centers in that one was predominantly secular whereas the other was religious.

**PHILADELPHIA, AUGUST 1774**

On August 3, 1774, one month before the Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, the city’s residents saw an anonymous re-circulation of a similar print on a large broadside, retitled “The Persevering Americans or the Bitter Draught Return’d” (Figure 4). This rare print was a much enlarged and
reversed version of “The able Doctor,” derived from the *London Magazine* or one of the other, intermediary versions (such as the likewise reversed composition in the *Hibernian Magazine*). Omission of the word “TEA” on the teapot makes it unlikely that the Philadelphia broadside was based on Revere’s composition in Boston. The engraved broadside was retitled to feature the American Indian’s resistance to the British officials’ oppressive conduct more than her being a victim. Broadsides, which were large, single sheets that could be rapidly reproduced and easily posted publicly in coffee houses and other political sites throughout an urban center, differed from magazines both in their circulation to the general public rather than to subscribers and in their relatively quick production and distribution.

In Philadelphia, “The Persevering Americans” was re-circulated at a location and moment wherein political power was soon to be exercised by a formal assembly to enact unified political resistance to Parliament and to influence partisans’ beliefs and actions throughout British America. Plans for a Continental Congress to be held in Philadelphia in early September were well underway. In response to the accumulating anti-American legislation, the *Journal of the Proceedings of the Congress ... Held September 5, 1774*, affirmed, “To obtain redress of these grievances, which threaten destruction to the lives, liberty, and property of his Majesty’s subjects in North-America, we are of the opinion, that a non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement, faithfully adhered to, will prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable measure.”

In another statement addressed to an Irish readership, Congress claimed that, “On pretence of punishing a violation of some private property, committed by a few disguised individuals, the populous and flourishing town of Boston was surrounded by fleets and armies; its trade destroyed; its ports blocked up; and thirty thousand citizens subjected to all the miseries attending so sudden a convulsion in their commercial metropolis.”

Congress’s endeavors to present unified resistance to Parliament was undercut by Loyalist pamphleteers, who, in a deluge of prose and verse throughout British America, condemned the Bostonians as deserving punishment for destroying private property and smuggling contraband tea, as did Thomas Bradbury Chandler and Samuel Seabury of New York, Richard Wells of Pennsylvania, and Daniel Leonard of Massachusetts, among others. In 1774, Chandler wrote in his *Friendly Address*, “the crime of the Bostonians was a compound of the grossest injury and insult. It was an act of highest insolence towards government.” A 1774 pamphlet by Seabury commented on illicit smuggling to specify some Patriots’ selfish motives for the tea’s destruction as clandestine profits: “All that is imported is smuggled from Holland, and the Dutch Islands in the West-Indies. In this trade the laws of our country are trampled upon. The nation is defrauded of its revenues.”
Although Loyalists’ concerns about the destruction of private property and profiteering from contraband tea were both accurate, Patriots depicted the consumption of tea differently in that the commodity now entailed threats to the British Americans’ rights and liberty as free men.65 As a synecdoche for unjust Parliamentary taxation, tea gave rhetorical presence (in Chaim Perelman’s sense of the term pertaining to public argument) to one among many Parliamentary deeds endangering British America.66 Inasmuch as tea was a mundane commodity, it had everyday rhetorical uses, its consumption or disuse tacitly conveying the political commitments of a household. As a metaphor, tea evoked dangers to American freedom because of its associations with temptation, addiction, and dependency.67 “The Persevering Americans” modeled nonconsumption of tea as a means of the colonists’ political resistance.

The re-circulated print in Philadelphia constituted all of British America as one public represented by the female American Indian—one courageous woman against a gang of common criminals. Her active resistance corresponded to the initial meetings of the Continental Congress to plan unified political resistance. There was nothing specifically or overtly religious about the Philadelphia broadside, which distinguishes it dramatically from another version during 1774. “The able Doctor” was re-circulated yet again in Salem, Massachusetts, where the government of Massachusetts had been relocated by Parliament’s Coercive Acts. There, basic elements of the narrative, including even the characters, were changed in the frontispiece of a pamphlet to focus the narrative of “The able Doctor” on key figures in Massachusetts’s political life, especially featuring the spectacle from the publication of Hutchinson’s correspondence. In this re-circulated print, the narrative was transposed from one imperial controversy onto another one.

Salem, 1774

Sometime during 1774 in Salem, Massachusetts, John Allen’s pseudonymous political pamphlet entitled Watchman’s Alarm. To Lord N—H [North]; Or, The British Parliamentary Boston Port-Bill unwrap[p]ed was printed by E. Russell with yet another version of “The able Doctor” as its frontispiece (Figure 5).68 During the previous year, Allen had written two other pamphlets, both published in Boston: The American Alarm, Or the Bostonian Plea and An Oration, Upon the Beauties of Liberty, the latter of which went through several editions. Allen was an itinerant Baptist preacher of dubious moral character who had immigrated from Britain to America only a few years earlier in 1769, as hinted in Allen’s pseudonym, “the British Bostonian,” which appeared on the Watchman’s Alarm’s title page along with Biblical and political epigrams.69

That the Watchman's Alarm was published in Salem was noteworthy, because Parliament had moved Massachusetts's government from Boston to Salem effective June 1, 1774, in an attempt to control and quiet the disturbances. Its publication in Salem suggested that Parliament had failed to quash protests or to pit the prosperity of one New England village against another, despite this having been a deliberate tactic. As Charles Chauncy commented pseudonymously in A Letter To A Friend: "In an address from an hundred and twenty-five merchants and freeholders at Salem, to his Excellency Governor Gage ... are these words; 'In shutting up the port of Boston, some imagine that the course of trade might be turned hither, and to our benefit.... we must be dead to every idea of justice, and to all feelings of humanity, could we indulge one thought to seize on wealth, and raise our fortunes on the ruin of our suffering neighbors.'"

To judge from the Watchman's Alarm's frontispiece, the narrative portrayed in "The able Doctor" provided so ambiguous a typology that it was possible to conflate the politics of the Boston Port Bill and the Franklin-Hutchinson spectacle by replacing certain characters in the narrative. That Allen's pamphlet did
this recasting is evident from a two-page "Explanation" after the frontispiece in the Watchman's Alarm. In place of Lord Mansfield (who in earlier versions had upheld the legality of Britain's taxation policies), this "Explanation" substituted Solicitor General Alexander Wedderburn, whom the explanation described as "that false, fickle, defaming, treacherous court sycophant, binding America with the iron hand of tyranny." Wedderburn had denounced Franklin in the Cockpit and had drafted the language of the Boston Port Bill. Instead of Lord Sandwich, the "Explanation" referred vaguely to "A late American Representative holding the feet of America." Presumably this was Thomas Hutchinson, though unnamed, because the explanation combined stories concerning the Franklin-Hutchinson spectacle with those concerning the Boston Port Bill. In the pamphlet, alluding to the recently exposed letters of Massachusetts's leaders, Allen asked, "who sent for this parliamentary bill of parcels," and replied, "Mr. T-----H--------n [Thomas Hutchinson], Mr. P----n [Charles Paxton], Mr. O-----r [Andrew Oliver], and others, by private and confidential letters" (13).

Sermonic in its florid style and Biblical allusions concerning the colonists' predicament, the pamphlet castigated the North ministry with overwrought rhetorical flourishes. To Allen, God intervened in the affairs of nations, and the British Americans' suffering resulted, in part, from moral failings attending slavery in British America (25–29). Allen exploited the colonists' concerns about their own political slavery to denounce their holding of slaves. As Bernard Bailyn underscored, slavery "was a central concept in eighteenth-century political discourse," in which it was "the absolute political evil." Bailyn characterized slavery in Allen's rhetoric as "a total abomination; it violated God's laws, the charter of Massachusetts, the natural and inalienable rights of mankind, and the laws of society and humanity." The re-circulation of "The able Doctor" in Salem provided supplementary texts re-identifying the characters and reshaping the narrative itself in ways that held British Americans responsible for the sexual assault, not because they had destroyed a fortune in tea, but because they practiced slavery. Allen's pamphlet featured the elements of race in "The able Doctor" to implicate the colonists in their own suffering by suggesting strongly that they were being punished by God for their sinful slaveholding. Allen's text suffused the political debacle with a specific religious sensibility that was distinctive inasmuch as Deists during the eighteenth century doubted that God intervened in the affairs of nations. The pamphlet constituted its readership as British American sinners.

**CONCLUSION**

After military violence broke out in New England during spring 1775, yet another woodcut version of "The able Doctor" was published in an almanac and still other
versions were carved on powder horns. Toward the end of 1775, an untitled woodcut version circulated on the cover of *Freebetter’s New-England Almanack, for the Year 1776*, which was published in New London, Connecticut (Figure 6). This pictorial composition featured the moral injustices committed by the British
government, dramatized the risks that British soldiers posed to women throughout British America, and urged the militia to protect themselves, their families, and their communities. Whereas the earliest versions had portrayed Britannia weeping to convey British ambivalence over policy, verses inside the almanac described Britannia as having decisively betrayed her own offspring. Whereas the earliest versions of the print had ridiculed the inexpediency of the Boston Port Bill and the British government’s incompetence, this wartime version centered entirely on British injustices to British America by dissolving any distinctions between the British people and their government. A printmaker in Connecticut transformed “The able Doctor” from deliberative ridicule into a moral indictment of Britain by using an accompanying text to reshape the image into a message with a thoroughly judicial character during the war. Additional reproductions of “The able Doctor” were carved on powder horns used on battlefields during the American Revolution, and they probably recurred in later publications during the Revolution. Such powder horns placed before the eyes of military men a vivid, visual reminder justifying their many sacrifices, including their lives.

In general, Sharon Block has argued that the eighteenth-century “print world transformed rape from an intimate sexual act into a public symbol that could define national and social boundaries.” She added, “Yet the dominant trend in the public presentation of rape was the displacement of women from the narrative, making rape an occasion for men to speak to other men about a range of male prerogatives.” Block generalized, “By replacing women’s experiences of their own bodies with men’s experiences of witnessing the victimization of women, rape-related stories opposed upstanding American male citizenry to corrupt British rule.” The print of “The able Doctor” went one crucial step further by addressing and constituting the men as analogous to both women and racial minorities. In other words, an underlying fear evoked by the active re-circulation of each version of “The able Doctor” was white men’s fear of being subjected to various acts of dominance analogous to those imposed so traumatically on women and racial minorities in their midst.

Whereas the intersections of race and sex in the initial British and Irish versions were factors in interpreting British America’s situation through the imagery of an exotic, dehumanized stranger, British Americans appear to have ultimately accepted and inhabited the pictorial image of an American Indian as an analogy for their predicament within the British Empire. The initial print portrayed a union among the British American colonies that, however disunited the colonies actually were at the time of the Boston Port Bill, they subsequently enacted among themselves because of a shared recognition of grievances that, to them, were anticipated as irreparable harms. Ironically, then, the London original of “The able Doctor” projected and helped to constitute an image of unity among the colonies that had not existed at the moment; however, that unity was actively
promoted subsequently with every re-circulation of the print by image makers throughout British America.

In addition, the female American Indian image probably alluded to republicanism for some viewers, since several writers referred to American Indians as having a republican government and since colonial radicals were often depicted as republicans in disguise. To ascribe motives to the Bostonians, various Loyalists alluded to republicanism as a concealed aspiration among the Americans, often portraying it as "veiled" or "disguised." In Boston, for instance, Massachusettsensis described a malicious "republican party" in 1775, by observing that it was "of long standing," though "dormant for several years." Leonard asserted, "At first they wore the garb of hypocrisy," but eventually, they "threw off their disguise, and now stand confessed to the world in their true characters, American republicans." From an opposing perspective, John Adams recorded in his Diary on March 12, 1774, "There is so much of a Republican Spirit, among the People, which has been nourished and cherished by their Form of Government, that they never would submit to Tyrants or oppressive Projects." In this regard, the American Indian woman representing British America was a disguised figure drawn from an unfamiliar, not-yet-institutionalized, but at once both demonized and idealized political system.

The contingent meanings of consuming tea varied with the perspectives of partisan viewers in the print's specific locations. Although universally recognized as property, a commodity, and an emblem of sociability, tea came to stand for a source of revenue through taxation for Britain at the same time that it represented infringements on constitutional rights to American colonists. As smuggled contraband, tea represented colonists' disrespect for British law; at the same time, its taxation represented British legislators' assault on colonists' rights. With the tea's destruction in Boston Harbor, British leaders and their sympathizers viewed the Bostonians' actions as high treason; at the same time, Bostonian radicals viewed its destruction as manly protection of their most fundamental rights. As a synecdoche, the tea was only one among numerous recent instances of the British government's insistent infringement on the colonists' rights. As a metaphor, it evoked temptation, addiction, and dependency. So the contingent meanings of tea in "The able Doctor" were affected by a combination of deliberative and judicial considerations pertaining to policy and justice at the same time that the mundane herb became a powerful symbol in the political economy of the British Empire, impacting merchants, consumers, and legislators. The ideological and the material merged in viewers' understandings of the now dangerous herb.

Despite only minimal variations in the pictorial composition, the multiple meanings of this pictorial message varied with its re-circulation to audiences and their rapidly changing economic, political, and military developments. In general, British audiences concentrated on British leaders' wrongs to Boston evinced
in foolish, ineffective policy; meanwhile, Patriots among the American audiences concentrated on injustice to Boston as wrongs to all British America. At the same time, some viewers in both Britain and America probably saw the print as mistaking the victimizers for the victims, because Bostonians had destroyed a fortune in tea. Loyalists throughout America and most Parliamentarians were affronted by the tea party as destruction of private property. Even such moderate figures as Franklin believed that destroying the tea had gone too far, and he suggested to Massachusetts's leaders that they reimburse the loss.\textsuperscript{82} George Washington explained in early June, "The cause of Boston[,] the despotick Measures in respect to it I mean[,] now is and ever will be considered as the cause of America (not that we approve their conduct in destroy[ing] the Tea.)."\textsuperscript{83} Richard D. Brown generalized, "Knowledge of the tea’s destruction was rarely acknowledged in letters from other colonies. Usually the praise for Boston's firm resolution circumspectly omitted specific reference to the tea’s actual fate."\textsuperscript{84}

In the print, therefore, the tea succinctly exemplifies contingent meanings.

During the era of the American Revolution, other visual compositions likewise formed multiple series and also migrated within and across imperial boundaries. There are numerous examples of such compositions in recent years as well. In general, image makers’ re-circulations of compositions could provide scholars of history, biography, visual rhetoric, and public address with a useful resource for exploring publics with sustained attention to perspectives and partisan stakes in controversies of the past and the present.

Scholars of visual rhetoric and public address may wish to reconsider notions of rhetoric as constitutive, especially insofar as the idea is now applied to what Michael Warner and others before him have called publics and counterpublics. Initially, the essay suggested that prevailing treatment of these notions may underestimate a certain, circumscribed degree of rhetorical agency in the specific activity of rhetorical re-circulation. This analysis of "The able Doctor" has documented how such agency is especially evident in the subsequent image makers’ varied acts of re-circulating such compositions, including both the productive efforts of image makers and the expressive consumption by subsequent viewers. Publics and counterpublics were not merely attentive, but actively engaged in understanding and oftentimes actively reshaping messages. Preoccupation with form at the expense of substance in scholarship on circulation may be hazardous for recognizing a circumscribed measure of rhetorical agency in terms of content, as this essay has illustrated. Perhaps rhetoric scholars will question whether attention is sufficient to appreciate how publics and counterpublics are constituted, because such a view may flatten the diversity of apprehension, reception, and consumption of visual texts, and, above all, because it may neglect what rhetoric is especially well positioned to contribute to considerations of the public sphere across the humanities.
NOTES


69–85. Coauthors Hariman and Lucaites derived their theoretical orientation to “circulation” from Michael Warner’s perspective but did not critically reassess his account in their coauthored essay, “Public Identity,” 35–66, esp. 36–37. Their essay might illustrate certain pitfalls of a theory-driven approach to rhetorical criticism of historical works. On these pitfalls, see Edwin Black, “A Note on Theory and Practice in Rhetorical Criticism,” Western Journal of Speech Communication 44 (1980): 331–32; see also Edwin Black, Rhetorical Questions: Studies of Public Discourse (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 1–2. As an alternative to theory-driven criticism, a critic could endeavor instead to explore an explicit dialogue between theory and critical practice in which inherited theory is reexamined explicitly to be extended, revised, modified, or otherwise questioned, possibly even set aside, as a result of critical practices entailing historical and cultural study. This activity would entail transvaluation of so-called “high” theory, as it is sometimes humbly characterized, by recognizing such theory as “low” until it has undergone explicit revision following careful historical and cultural investigations. The current essay attempts a dialogue between theory and practice in rhetorical criticism to argue for the value of attending to rhetorical re-circulation.

8. Circulation is a much broader subject than the specific idea of re-circulation featured here, since most compositions circulate to audiences, but only a subset of them are selected by other message-makers for redistribution during a controversy. The current essay continues a line of research evident in Olson, Entwisms (1991). Since then, “circulation” has received increasing attention by various rhetoric scholars, because of its central role in scholarship on the public sphere discussed by Michael Warner and others. Since the millennium, rhetoric scholarship in circulation has centered on one medium: photography. A particularly fine example of this is Cara A. Finnegan, “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture,” Rhetoric & Public Affairs 8 (2005): 51–58. A reproduction of Lincoln’s daguerreotype photograph decades later in a subsequent magazine might exemplify re-circulation (although it is not evident that the initial daguerreotype was ever publically displayed). Yet Finnegan does not explicitly name this practice with a key term, presumably because she was interested instead in proposing the concept of “image vernaculars” to emphasize viewers’ “ethnemematic” contributions, while interpreting the magazine illustration. The term “ethnemematic” is problematic for defining “image vernaculars” because ethnèmes were used in verbal, propositional reasoning, which is too specific to encompass what viewers may contribute while actively interpreting images. As possible alternatives, universal topoi or the loci for the person and act would be relatively associational options. Note, too, that her essay relies on verbal evidence to infer historical audiences’ viewing practices. Finnegan’s essay continues her scholarship featuring circulation from Cara A. Finnegan, Picturing Poverty (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2003). This landmark book features circulation in insightful ways (see xx and 222–23). But here, too, she does not coin an analytical term for “re-circulation” presumably because, as she accurately notes, “Photographs, in particular, were produced to be reproduced” (xx). During the eighteenth century, in contrast, the mass distribution of engraved prints entailed labor and techniques of a different sort than photography. Circulation pertains, moreover, to “iconicity” in Robert Hariman’s and John Louis Lucaites’s essays and book on photography, such as “Performing Civic Identity: The Iconic Photograph of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima,” Quarterly Journal of Speech 88 (2002): 563–92, esp. 366–68; and “Visual Rhetoric, Photojournalism, and Democratic Public Culture,” Rhetoric Review 20 (2001): 37. Also germane to discussions of circulation is Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, No Caption Needed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), which was not released until more than two years after this essay had been presented to the Organization of American Historians during spring 2005, and was not available to me until
its final revisions. In this book, the coauthors briefly define appropriation (37–39). The coauthors' concentration on photographs might likewise account for not distinguishing between initial circulation and subsequent re-circulation of compositions.


14. Warner's discussion of "She-romps" comes closest to doing this, but, significantly for my purposes, the "letter" concerning "She-romps" was published by the same outlet and publisher. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 89 and 103–7, respectively. Warner's account has been criticized by coauthors Cara A. Finnegan and Jiyeon Kang for giving priority to "discourse" or "texts," when his insights might be useful to understanding pictorial or visual symbols alone or in combination with such texts. Cara A. Finnegan and Jiyeon Kang, "Sighting the Public: Iconoclasm and Public Sphere Theory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (2004): 377–402. Finnegan and Kang advocate "sighting" the public by expanding Warner's account to encompass pictorial or visual works. Warner's commentary on the pictorial imagery for his book cover, however, exemplifies his awareness that pictorial images circulate in ways that constitute publics. See, for example, Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 12–14. Warner does nonetheless typically refer to "texts," "discourse," "writing," and "speaking" in his book, as Finnegan and Kang observed and as excerpts in this section amply illustrate. In the current essay, I substitute "message," "composition," or "work" as more general terms, since they readily encompass both vision and sound, as in both musical compositions and verbal expressions. Expanding on Finnegan and Kang's insight, scholars may wish to "sound" the public through attention to musical rhetoric. In connection with compositions combining specifically pictorial and textual elements, "rhetorical re-circulation" has some loose affinity with Peter Wagner's idea of the iconic text, the notion that pictorial and verbal elements of a composition interact and can be modified in ways that alter an original work's meanings. Peter Wagner, *Reading Iconotexts* (London: Reaktion Books, 1995), esp. 44–48. For comment
on Wagner's term, Kimble and Olson, "Visual Rhetoric," 548–49. Re-circulation expands the idea of an iconotext in Wagner's book, however, not only by examining extant evidence detailing varied rhetorical factors (as detailed elsewhere in this essay), but also by recognizing varied types of compositions combining symbol systems (such as music with instrumental sounds and lyrics).


16. Appropriation has been treated as virtually synonymous with any treatment of the same subject matter, as a synonym for an "allusion" or, for that matter, any variety of what is sometimes termed "intertextuality." For examples of essays stressing "appropriation" without explicit definitions, Edwards and Winkler, "Representative Form," 289 and 305; Blair and Michel, "Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics," 32 and 41; Hariman and Lucaites, "Public Identity," 38 and 49–53. On "intertextuality," see Barbara Warnick, "Intertextuality and Web-Based Public Discourse," Rhetoric Online: Persuasion and Politics on the World Wide Web (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 91–120. Intertextuality is too broad a concept to capture repetitive uses of almost identical compositions, but it has been nonetheless useful in essays concerning discursive rhetoric. For example, Martha Solomon Watson, "The Dynamics of Intertextuality: Re-reading the Declaration of Independence," in Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century America, ed. Thomas W. Benson (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 91–112.


23. I have placed page numbers in parenthesis in the main text wherever the primary source is evident and its complete citation appears in earlier endnotes.


35. Both the *Hibernian Magazine* and *An Address* are quoted in Morley, *Irish Opinion*, 86 and 87, respectively.


42. *Boston Evening Post*, Aug. 8, 1774, 3, and Aug. 15, 1774, 3.


48. *Boston Evening-Post*, Sept. 5, 1774, 3 (two notices); and Sept. 19, 1774, 3.


59. To my knowledge, the only extant original of the broadside is held at Houghton Library, Harvard University. For commentary, Brigham, *Paul Revere’s Engravings*, 118; Olson, *Emblems*, 112.


63. [Thomas Bradbury Chandler], *A Friendly Address* (New York: [Rivington], 1774), 15. Evans 13224.

64. [Samuel Seabury], *Free Thoughts* (New York: [Rivington], 1774), 10–11. Evans 13602. Similarly, [Leonard], *Massachusettsian*, 30.

65. For example, *A Sermon on TBA* (Lancaster, PA: Francis Bailey, [1774]), Evans 13606.


68. [John Allen], *Watchman's Alarm* (Salem, MA: E. Russell, 1774). Page numbers from this pamphlet are provided in parentheses in the text. To my knowledge, this version has not been mentioned in previous scholarship concerning "The able Doctor." Joseph Sabin, *Bibliotheca americana. A dictionary of books relating to America, from its discovery to the present time, by Joseph Sabin* (Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1961), 102051. All subsequent references will be to Sabin. Please note that Sabin lists this title twice with two different publishers, but also does not specify the location of an extant copy for the same version listed in Evans (Sabin 102050). Sabin 102051 corresponds to E. Russell's imprint, which is held at the John Carter Brown Library, the New-York Historical Society, and Rutgers University. Sabin indicates that the copy at the New-York Historical Society lacks its frontispiece. The print is rare.


71. [Charles Chauncy], *A Letter To A Friend* (Boston: Greenleaf, 1774), 8. Evans 13197.

72. If Brigham's account is accurate (see Paul Revere's Engravings, 118), presumably there is yet another version of "The able Doctor" in Salem, since the pamphlet's frontispiece did not have Roman numerals on the pictorial composition, but only on the explanation.

73. The Cockpit was a location "aptly named for an earlier building there that Henry VIII and his friends had used for bloody games in which birds ripped each other apart for the viewers' pleasure." See Olson, *Franklin*, xvii. It was the site of Franklin's public humiliation and denunciation before Parliament for having sent copies of private letters to political leaders in Boston.


79. For example, [Thomas B. Chandler], Friendly Address, 32; also [Thomas B. Chandler], What Think Ye of the Congress Now? (New York: James Rivington, 1775), 40. Evans 13866.

80. [Leonard], Massachusetts, 93.


83. Quoted in Labarre, Boston Tea Party, 234.

84. Brown, Revolutionary Politics, 180.