

LITERARY JOURNALISM BEFORE CONFEDERATION

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I once asked a Nova Scotian why his country was destitute of poets. "Poets!" he exclaimed, laughingly, "don't talk of them here, they are exotics that our country does not produce; the 'almighty dollar' is our 'immortal bard;' he is the Apollo of our mountains, lakes, and rivers, 'the wandering minstrel with the golden harp.'"

Reported by Andrew Spedon in his
Rambles Among the Blue-Noses (1863), p. 207.

THIS Bluenoser's ironic answer reveals the paradoxes that confront anyone who examines the Maritime literary milieu before Confederation. For instance, much literary publishing consisted of sermons on infant baptism, and political pamphlets on boundaries and federations, as well as some histories and textbooks. Were poetry, fiction, and *belles lettres* neglected, then? If we remember that literary landmarks such as Haliburton's *Clockmaker* (1836) first appeared in the newspapers, we shall discover that the periodicals are the proper starting point for discussing what is in fact an abundant quantity of imaginative writing. The story of the literary newspapers and magazines is now relatively unknown,¹ yet the genres, the preoccupations, and the cultural trends we find in them reflect a far more complex intellectual climate than we have hitherto acknowledged.

The first magazine in this country was *The Nova-Scotia Magazine and Comprehensive Review of Literature, Politics, and News* (July 1789 - March 1792), a monthly printed and published in Halifax by John Howe. It was edited first by the Rev. William Cochran, who left to become the first President of King's College, Windsor, and then by Howe himself. While it had a warm reception in its first year (267 subscribers, many of them Loyalist emigrants), the magazine was probably discontinued for lack of support. Apart from several essays, speeches, and a group of poems, its contents were composed of reprinted "selections".

Several attempts to begin magazines before the 1820's came to nothing. By that decade, however, some communities had been settled for over three generations, and there had been a brief, heady taste of prosperity during the Napoleonic Wars. Local schools and private subscription-libraries had sprung up, and the first Mechanics' Institute opened in Halifax in 1831. Two other factors explain the flow of magazines, literary and denominational, after 1826.

For one thing, a group of influential British magazines, among them *The Edinburgh Review* (1802), *The Quarterly Review* (1809), and *Blackwood's Magazine* (1817), had each helped alter literary and political journalism at home and in the colonies. These magazines were devoured in the Maritimes, and selections from them constantly appeared in colonial newspapers and magazines. Within the Maritimes, too, a new style of newspaper journalism had evolved under the guidance of Anthony Henry Holland. His reform *Acadian Recorder* (est. 1813) publicized political and social issues, and encouraged readers to discuss them in his columns. Between 1819 and 1823, for example, John Young ("Agricola"), Thomas McCulloch, and [Mr.] Irving set standards for Maritime prose rarely surpassed by subsequent journals.

The Acadian Magazine; or Literary Mirror (July 1826 - January 1828) was a monthly printed and published by J. S. Cunabell, Halifax's leading publisher until the 1850's. Among their intentions, the Proprietors (not identified) hoped to improve the Provincial image in British eyes by advancing "the literary standing of the Country".² At first, this magazine was successful in attracting original poetry and prose, and in his January 1827 "Address", the editor spoke of gains in subscriptions and contributions from all three provinces, and pointed out that this number contained no selections at all. Yet, by 20 September 1827, "Observer" in *The Acadian Recorder* criticized the magazine for its lack of local contributions. Some regular contributors were John Templeton, "Henry" [Clinch?] of King's College; the literary critics "Peter" and "Paul" and I[rvin]G of Truro; and a group of poets known only by their pen names, "Cecil", "Mandeville", and "E.O."

The unexplained demise of *The Acadian Magazine* coincided with the beginning of Joseph Howe's fourteen-year proprietorship of *The Novascotian*. It became the leading political and literary journal of the 1830's, a reflection of Howe's wide-ranging interests. Besides the selections, he printed book and theatre reviews, poetry, fiction, sketches, and essays. Another newspaper of distinctly literary bias was *The Colonial Bee* (1835), edited and published by the Pictou bookseller, James Dawson. The clergy, teachers, and students of McCulloch's Academy who contributed to *The Bee* displayed strong scientific and speculative interests. Dawson's son, the geologist and educator John William Dawson, received his early training in this milieu.

The Acadian Magazine's successor was *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* (June

1830 - January 1833), also printed and published by Cunabell. Its editor was John Sparrow Thompson (1795-1867), a literary jack-of-all-trades and father of a future Prime Minister.³ The magazine's policy was to offer both selected and original articles, but Thompson (who became proprietor in October 1832) several times had to plead for both patronage and for regular correspondents. While there were fewer fictions and poetry than in *The Acadian Magazine*, there was — significantly — a broader range of essays. This shift may well reflect Thompson's own interests, for he enthusiastically printed the lectures on science and history given at the new Mechanics' Institute. Very little is known about Thompson's competitor, *The British North American Magazine, and Colonial Journal* (February 1831-?), published by Edmund Ward; it was discontinued by April 1831.

Unlike most contemporary Halifax newspapers, *The Pearl* (3 June 1837 - 15 August 1840) announced that it was "Devoted to Polite Literature, Science and Religion". On 28 June 1839, John Sparrow Thompson succeeded the Rev. Thomas Taylor as editor, and about the same time Howe purchased *The Pearl* from William Cunnabell "to help" Thompson.⁴ Howe paid him a salary of £45 and hoped for a profit by 1843; however, Thompson reluctantly had to discontinue it after one year. An ambitious paper which carried on Thompson's policies from *The Halifax Monthly*, its many original contributions are evidence that Thompson could attract writers but couldn't make the paper pay. Joseph Kirk's *Nova Scotia New Monthly Magazine* (February - April 1842) published some interesting original pieces, but it quickly disappeared. Thus concludes the most active generation of pre-Confederation Nova-Scotian literary magazines.

In New Brunswick, similarly, there were many attempts in the 1820's and 1830's to produce literary magazines. Henry Chubb's *New Brunswick Courier* (est. 1811) and John Hooper's *British Colonist* (est. 1827) included literary items. The Rev. Alexander McLeod's *New Brunswick Religious and Literary Journal* (January 1829 - February 1830) was more religious than literary in its contributions. Of the first literary magazine, Patrick Bennett's *Saint John Monthly Magazine* (July-December 1836), only one number seems to have survived. Likewise, only a few numbers survive of H. B. Sancton's *New Brunswick Literary Journal* (January-December? 1840), modelled on *The Pearl*.

The Amaranth (January 1841-December 1843), a Saint John monthly edited and published by Robert Shives, was New Brunswick's first literary magazine of both quality and duration. Born in Scotland, Shives (c.1815-1879) was apprenticed to Henry Chubb, and remained in the printing trade until 1866, when he was appointed Emigration Agent for New Brunswick.⁵ Though not an author himself, he gathered around him a respectable group of Maritime writers. In May 1841 he commented that he had more than enough original articles; in April 1842 he boasted that his most popular writers were being reprinted in colonial and American papers. Shives' intention was to provide high-quality

articles in order to raise the cultural taste of the Province. Furthermore, he hoped *The Amaranth* would counteract the "levelling" and "anti-British" sentiments of American magazines now flooding the country. However, there were the usual problems: whereas 1841 and 1842 had a high ratio of original to selected articles, 1843 reversed the proportions, and *The Amaranth*, unlike its namesake, faded away. Shives attributed its failure to lack of patronage, but James Hogg later revealed that several promised articles were lost in the mails and Shives was forced to quit.⁶ The chief contributors were Moses Perley, Douglas Huyghue, William R. M. Burtis, Mrs. F. Beaven, the poets John McPherson and James Redfern, and the lecturer George Blatch.

IN THE EARLY 1850's two Halifax women attempted to revive the literary magazine. Mary E. Herbert (1832-1872), herself a poet and fiction writer, edited *The Mayflower, or Ladies' Acadian Newspaper* (May 1851-February 1852), which was printed at The Athenaeum Office, the home of many temperance publications. A spirited and determined young woman, Mary Herbert probably wrote much of her magazine's original material. *The Mayflower* exhibited a new trend in its emphasis on women's interests such as the latest Paris and London fashions and domestic hints. Phyllis Blakely suggests that *The Mayflower* was discontinued for "lack of financial support and competition from other periodicals".⁷ Interestingly enough, *The Literary Garland* had just gone under because of competition from *Harper's*.

Mary Jane Katzmann (1828-1890)⁸ had already started her magazine, hoping it would compete with the American journals. *The Provincial: or Halifax Monthly Magazine* (January 1852-December 1853) was the last and best-edited literary magazine in Nova Scotia before Confederation. Its handsome typography and its lively literature and general articles are a reflection of Miss Katzmann's considerable editorial intelligence and the changed nature of Provincial interests since the 1830's. *The Provincial's* contributors included Mary Herbert, Clotilda Jennings, Andrew Shiels, J. E. Hoskins, and the editor herself. Although she scolded Haliburton for not contributing, the magazine's problem was not writers, but a lack of subscribers. James Bowes, its publisher, paid contributors with a year's free subscription, but promised that when the subscription list reached 1,000, they would be paid cash. We are still speculating why Halifax, prosperous and otherwise cultured, had no literary magazines between 1853 and 1873. The intensive and exhausting political controversies of the day, as evidenced by the vindictiveness of the newspapers, may be part of the explanation.

After *The Amaranth* expired, a number of Saint John and Fredericton newspapers carried literary material. The most interesting of these is the *New Bruns-*

wick Reporter and Fredericton Advertiser (est. 1844), edited and published by James Hogg (1800-1866). He too was trained under Chubb, whose office issued Hogg's *Poems* (1825), the first such book written by a native New Brunswicker. He also made much of his connection with his cousin and namesake, the "Ettrick Shepherd". In its early years, the *Reporter* was almost entirely devoted to literature, and deserves further consideration in any survey of provincial literary life before Confederation.

The Guardian, A Monthly Magazine of Education and General Literature (January-September 1860) was edited by two young teachers, Edward Manning and Robert Aiken. While deliberately modelled on *The Amaranth*, *The Guardian* kept turning into an educational monthly, although it presented a wider spectrum of scientific and educational articles. It also succumbed for lack of subscriptions, and neither free postage nor the carrot-promise of increasing the pages from 24 to 36 when the subscription list reached 600 helped save *The Guardian*. Its chief contributors were William R. M. Burtis, R. Peniston Star, and Dr. Sinclair; many of the unsigned articles were by the editors themselves.

The first literary activity in Prince Edward Island began with the appearance of James Douglas Hazzard's *Prince Edward Island Register* in 1823, when poems and sketches poured into the paper. Other newspapers, particularly *The Prince Edward Island Times* (est. 1837), and Edward Whalen's *Palladium* (est. 1843) and his *Examiner* (est. 1847), included original writings, news about literary societies and the Mechanics' Institute (1838), and carried serialized fiction and selections from foreign journals. The first literary weekly was the very successful *Ross's Weekly, A Literary Journal* (est. 1859), edited and published by John Ross, of whom we know little. Circulation rose from nearly 500 on 28 September 1859 to 1400 subscribers by 10 December 1860 — now "the largest paper on the Island". For two years, *Ross's Weekly* was almost exclusively devoted to cultural and scientific news, and attracted the essayists J. H. Fletcher and Harry Lee, and the poet John LePage. However, in the middle of 1861, Ross began to devote more space to political news, particularly the American Civil War; then in 1863 he reorganized the paper as the *Semi-Weekly Advertiser*, now "Devoted to Commercial and General News".

The only Island magazine until well after Confederation was the short-lived *Progress Magazine* (January-February 1867), edited by Thomas Kirwin from the office of his *Summerside Progress, and Prince County Register*, a pro-annexation newspaper. An Islander who spent much of his journalistic career in the United States, Kirwin (1829-1911) reprinted both British and American selections, one poem by Elizabeth Lockerby, and sketches of his own experiences in the Civil War.

The first national magazine of Confederation was *Stewart's Literary Quarterly Magazine* (April 1867-October 1872), edited by George Stewart, Jr. (1848-

1906). He later edited *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly* and *The Chronicle* (Quebec), and was a charter member of the Royal Society of Canada. About 1892 Stewart reminisced about his youthful undertaking, and praised his Saint John publisher, George James Chubb, for not taking any profit out of the venture from first to last. Stewart believed that

the time had come for literary development in Canada, and especially in New Brunswick. Our best writers then, as now, were sending their work to the British and American magazines,* and I was convinced that the country could and would afford a decent support to a monthly or quarterly publication.⁹

His "Introductory" editorial was more explicit: the danger was the great quantity of "cheap Yankee literature", which on the one hand was often violently anti-British, and on the other lulled Canadians into a dependence on foreign matter with no development of their own talents.

Stewart attracted Maritime writers such as James Hannay, Moses Harvey, Allan Jack, John Bourinot, T. C. Garvie, and William Lyall. Moreover, taking advantage of the new patriotism itself and the temporary lack of magazines in the upper provinces, he got contributions from D'Arcy McGee (briefly), J. M. LeMoine, Daniel Clark, Charles Sangster, Alexander McLachlan, and Evan McColl.

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ALMOST ALL THE JOURNALS carried "selections". *The Nova-Scotia Magazine* offered Collins' new "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands". *The Acadian Recorder* carried reviews of Byron's plays. *The Acadian Magazine* included poems by Moore and Southey. *The Novascotian* printed Shelley's "Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples" in 1828. A review of Tennyson's *Poems* in *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* quoted "Mariana". *The Pearl* reprinted William Ellery Channing, Daniel Webster, and Hawthorne. *The Novascotian* offered portions of Dickens' *American Notes*. *The Amaranth* carried Seba Smith and Harriet Beecher Stowe. *The Palladium* abridged *A Christmas Carol*. *The Mayflower* included a portion from *Confessions of an Opium Eater*. *Haszard's Gazette* serialized *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *Ross's Weekly*, *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room*.¹⁰

Since this practice was common in nineteenth-century journals, it cannot be explained merely as colonial inability to produce original material. Rather, these selections represent the educated Maritimer's awareness of the larger world, and if they are a curious blend of literary peaks and bogs, they are actually representative of international tastes. Significantly, too, literary magazines made room for religious, geological, and technological subjects.

* Among them: James De Mille, May Agnes Fleming, and Louisa Murray.

At the same time, Maritime contributors themselves discussed literary and philosophical currents. Thus *The Acadian Recorder's* "Letters on the Living Poets" (1820-23), by Irving, provoked favourable and hostile comments about contemporary poetry. "Cecil" wrote of the erosion of freedom in "Greece" for *The Acadian Magazine*. *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* carried discussions of the principal plants of Nova Scotia and the building of the Shubenacadie Canal. From the 1830's onward there are dozens of temperance tales and poems. Douglas Huyghue's ("Eugene") "Essay on the Foresight of Nature, in Providing for the Reproduction of the Insect Tribes" (*The Amaranth*, April 1842) is a pre-Darwinian statement which combines scientific curiosity and religious idealism in its assumptions that all knowledge is a manifestation of the Creator's great universal pattern. *The Provincial* carried articles on Samuel Cunard and steam navigation, electric telegraphs, the role of women, international copyright (from the Maritime writer's viewpoint), and travel sketches of Europe. *The Progress* published sketches by Islanders about their American Civil War experiences. *Stewart's Quarterly's* articles covered the North-West, geological discoveries in Newfoundland, American democracy, contemporary British poetry, and the cultural rift between literary humanism and modern science.

When we turn to imaginative writing, we find colonial authors adopting the genres and subjects of London and Edinburgh. Lyrics, ballads, sonnets, hymn forms, odes, and free translations from Greek and Latin predominate. Among the longer poetic forms, the narrative and the satire, complete with heroic couplets, survived into the 1840's. Reflective and topographical verses also retained their popularity, easily adaptable to the needs of nineteenth-century poetry. The poems show considerable awareness of British poetic traditions, from Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden, through Pope, Thomson, Gray, Goldsmith, Campbell, and Burns, down to Scott, Moore, Southey, and Byron.

The two major poems in *The Acadian Magazine* display the lingering eighteenth-century tradition. "The Accepted Sigh. A Tale" (January 1827) begins as a graveyard poem, develops into a consolation piece, and concludes with the assertion of God's redemptive grace over man's sinfulness. In itself, R—y's "Accepted Sigh" is in the Evangelical tradition of Maritime poetry. "Western Scenes" (February 1827), which the anonymous author claims was partly written before *The Rising Village* (1825) and Howe's "Melville Island" (1826) appeared, is a topographical poem set in the Annapolis Valley. Its patriotic and progressive sentiments reflect a secular strain in Maritime writing. Of Annapolis Royal the poet says:

Who would not sigh at thy neglected state,
 (Destined by Nature for a better fate;)
 Without improvement lies thy fertile soil,
 In vain the marshes beg the farmer' toil.

The river source of boundless wealth would prove,
 If aught from apathy thy swains could move.
 If Labor's sons by fortune here should roam,
 Soon would fair Commerce bless th' adopted home,
 And thro' the land luxuriant harvests spread,
 The gifts of plenty, where there lacks now bread.
 So thought Agricola and would impart
 To our rude hinds the nicer rules of art.
 Divine the art! yet Industry we need,
 If I my country's character can read;
 For knowledge cannot the ungrateful serve,
 And labour's arm must gen'rous feeling nerve.

By the 1850s, however, poems such as Clotilda Jennings' ("Maude") series "Wild Flowers of Nova Scotia", in *The Provincial*, show the mid-century romantic emphasis on the detailed and the unique in the commonplace:

Where graceful, leafy boughs crown ancient stems,
 And cast their quivering shadows far below,
 Making cool, lovely paths through the green world —
 The wanderer finds thee, Lily; shelt'ring 'mid tall, grassy blades,
 Thy pale, serene and fragrant beauty, or far away
 In some secluded winding, where pearly violets
 With deep, golden heart, (thick as the stars
 In a clear, summer heaven) carpet sweet nooks of shade.
 Thy tender stem, rears up its delicate bells,
 Shielded by broad, green, glossy leaves, that seem to guard
 Lovingly, a thing so odorous and pure.

(No. II, The Lily of the Valley, April 1852)

In the search for an appropriate language, Andrew Shiels ("Albyn") in his Preface to *The Witch of the Westcot* (1831) observed:

instead of "mountains high" and "hills of green," the beautiful vale, breathing with imagery, including mouldering abbey, delapidated tower, ruin'd camps of Dane and Roman . . . let the traveller to Nova Scotia ask what is the name of yonder dwelling? the answer is almost universally Mr. Such or such-a-ones' farm, and that contains all the variations of its History; or enquire the name of the dull half forgotten, or perhaps unknown stream, in any quarter of the Province, and ten to one but it is either Nine Mile or Salmon River.

In general, great chunks of pre-Confederation poetry are characterized by religious idealism and sentimentality, and many of its rhetorical stances irritate modern readers.

There are examples of almost every kind of contemporary fiction: the exotic-oriental tale, the gothic, the local-colour dialect (usually Irish), the silver-spoon high-society, the temperance tale, the historical romance, and the fictional sketch.

Few of the stories are in the realistic mode, although dialogue sometimes has a contemporary ring. There are very few book-length fictions.

While poetry — no matter how bad, it seems — was accepted as a legitimate literary pursuit, fiction writers had to overcome the suspicion that novels were a “sinful waste of time”.¹¹ Thus, John Sparrow Thompson sets out the platonic-puritan-evangelical hostility towards fiction in his 1832 lecture on “History”:

The writers of the [romance and novel] endeavour to excite the fancy, by building interesting and picturesque combinations, of persons and action and scenery, on a very slender foundation of assumed facts. The Historian, on the contrary, has an immense mass of facts of real life under his pen, and he endeavours to record them in a most brief and lucid manner; having simple and severe Truth for his instructor, instead of enthusiastic and credulous Imagination. In studying the works of the first, amusement is the end sought; the facts are unimportant.¹²

Possibly such views help explain why McCulloch and Haliburton turned more readily to the sketch than to other fictional forms. Still, there were answers to Thompson’s position. Mary Herbert defended fiction on both ethical and psychological grounds in *The Mayflower* (August 1851). In 1859 *Ross’s Weekly* permitted two correspondents to answer the Charlottetown *Protestant’s* disapproval of the *Weekly’s* fiction. “Old Times” opined that “novel readers metamorphose themselves into sickly sentimentalists . . . while the real miseries of humanity, excite little or no attention.” J. H. Fletcher agreed, but observed that Dickens, Bulwer Lytton, and Scott provided social experiences and a knowledge of character not found elsewhere in literature.¹³

Yet, three kinds of fiction — the emigrant tale, the historical romance, and the regional sketch — still deserve some attention, for they mirrored common psychic and social experiences. For example, Douglas Huyghue’s (“Eugene”) “Argimou. A Legend of the Micmac” (May-September 1842) was *The Amaranth’s* most ambitious contribution to Maritime historical romance. “Argimou” has many of the flaws of such popular fictions; it is “stereotyped in character, rhetorical in style, and melodramatic in plot”,¹⁴ but it is through these conventions that Huyghue reveals his intentions. Set between 1755 and 1761, the tale announces that the white man must bear the guilt for the debasement of the Indian, and it illustrates this thesis in the friendship between a good white man and a good Indian. Despite (or because of?) the Micmacs’ Scottish language and the Victorian sentiments of the eighteenth-century English gentlefolk, “Argimou” stands as one of the earliest fictional attempts to mythologize the Maritime past and to invest its events with ethical meaning. In a climactic passage, the Englishman Edward recognizes that his quest for the captured Emily will only succeed after his initiation into the woodcraft of his Micmac friend Argimou:

[Edward’s] belief in the progressive improvement of the human race was shaken, as the lamentable truth forced itself upon his understanding, that mankind seemed

to have journeyed further from the right, as they deviated from the plain habits and principles of the primitive ages. . . . Here in the rude forests he beheld plenty, cheerfulness, and frames untainted by the enervating maladies of the Old World. Here, among men unrestrained by penal codes, or chains, or strong dungeons, were to be found the most unflinching virtue; the elements of a beautiful philosophy. . . .

In its time, "Argimou" was respected enough to be published as a book (Halifax: Courier, 1847), and re-serialized in *The Saint John Albion* (1859-60).

MARITIME WRITERS were at their liveliest, however, in non-fictional prose, especially the sketch and the essay, which are both flexible, personal forms. The sketch could be either fictional or autobiographical. The essay could be either formal (for science, speculation, or criticism) or informal — at which point it almost merges with the autobiographical sketch. These prose traditions descended from Addison and Steele, and many nineteenth-century textbooks kept these models before generations of children. In addition, the travel pieces of Cobbett and the essays of Lamb provided models for the proliferation of travel sketches and familiar essays — chatty, antiquarian, self-consciously literary — which appeared in the 1820's. But the more immediate influences on much British North American humour were the convivial and sometimes coarse *Blackwood's* sketches of Lockhart, Wilson ("Christopher North"), and James Hogg, known as "Noctes Ambrosianae" — Nights at Ambrose's Tavern.

McCulloch's Stepsure "Letters" (*The Acadian Recorder*, 1821-23) and Hali-burton's "Recollections of Nova Scotia" [The Clockmaker] (*The Novascotian*, 1835) are the best known works in the humorous tradition. There is also "Samuel Slyboot's" analysis of fashionable Carlottetown at "A Tea Party" (*P.E.I. Register*, 23 August 1823). Among "The Club" Papers in *The Novascotian* is the famous punning sketch on the Assembly's proceedings (22 June 1831), possibly by Hali-burton. No. IV of "The Recess" Papers in *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* sends up the interminable verses produced by the Halifax garrison (August 1831). Mary Jane Katzmann's "Editor" in *The Provincial* holds dialogues with "Snaffle" on the magazine's prospects. George Stewart considers the possibility of a special issue of *Stewart's Quarterly* to be composed of rejected pieces (April 1870). One of the more charming *personae* is Dr. Sinclair's "Recluse" in *The Guardian*; his ambiguous rejection of any political aspirations (March 1860, p. 60) is not merely Leacockian but implies much about contemporary New Brunswick politics.

Practically every editorial and speech by Howe has its literary virtues, and the recently published *Travel Sketches in Nova Scotia* (1973), reprinted from his "Western" and "Eastern Rambles" in *The Nova-Scotian* (1828-31) reveal a literary direction he unfortunately did not follow. A forgotten but imaginative

series is Moses Perley's five "Sporting Sketches of New Brunswick" in *The Amaranth* (1841). His vivid, first-hand, sympathetic accounts of hunting with the Indians emphasize that English sportsmen do not understand the pleasures of axe, paddle, and spear. Like Huyghue, Perley (with a more felicitous style) sees forest life as a humanizing and educative experience.

The many essays devoted to the problems of developing a native literature alternated, almost randomly, between optimism and despair. *The Acadian Magazine's* "Preface" (July 1826) admitted the problem of subject matter: "A young country presents no field for the researches of the Antiquarian, it contains no vestiges of the glorious deeds of the days of Yore . . ." (p. i). By May 1827, "Peter" and "Paul's" "Characteristics of Nova Scotia" pointed with pride to the numerous and respectable periodical publications, and to the evidence of intellectual development in the work of Grizelda Tonge, Goldsmith, and Howe. Yet, in his 7 August 1828 "Ramble", Howe tartly observed that *The Acadian Magazine's* Editor

asserted the depraved taste of this illiterate Province suffered [it] to perish; a charge which would have made greatly against our literary character, if it had not been proved that such a thing could not die that never had any life in it.¹⁵

The Halifax Monthly Magazine happily reviewed "Publications in Nova Scotia" (June-September 1832), yet saw fit to echo the plaintive cry in *The Gazette* (Montreal) of 26 June 1832, are we the only ones in the world not to make books? The continual editorial entreaties for articles also suggest that supplies could dry up without warning. By 23 January 1840, however, *The Nova Scotian's* "Glance at the Past" could report favourably on the literary accomplishments of the colony, and *The Nova Scotia New Monthly Magazine* noted the developing sense of "locality" in writing. Paradoxically, 1842 is a year in which Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers had high hopes for literary flowerings. When *The Guardian* closed in 1860, Aiken and Manning no longer mentioned literary progress:

Nor do we feel much abashed at failure in this case; having several examples before us of a similar result, under far more favorable auspices. The fact seems to be forced upon us, that the Provinces are not ripe for an indigenous literature.¹⁶

Both *The Provincial* and *Stewart's Quarterly* examined at length the native literary tradition and were equally confident about placing colonial writers in the international republic of letters. Thus *The Provincial* discusses Haliburton's virtues and flaws as respectfully as those of Dickens and Thackeray, and its five "Half Hours with Our Poets" selected Mrs. Cotnam, Grizelda Tonge, John McPherson, Sarah Herbert, Charles Desbrisay, Dr. Byles, and the Rev. Samuel Elder as the notable versifiers, none of whom have survived as well as have the prose writers — Haliburton, Howe, McCulloch, Dawson, even Perley. *Stewart's Quarterly* reviews, as with Mair's *Dreamland and Other Poems* (January 1869), empha-

sized the *national* literary climate. Stewart's "Canadian Literature" (January 1870) was a new approach, for "Canadian" no longer meant only Quebec and Ontario, and he had an impressive group of professional writers — poets, novelists, scientists, and historians, in two languages — who had international reputations. Furthermore, Stewart related the development of professional authorship to the native publishing industry, for both of which he expressed modest prospects — and which the depressions and other national setbacks of the 1870's and 1880's virtually destroyed.

Maritime literary magazines all set out to develop local writing, to avoid sectarian politics and religion, and some, to offset the reading of American trash. Most of the high hopes ended in financial shambles due to lack of contributors or subscriptions or both. They had life spans similar to other nineteenth-century literary magazines, *The Literary Garland* excepted. Yet long periods without magazines did not mean lack of literary activity, for the newspapers had literary corners until well into the twentieth century. As it turned out, the newspapers, rather than the magazines, were the springboards to fame.

From the 1820's on, colonial achievements and identity were the subject of many analyses, both adulatory and critical. This complex of dualities and sentiments was formed by the shared Loyalist and emigrant experiences, the sense of colonial unity among the three British peoples, and a growing love for the familiar trees, valleys, and coves. There was an (unfulfilled) urgent hope that industrial development and literary progress would go hand in hand. Measurement was made by reference to restless, dramatic society to the south and to the powerful Empire whose heart was just across the ocean. Such perspectives encouraged a double vision and ironic attitudes among the many writers who contributed to the nationalism which pervaded the Maritimes in the 1860's: a nationalism which, sadly, evolved into a complacent nostalgia in the next eight lean decades.

Editors and writers alike responded to an emulated British poetry and fiction, while after 1850 there was admiration for the best American writing. Maritime poetry, especially, retained many elements of eighteenth-century culture; we may attribute these in part to the American traditions of the educated Loyalists.

Thus, we can observe the demotion of the heroic couplet between 1820 and 1840 as new cadences slowly permeated poetic consciousness. There were other smooth transitions from the previous century: concepts of progress and scientific development, the humanistic emphasis on literary culture, the role of evangelical piety and sentimentalism in literature; all are apparent in nineteenth-century Maritime journalism. Finally, the best prose has vitality, uniqueness, and a sense of shape — qualities which are often missing from otherwise competent but derivative and technically-cautious fiction and poetry. And now we know why Spedon didn't find any poets in Nova Scotia: he couldn't see that the metaphoric prose of his Bluenoser held the answer.

NOTES

- ¹ The few articles on literary journalism are useful but often inaccurate: D. R. Jack, "Acadian Magazines," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 2nd Series, IX, Section 2 (1903), 173-203. D. R. Jack, "Early Journalism in New Brunswick," *Acadiensis*, VIII (October 1908), 250-265. David Arnason, "Canadian Literary Periodicals of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, II (Summer 1973), 125-128. My thanks to the Canada Council and the RMC Arts Research Fund for research grants, and thanks to the staffs of Douglas Library, Queen's; Saint John Regional Library; the New Brunswick Museum; Killam Library, Dalhousie; Public Archives of Nova Scotia; and Public Archives of Prince Edward Island.
- ² "Preface," *The Acadian Magazine*, I (July 1826), i.
- ³ Joseph Chisholm, "John Sparrow Thompson," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, XXVI (1945), 1-31.
- ⁴ Public Archives of Canada, *Joseph Howe Papers*, Vol. 33.
- ⁵ "Death of Robert Shives," *The Daily Telegraph* (Saint John), 8 January 1879, p. 2.
- ⁶ "To the Patrons of the Amaranth," *The Amaranth*, III December 1843), 393. [Editorial Note], *The New Brunswick Reporter*, 15 August 1845, p. 158.
- ⁷ Phyllis Blakeley, "Mary Eliza Herbert," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, X (1871-1880), 348.
- ⁸ I am indebted to Mrs. Lois Kernaghan, Research Assistant, PANS, for permitting me to examine her notes on Mary Jane Katzmann for a forthcoming *DCB* article.
- ⁹ George Stewart, "The History of a Magazine," Typescript copy. New Brunswick Museum.
- ¹⁰ As far as I know, the journals did not pay for reprinting the selections, but they were usually scrupulous about identifying sources; hence, there is copyright abuse here.
- ¹¹ "Editorial," *The Mayflower*, I (August 1851), p. 125.
- ¹² John Sparrow Thompson, "History," *The Halifax Monthly Magazine*, III (September 1832), p. 156.
- ¹³ "Old Times," "Letter," *Ross's Weekly*, 10 August 1859; J. W. Fletcher, "Correspondence," *Ross's Weekly*, 24 August 1859, p. 2.
- ¹⁴ Fred Cogswell, "Literary Activity in the Maritime Provinces 1815-1880," *Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 110.
- ¹⁵ Howe's comments on *The Acadian Magazine* were brought to my attention in Malcolm Parks's edition of Howe's *Travel Sketches of Nova Scotia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), pp. 64-65.
- ¹⁶ "Close of the Volume," *The Guardian*, I (September 1860), p. 218.