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“Every Heart North of the Tweed”: Placing Canadian Magazines of the 1820s and 1830s

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AN ASSUMPTION THAT UNDERPINS most assessments of the early-nineteenth-century Canadian literary scene is that meaningful participation in what Carole Gerson has called “the creation of a national literature that distinctively and appropriately referred to Canada” is signalled by the presence of “Canadian content,” and is in inverse relation to the extent of a publication’s imitation or reproduction of British literary models (ix). This article argues for a different understanding of early Canadian magazines’ engagement with, and incorporation of, British (and especially Scottish) Romantic literature. Not only do these interactions complicate the view that reprinted material acts as an impediment to the emergence of original Canadian literary expression, they prove to be key to the magazines’ own understanding of their role as agents of national cultural development.

One of the “few notable successes” of these early decades is the *Literary Garland*, which began publication in Montreal in December 1838, entering a marketplace in which no English-language literary magazine had previously survived for more than three years (Hare and Wallot 77).¹ The first number of the magazine begins by dwelling self-consciously on its place in this succession of noble but abortive attempts:

Dispiriting as is the influence of the failure of all who have preceded us, we enter upon the arena with no fear for the result . . . we throw ourselves unreluctantly upon the good faith of an honourable community, to whom we offer a secure pledge, that for one year at least our efforts shall not be relaxed. If, at the expiration of that time, the GARLAND shall not have gathered a stem sufficiently powerful to support itself, it must fall and wither, as has been the fate of many a more beautiful and classic wreath. (Gibson 3)

In fact, the *Garland* would go on to run for thirteen years until shortly after the death of its editor John Gibson in 1851. For some critics, its longevity and sizeable pool of locally based contributors, which included such notable names as Susanna Moodie and Rosanna Leprohon, make the *Garland* an important “watershed” in the development of the Canadian literary scene (Bowness 31). For others, the *Garland* may be a relatively successful Canadian magazine, but it is not a magazine that is successful at *being* Canadian; in fact, it represents the failure of Canadian periodicals to reach some horizon of authentic literary expression by the end of the 1830s. Carl F. Klinck is notably disapproving of the *Garland* in the *Literary History of Canada* (1976): “As an aid to the development of a national literature, it taught certain skills, but it was a parlour game. It encouraged amenable native talent; but it made only feeble attempts to discover a native norm in content, treatment, or quality” (160). What Klinck means, in part, is that the *Garland* did not interpret its stated goal — to “assist in fostering the spirit of literary enterprise” in the Canadas — as a mandate to encourage its writers to depict contemporary settler life (4). In *A Purer Taste*, her 1989 study of the literature and reading habits of nineteenth-century Canada, Carole Gerson notes that “While the majority of its contributions came from Canadian residents and were directed towards Canadian readers, its fiction was primarily non-Canadian in content. Especially popular were Oriental tales, Old World pastoral idylls, European medieval romances, Irish and Scottish dialect anecdotes, and English silver fork stories” (45).

Klinck defines the elusive “native norm in quality” in opposition to the genteel femininity which he considers to be the *Garland*’s defining characteristic, arguing that although it was edited by a man and counted many male writers, “even rugged souls like Dunlop and Richardson,” among its contributors, “the substance and tone were set by invincible ladies of Old British or Bostonian origin” (159).² In consequence, “the *Garland*’s garment wafted a strong perfume of artificiality to men and women on the farms and in the towns” (160). It is certainly true that the *Garland*’s dedication to “polite” literary genres — fiction, poetry, anecdotes about the lives of historical figures, essays, and short book reviews — results in a relative dearth of Canadian material (if this is defined in terms of subject matter or setting as well as authorship) compared to some of its predecessors.

The *Garland* does not, for example, include a digest of foreign and provincial news, or announce births, deaths and marriages, as one of its notable predecessors, the *Canadian Magazine and Literary Repository* (1823-25), does. It also avoids the dry factual pieces on the fur trade or the history of Montreal or local agriculture which are the lifeblood of the *Canadian Magazine*. The first issue of the *Garland* already demonstrates the generic and geographical variety outlined by Gerson above: its original fiction includes “The Village Garrison,” about a Spanish general during the Thirty Years’ War, and “Aunt Mary’s Note Book,” set in Devonshire. Other items, however, do have Canadian settings, including poems about “The Saint Lawrence” and “The Death of Montcalm” and a tale entitled “The Hermit of Saint Maurice” which opens in Lower Canada before swiftly turning into a found manuscript narrative in which a group of travellers stumble across a scroll relating the mysterious recluse’s tragic backstory in a cell by the Shawinigan Falls. Alongside this original material is the first instalment in a serialized reprinting of “The Bit o’ Writin” (1838) by the Banim brothers, and a short extract from *Oliver Twist* (1838).

More recent literary histories have rejected the gendered terms of Klinck’s criticism of the *Garland*, which blames female practitioners of popular sentimental romance for “delaying the rise of serious fiction” (159). However, another underlying premise of Klinck’s argument remains fairly constant in evaluations of the pre-Confederation publishing scene: namely, that the *Literary Garland* presents a slightly confounding obstacle to teleological narratives of the emergence of a distinctively Canadian literature because it does not improve on its more short-lived predecessors in the realm of “Canadian content.” This category can be defined in two different ways: in its more capacious sense it would include any original material by local authors, but it is frequently interpreted more stringently to refer only to writing that reflects the realities of the contemporary Canadian environment. In this regard, the *Garland* compares unfavourably with the *Canadian Literary Magazine* (1833): seven of the eighteen items in the first number of this short-lived periodical address Canadian topics and several engage with the ongoing process of Upper Canadian colonisation. “A Page from the History of the Glengarry Highlanders,” for example, summarizes the history of the Glengarry Fencible Regiment and explains how veterans of that regiment came to be settled in Upper Canada, while “The Prize

Poem: As recited on the 20th December, 1832, at the Upper Canada College” is on the subject of “Emigration.”³ Recent history is covered in “The Stolen Child: A Canadian Anecdote” (about an incident that took place during the American Revolution), “Reminiscences of the Late War” (about the 1814 Battle of Lundy’s Lane) and “Archdeacon Mountain’s Sermon on the Cholera” (from the previous year, 1832), and local scenery in “A Description of the Falls of Niagara.”

It is usually taken for granted that the two types of “Canadian content” can be conflated, that reprinted material and homegrown content which is derivative in nature signify the same thing, which is a magazine’s inability to offer anything more than a colonial facsimile of British models. In their chapter on “Magazines in English” in *History of the Book in Canada* (2004), for example, Thomas Brewer Vincent, Sandra Alston, and Eli MacLaren argue that “early magazines in British North America faced an environment that was implicitly biased against them. At best, they were perceived as provincial organs designed to transmit the culture of distant centres. The imitative form and large amount of ‘borrowed’ content tended to reinforce this perception” (241). The *Garland*’s first address “To Our Readers” seems in places to support such a reading of reprinting as a compensation for the paucity or deficiency of Canadian material: “it will afford us much pleasure to lay before the public such original literary tales and sketches as it may be in our power to procure, but our principal dependence must be, for a time, at least, that we can borrow from minds so much richer than our own, that many will deem it a waste of space to devote the pages of the Magazine to our own outpourings” (Gibson 4).

To accept this self-deprecation at face value, though, is to overlook the extent to which magazines of this period also anticipate and respond to objections to their existence on the basis that the Canadas are inhospitable ground for polite literature. In the same editorial, Gibson acknowledges that “There are many who deem, that in a country yet in infancy, with little of storied or traditionary lore, the sphere of our action must be circumscribed, and that our efforts, like those of our predecessors, will end in failure. We have no such fear” (4). Gibson positions the *Garland* as a contribution to an ongoing effort that will not “yield its golden fruits” until some point in the future, but at the same time defends the achievements of the present moment: “Nor be it supposed, that we look upon the literary garden as unadorned with native

gems. . . . Be the task ours, to gather up of these the most beautiful, and by giving them a ‘local habitation and a name’ in the pages of the GARLAND, as well preserve them from oblivion, as assist in fostering the spirit of literary enterprise” (4). Canadian literature may be in its early stages, but there is already some material for the *Garland* to collect and preserve with an eye towards futurity.

In his introduction to the first number of the *Canadian Magazine* in July 1823, its editor David Chisholme is even more bullish about the role of magazines in the nascent Canadian literary scene than John Gibson in 1838: “Let US be permitted to mark a period in the history of CANADA, and open a page in which her future historian may descry the feeble glimmer of the first rise of a great, prosperous, and independent nation!” (6).⁴ The preface to the magazine’s fourth volume in January 1825 states that “the patronage such publications have met with in any country has been considered as a pretty sure criterion of the estimation in which it holds literature, and the degree of civilization to which it has reached” (Christie). Like the *Garland*, the *Canadian Magazine* is imagined both as an agent and a litmus test of improvement, demonstrating the cultural refinement of the present moment while driving future developments. But the proto-nationalist tenor of these remarks does not, crucially, imply that the magazine will fulfil its weighty civic mission by focusing exclusively, or even primarily, on homegrown literature. On the contrary:

It shall form one of the most prominent parts of our labours to select and transfer into our pages, from the most estimable sources of our standard literature as well as from the most reputable periodical publications of the day, such articles as we may deem of importance, in promoting the diffusion of useful knowledge throughout this country — in keeping alive the heroic and energetic sentiments of our ancestors — their private virtues and public patriotism — and in forming, for the example of posterity, a moral, an industrious, and a loyal population. (Chisholme 7-8)

The “basic impetus to position magazines as a forum for civic (and later national) improvement, as well as intellectual and cultural expression,” a stance which, as Suzanne Bowness has pointed out, “remains fairly consistent throughout the nineteenth century,” is considered by these earliest magazines to be entirely compatible with a high degree

of “borrowing” from metropolitan sources (67). Nonetheless, there has been little critical consideration of the precise nature of the material selected for reprinting in these magazines, and the uses to which this material is put. Vincent, Alston, and MacLaren note that “use of the borrowed form of the magazine was marked by a struggle to adapt it to local circumstances, so that over time it came to speak as much *for* as *to* the cultural consciousness of its readership” (240). However, attending closely to the various ways in which periodicals incorporate and repurpose British Romantic writing reveals that this process of adaptation to local circumstances also takes place at the level of content.

One striking example of this phenomenon is the epigraph to the first volume of the *Garland*: “O’er the glad waters of the dark blue sea.” The most obvious interpretation of this quotation, which is the opening line of Byron’s *The Corsair* (1814), would be that the “dark blue sea” is, in this instance, the Atlantic Ocean; that this constitutes a recognition of the *Garland’s* colonial identity as a transatlantic outpost of British culture. However, the line’s original context within Byron’s poem complicates matters a little:

O’er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
 Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,
 Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
 Survey our empire, and behold our home!
 These are our realms, no limits to their sway —
 Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey. (1-6)

Here “empire” and “home” are located on the sea itself, with no stable resting place which can be used to determine the relative positions of centre and periphery. The *Garland’s* own explanation for its choice of epigraph, given in the twelfth issue as part of an extended reflection upon the magazine’s successful first year of existence, is somewhat different again: “Inappropriate as our motto may have seemed, it was, at the moment of adoption, the best that occurred to our memory, as imaging the buoyant hopes with which we threw ourselves upon the stormy billows of public feeling” (Gibson 537). No mention is made here of the wider world beyond the Canadas. The meaning of the epigraph is confined, apparently, to the *Garland’s* attempt to gain a place within local print culture, the sea imagery wholly figurative. Gibson

then enlarges upon his earlier reference to the tenor of public feeling in 1838:

When the day was laden with tales of blood, and the night was one long dream of glory, to cast before an excited people, a peace offering, humble and unpretending in its character as ours; the more especially when the death-knells of similar efforts, undertaken under more smiling auspices, and in times less “troublous,” were hourly dinned into our ears. (537)

The “billows” of public opinion had been particularly “stormy” at the moment of the *Garland*’s first appearance because it came in the wake of the rebellions of 1837 and 1838 in Upper and Lower Canada, and the editorial links these political events to the inauspicious state of Canadian letters. The “death-knells” that menace the *Garland* are conflated with the “tales of blood” accompanying the struggle for responsible government. While the choice of *The Corsair* hints at the magazine’s enthusiasm for the immensely popular genre of the Oriental tale, according to the editor’s gloss the epigraph has been selected for its applicability to a peculiarly Canadian situation. But at the same time, Gibson’s description of the motto as potentially “inappropriate” is, perhaps, an acknowledgement that in their new context Byron’s words become extremely opaque. Their reference points may be global, local or metaphorical, and such geographic instability is a frequent result of these magazines’ engagement with mainstream Romantic literature.

That mainstream is represented, overwhelmingly, by Byron and Walter Scott. The first three numbers of the *Canadian Magazine* in 1823 contain lengthy extracts from Scott’s latest novel, *Quentin Durward*. Little is offered in the way of criticism, “our only business at present being, to present to our readers, in as brief a detail as possible, a general view of the story before us, and to select such extracts from it as will enable them to form an opinion of the merits and beauty of the work in general” (“*Quentin Durward*” 26). The same is done for *Saint Ronan’s Well* in February 1824 and an “Extract from the Novel, now in press, called RED GAUNTLET, by Sir Walter Scott” appears in July 1824. For historians of nineteenth-century Canadian literature, one of the clearest markers of the colony’s cultural conservatism has always been its continuing attachment to Walter Scott as an ideal literary model long after his popularity in Britain had declined. Gerson notes that “Before

1860, during the colonial period, Scott was esteemed for having made fiction respectable and directly or indirectly received the homage of scores of imitators who filled the pages of Canadian literary periodicals with historical romances set in Europe” (67). There is, however, a subtle difference between “before 1860” and “before 1840,” in that Gerson is referring to a Scott who has been posthumously enshrined as a model of sound imperial values and of the moral superiority of romance to realism, not the Scott who was at the centre of the contemporary British literary scene for writers working in the 1820s and 1830s. In these decades, Scott is brought into the periodical sphere in other, more concrete, ways than through belated imitation. His new works are excerpted as they are published — the most direct possible transmission of “the culture of distant centres” — but Canadian readers are also offered more complex pictures of their relationship to the author.

The first issue of the *Canadian Literary Magazine*, published in York, Upper Canada, in April 1833, features an image of Scott that is touted as a great technical triumph:

Mr Tazewell, our Artist, has bestowed considerable pains upon the accompanying Portrait — the first we believe ever engraved in Upper Canada — engraved too on Canadian Stone, and from thence, by means of a Canadian press, transferred to Canadian paper. The sketch is borrowed from *Fraser's Magazine*; and we think Mr Tazewell has been extremely happy in transferring the likeness to our pages. (“Sir Walter Scott (with a Sketch)” 41)

The original belongs to *Fraser's* “Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters,” a series that ran from 1830 to 1838, with each entry consisting of a page-length biographical sketch by William Maginn and a portrait by Daniel Maclise.

Miriam Thrall describes the Gallery as “the first attempt which any English magazine had made to give informative, intimate accounts of the most prominent living men of letters,” though by the time the *Canadian Literary Magazine* reproduces Scott’s portrait it has become a memorialisation (19). The article in which the image appears includes a dispute between the editor and one of the magazine’s contributors, Guy Pollock, about “the best mode of testifying respect to the memory of Sir Walter Scott in this Province” — Pollock favours a monument while the editor argues that the interests of the “infant Colony” of Upper Canada would be better served by “blending utility to the living with

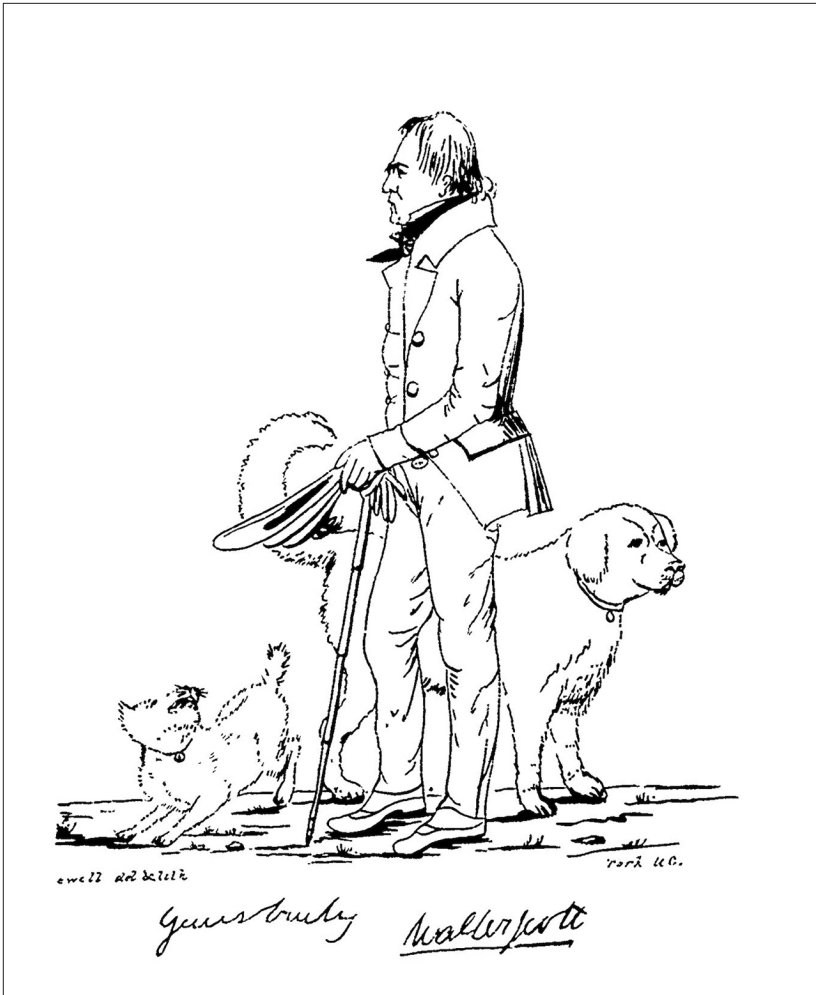


Figure 1. “Sir Walter Scott (with a Sketch).” *Canadian Literary Magazine* 1.1 (1833). Courtesy *Early Canadiana Online*.

honor to the dead” and establishing a much-needed library and museum in Scott’s name (42). The piece ends with a “Dirge on the death of Sir Walter Scott: written, we believe by Mr D. Chisholm [sic], of Three-rivers . . . who has thus patriotically sung a lament for his illustrious countryman on the banks of the majestic St. Lawrence” (44). (This is of course David Chisholme of the *Canadian Magazine* and *Canadian Review*, now a government official in Trois-Rivières.) The article is



Figure 2. "The Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters. No. VI. Sir Walter Scott." *Fraser's Magazine* 2.10 (1830).

invested in carving out a place for Scott in the local Canadian context; at the same time, however, it draws its description of Scott's personal appearance from a sketch by his friend Allan Cunningham, which was originally published in the *New Monthly Magazine's* series on "Living Literary Characters" in January 1831. The *Canadian Literary Magazine* patches together content from two metropolitan periodicals but also makes an effort to register the particular experience of responding to Scott from the banks of the Saint Lawrence. Equally, the magazine's ability to produce a replica of a British engraving is celebrated as a proof of advances in local technical capabilities; British literature is the subject, but it is mediated through Canadian stone, a Canadian press, and Canadian paper.

The fact that the recently deceased Walter Scott was selected as the first subject of Canadian periodical portraiture is by no means surprising. However, a note from the editor throws up an interesting wrinkle: "We had originally intended to have placed in our first number the Portrait of a distinguished personage intimately connected with this Colony. But a variety of unforeseen obstacles concurred to prevent this intention from being carried into effect, and we have endeavored to repair the disappointment as well as possible" (41-42). In the very next issue, in May 1833, that personage is revealed to be John Galt, the former secretary of the Canada Company who resided in the colony between 1826 and 1829 and was a dominant figure in shaping the representation of Canadian affairs in the British periodical press, particularly in *Blackwood's Magazine* and *Fraser's* itself. Scott and Galt are the sixth and seventh subjects of *Fraser's* portraiture, appearing in November and December 1830.

In a letter to his publisher William Blackwood, dated 30 January 1821, Galt remarks: "What a cursed fellow that Walter Scott has been, to drive me out of my old original line" (qtd. Duncan 215). This is a reference to the pre-eminence of Scott's brand of historical fiction, which had eclipsed Galt's own method, which he calls "theoretical history" — an approach that underpins his novelistic depictions of emigration to the United States and Upper Canada, *Lawrie Todd; or, The Settlers in the Woods* (1830) and *Bogle Corbet; or, The Emigrants* (1831). In the *Canadian Literary Magazine*, Scott has displaced Galt yet again, but for once the intention really was for Galt to have taken precedence. In Galt's case, however, his image is not simply transferred from *Fraser's*

to Canadian paper; it is altered. While both pictures show a map of the Great Lakes region hanging on the wall behind Galt, in the *Fraser's*

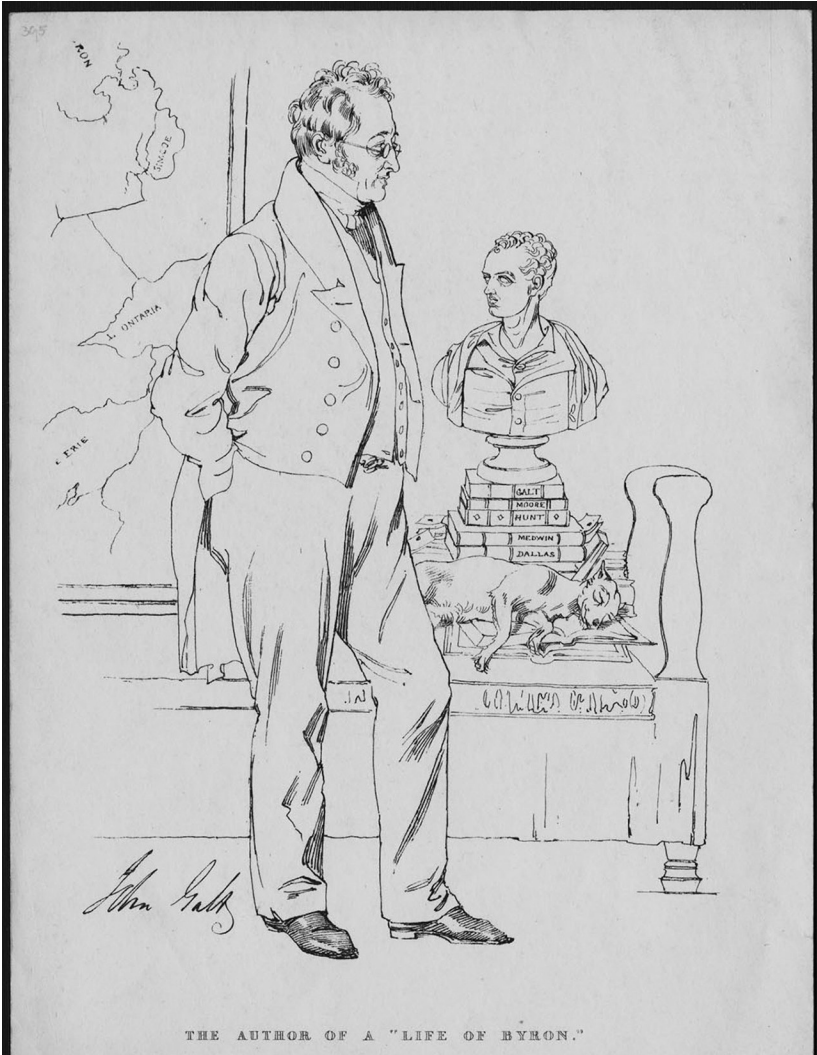


Figure 3. "The Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters. No. VII. John Galt, Esq." *Fraser's Magazine* 2.11 (1830).

original Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Simcoe, and Lake Huron are marked unobtrusively in small print.

The *Canadian Literary Magazine* version uses large, bold lettering to

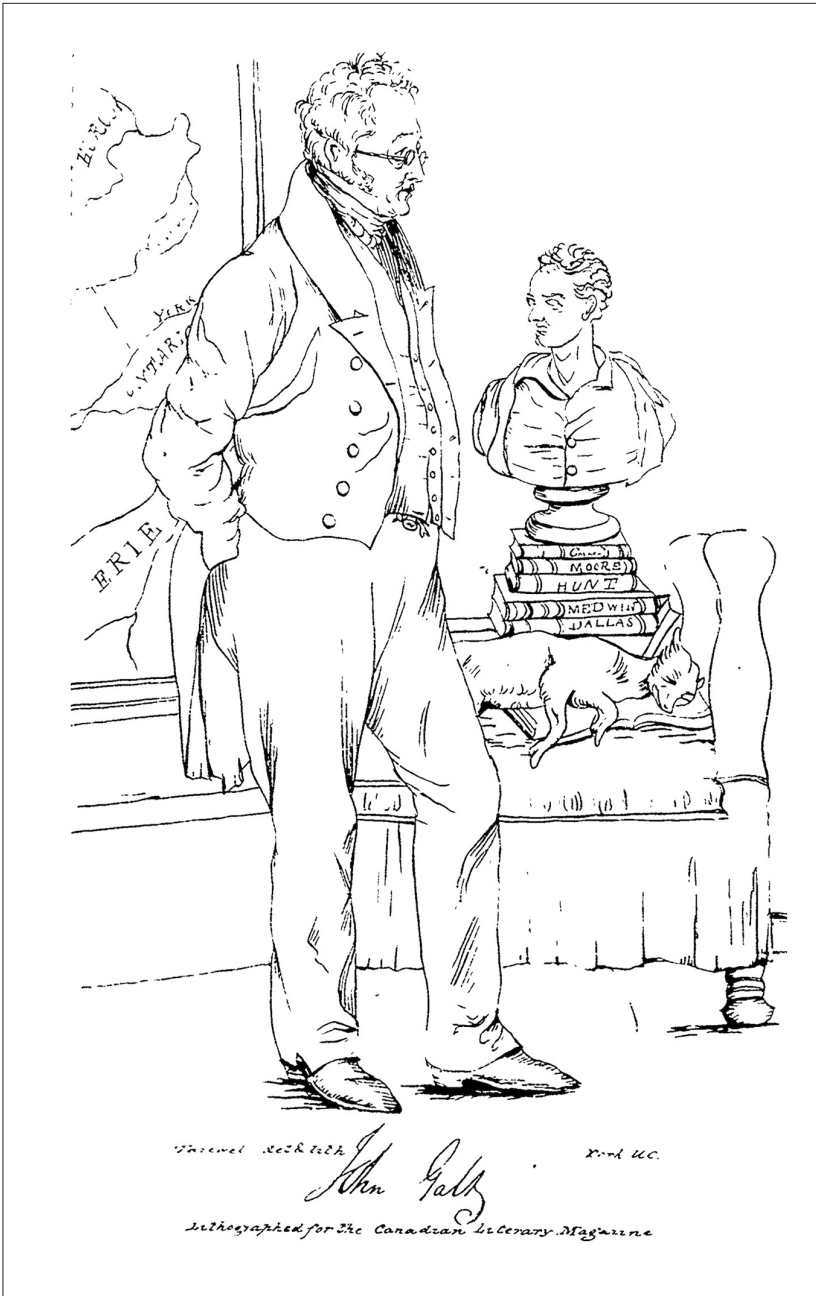


Figure 4. "John Galt." *Canadian Literary Magazine* 1.2 (1833). Courtesy *Early Canadiana Online*.

make these features more prominent, and adds an extra detail — it puts York, the magazine's place of publication, on the map.

The *Canadian Literary Magazine* visually amplifies Galt's real-life Canadian associations, but also continues to identify him with his role as one of Byron's many biographers (the bust of the late poet sits atop a pile of such works by Galt, Thomas Moore, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Medwin and R. C. Dallas).⁵ The brief account of Galt's life and literary career which accompanies the engraving devotes far more space to anecdotes about his tempestuous relationship with Byron than to his many writings on Canadian subjects, remarking only in passing that "The name and writings of Galt have also been of considerable avail in attracting public attention in Great Britain towards Upper Canada" (105). "The Editor's Address to the Public" in the first issue of the *Canadian Literary Magazine* asks "who will deny that the events which have characterized the infancy of this extensive country afford ample materials for the Historian, the Poet and the Novelist?" (Kent 1), but no attempt is made here to single out *Bogle Corbet*, Galt's Canadian novel, as an imaginative response to the recent history of colonial settlement. Instead, it is mentioned alongside more well-known novels of provincial life in the West of Scotland, such as *The Ayrshire Legatees* (1820), *The Provost* (1822), and *The Entail* (1823).

The *Canadian Literary Magazine's* biographical sketch concludes that "the greatest merit of Galt's writings is the extreme felicity with which he depicts the subacid humour of the Scotch, and the manners of the middling and lower classes of his countrymen" ("John Galt" 106). It does not distinguish between portrayals of Scottish characters in their native places, as in *Annals of the Parish* (1821), which takes place entirely in the fictional Ayrshire village of Dalmailing, and texts such as *Lawrie Todd* and *Bogle Corbet*, in which Scottish "manners" are depicted within narratives of migration to the United States, the West Indies, and Upper Canada. The magazine's reluctance to make any connections between Galt's literary career and his residence in Canada may seem to be at odds with its proud defence of local subject matter as "equally interesting to the Canadian, and to him who has adopted Canada for his country" (Kent 1-2). It suggests that, while the *Canadian Literary Magazine* addresses itself to a reader who possesses both colonial and metropolitan cultural affiliations — who is the audience both for local history and for biographies of Scottish writers — it is not able to con-

ceive of the two categories, Scottish and Canadian, as being united in the oeuvre of a single author. What this means, perhaps paradoxically, is that it is easier for Scott, who looms large only as an imperial literary figure and not as a local one at the same time, to be imaginatively integrated into the public life of the Canadas. He will be commemorated with a monument or a library in York and will be the subject of a dirge composed in Trois-Rivières, without the complication of his having ever visited these places in person.

In the *Canadian Magazine*, the question of Scott's physical presence — and the Canadian reader's own geographical position in relation to the Scottish author — is not such a settled one. In the first number of the magazine the extract from *Quentin Durward* is placed immediately after a biographical sketch of Scott which, unlike its counterpart in the *Canadian Literary Magazine* ten years later, does not cite a specific source for its descriptive detail. Instead, the *Canadian Magazine's* insight into Scott's appearance and behaviour derives from an anonymous "we":

He smiles frequently, and we never saw any smile which tells so eloquently that union of broad good humour, with the keenest perception of the ridiculous . . . we have even seen him walk for upwards of half an hour in the great Hall of the Parliament House of Edinburgh, without any stick at all — having only his hand placed on his left knee, where, we believe, the grand defect lies. ("Sir Walter Scott" 24)

Scott in this instance is not transported symbolically to Canada but is firmly located in Edinburgh, in the flesh, where the writer appears to have been a frequent observer of his motions. What is slightly disorienting about the piece is its lack of acknowledgement of the current distance between Scott and the Montreal offices of the *Canadian Magazine*. Instead, the reader is left with the sensation that the writer might at that moment be able to step into Parliament House and see Scott again. This phenomenon recurs in the *Canadian Magazine's* third number, in a piece on "Lord Byron's Palinade to the Edinburgh Review" — only this time it is the magazine's readers, not an individual contributor, who find themselves displaced. "The Poet commences Canto X. of Don Juan, still unpublished. . . . We quote the conclusion, which

is very beautiful; and will be felt to the core by every heart north of the Tweed" (265).

These words are actually lifted wholesale from a longer article published in Leigh Hunt's *Literary Examiner* on 9 August 1823, retitled and placed in the *Canadian Magazine's* "Original Poetry" section without attribution. The *Literary Examiner* can, of course, address itself to Scottish readers without implying that the entirety of its audience is located in Scotland; this does not place the conventions of the metropolitan periodical under any particular strain. Indeed, major British periodicals, as Jude Piesse points out, "also functioned as a particularly porous point between national boundaries and catered for colonial and American, as well as for British, readerships" (26). But where does this leave the readers of the *Canadian Magazine's* article on Byron, readers who might find themselves included within the scope of an address from a British periodical to a readership imagined as infinite or at least potentially transcolonial and transatlantic, but who, by definition, cannot be located on the north side of the river that flows along the border between Scotland and England? These readers are firmly tied to Canada partly by the limited geographical circulation of the fragile, financially circumscribed early Canadian periodical, and partly by the magazine's explicit address to a local audience which shares the editor's investment in "promoting, no less the internal improvement, than the general interests of these Provinces" (Chisholme, Preface) through the encouragement of homegrown publications.

One possible answer might be that the invitation to participate in the early days of a nascent national literature only applies to "Canadian content"; that the reprinted material requires residents of the Canadas to alter their mental orientation and read as though they are actually in Britain, the distance between Canada and the imperial centre sliding in and out of focus according to the subject matter at hand. Another (deceptively complicated) possibility is that the *Canadian Magazine* itself holds two editorial viewpoints, Scottish and Canadian, simultaneously. While the *Literary Examiner's* review of *Don Juan* moves on to consider Juan's adventures at the court of Catherine the Great and in London, the *Canadian Magazine* excerpts only the section of Canto X pertaining to Scotland and to Byron's own Scottish upbringing ("But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred / A whole one"). It also adds an extra snippet of biographical information not present in the *Literary*

Examiner: “Lord Byron had the early part of his education at Aberdeen, and his mother was a Miss Gordon, heiress to a patrimonial estate in that country, and of an ancient family there” (“Lord Byron’s Palinade” 264). As the article becomes Canadian, as it is adapted to fit the priorities of the *Canadian Magazine*’s editor and implied reader, it — and its subject — also become more Scottish. This assumption that the reader will take a particular interest in the Scottish aspects of Byron’s life and work echoes the conclusions of the *Canadian Magazine*’s earlier article on Scott’s poetry, which does not consider the empire-wide popularity of his writings but, rather, their particular significance for Scottish readers:

Now, a poet like Walter Scott, by enquiring into and representing the modes of life in earlier times, employs the imagination of his countrymen, as a means of making them go through the personal experience of their ancestry, and of making them acquainted with the various courses of thought and emotion, by which their forefathers had their genius and character drawn down. Other poets, such as Byron have attempted an analogous operation, by carrying us into foreign countries, where society is still comparatively young, but their method is by no means so happy or complete as Scott’s, because the people among whom they seek to interest us, have national characters totally different from the people of Scotland — whereas those whose minds he exhibits as a stimulus, are felt at once to be great kindred originals, of which our every-day experience shows us copies, faint indeed, but capable of being worked into stronger resemblances. (“Sir Walter Scott” 20)

The surface explanation for such an analysis of Scott’s special appeal to his own countrymen is that the editors of the *Canadian Magazine*, David Chisholme and A.J. Christie, were both Scotsmen, writing primarily for members of a small literary-minded clique within Montreal’s anglophone mercantile community. However, in the opposition between Scotland and “foreign countries, where society is still comparatively young,” and the remark that “our every-day experience” is one of contact and identification with Scottish national character, there is little to suggest that this piece is directed towards a readership outside Scotland, even a diasporic Scottish one. This would seem, then, to be the clearest possible example of a periodical failing to fit its form of address to its colonial readers, to register their distance from the imperial centre.

But these same readers are also the target audience for an article

“On the Influence of a Well-Regulated English Theatre, in Montreal” and a poem addressed “To My Flute: Written at the Fall of the Grand Calumet,” both of which appear in the same issue as “Lord Byron’s Palinade to the Edinburgh Review,” juxtaposed with an antiquarian exploration of “Tithes and Parish Schools in Scotland” and, in the “Varieties” section, “a list of the forfeited Scotch titles restored by a late order of George the Fourth” (270). The “Anecdotes” include a story about James IV of Scotland’s encounter with a band of robbers in “a cavern near Wemys [sic], which is one of the most remarkable antiquities of Scotland” (271), while the “Foreign Summary” provides an account of the Robert Burns monument erected in Alloway in 1823: “And what enhances the merit of the work, is the fact of its being executed by Ayrshire men” (274-75). The *Canadian Magazine* acknowledges two main areas of interest, one local and the other Scottish, and switches repeatedly from one to the other.

A piece from the second issue of the *Literary Garland* offers a sharp contrast to this peculiar fusion of Scottish and Canadian perspectives. The narrator of “The Indian’s Dream” also speaks from an explicitly Scottish point of view, but here the disparate origins of individual subjects are reconciled in a new, more recognizably imperial whole:

What matters it which of the sea-girt isles may have seen our birth?
 What matters it, that some amongst us may claim the Emerald gem
 of ocean-sea as their father land — that some have first inhaled the
 ether of existence, mingled with the rose-breath of glorious Albion
 — that others have tried their infant footsteps on the bounding
 heather of our own loved Caledon. . . . Let it be written of us, with
 emphasis and truth, that “WE ARE ONE” — “one and indivis-
 ible” — denizens of the same glorious empire, whose first wish is
 the prosperity of our fellow-men. (64)

This perspective exemplifies what Katie Trumpener describes, less favourably, as the “colonial tilt, this collective amnesia whereby Scottish (and Irish) settlers misplace in transit their age-old anti-English, anti-British, and anti-imperial hatreds” (253). In this, if not in the percentage of its “Canadian content,” the *Garland* does distinguish itself from the magazines that come before it, offering a vision of the Canadian reader’s identity as one that transcends Old-World national origin.

Situated between the two extremes represented by “The Indian’s

Dream” and the *Canadian Magazine*’s address to “every heart north of the Tweed” is the *Canadian Literary Magazine*’s “Description of the Falls of Niagara: Written for the information of a friend in England, during the month of August, 1830,” which presents a narrator whose reference points are explicitly Scottish but who is also in a position to interpret the significance of Niagara for his correspondent. It opens by announcing, boldly, that “Compared with the Falls of Clyde, those of Niagara have a lifeless appearance” (Hamilton 27-28). The author of the piece is one of the magazine’s main contributors, Guy Pollock, the pseudonym of Robert Douglas Hamilton, a doctor from Muirhead in Lanarkshire who had recently settled in Scarborough, Upper Canada. Before emigrating in 1827 he had lived in Lesmahagow, about ten miles from the Falls of Clyde (see Roland). He goes on to enlarge upon the absurdity, but also the inevitability, of his viewing these two bodies of water in relation to one another:

After all, comparing the Falls of Niagara with the Falls of Clyde, is something like comparing the Temple of Luxor with Melrose Abbey, or the Register Office of Edinburgh, — the Pyramids of Egypt with the tomb of Themistocles, — the Himalayas with Ben Lomond Hill, — or the Colossus of Rhodes with the Antinous of Rome. The former of these objects are great and commanding: they inspire us with awe and respect. The latter are comparatively small and elegant, and inspire us with love and pleasure, which to minds cast in an ordinary mould, are probably the most delightful emotions. (28)

While Niagara is aligned with exotic wonders of the ancient and natural world, the Scottish landmarks are more “homely” and have a stronger affective resonance. If the *Canadian Magazine* presents discrete Scottish and Canadian perspectives ranged side by side, and the *Garland* attempts to merge Scottish identity into an imperial collective which is geographically untethered, the *Canadian Literary Magazine*’s strategy is to process the Canadian landscape through a Scottish filter.

There are clear differences in the manner in which the three magazines deploy Scottish cultural references. The Scottish Byron of 1823 is succeeded by a Byron at once Canadian and fundamentally unmoored in 1839; where the *Canadian Magazine*’s interpellation of an imagined Scottish reader involves little to no acknowledgement of its own

non-Scottish location, the *Canadian Literary Magazine* gives voice to a Canadian resident who feels a continuing sense of ownership in Scottish literary figures and landmarks. It would be possible to read this transition as the gradual purging of another outside influence as the Canadian periodical comes into its own, were it not for the fact that these magazines' co-optation and refashioning of Scottish literature is more nuanced than a zero-sum opposition between "original/Canadian" and "borrowed/British" content will allow for. Rather, it is necessary to recognize that the partial "Canadianisation" of Scottish materials serves a particular vision of the Canadian magazine's temporal, as well as geographical, position.

The strict categorical division between imported and homegrown content supports a broad characterization of this period in Canadian literary history as ultimately provisional rather than consequential, populated by literary productions whose Canadian identity is incompletely formed. This is an argument of which the periodicals of the 1820s and 1830s are themselves already aware; they frequently call attention to the fragility of their historical moment, to the possibility of its being judged irrelevant when "society shall resume the order, the elegancy, and the permanency of the most civilised countries on the face of the earth!" (Chisholme 6). The fifth issue of the *Canadian Magazine* confronts the question head on:

We have, however, been seriously surprised at having heard the daring assertion, that, after an anticipated era relating to these provinces, which is as ardently hailed by one party as it is rejected and disapproved of by another, the preceding history of Canada will not only entirely vanish in the importance of succeeding events, but be totally unworthy of record. . . . The origin of nations, and their progressive rise towards maturity, we deem by far the most important era in their annals. ("Selected Papers" 427)⁶

These magazines' impulse to place themselves at the beginning of Canadian time, at the point of national origin, amounts to a refusal to acknowledge First Nations or French histories as part of the inheritance of English-Canadian settler society, which looks instead to the "heroic and energetic sentiments of our ancestors — their private virtues and public patriotism" for help in "forming, for the example of posterity, a moral, an industrious, and a loyal population" (Chisholme 8). The

Garland's view of Canada as lacking its own "storied or traditionary lore" echoes a well-known passage from Catharine Parr Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836): "Here there are no historical associations, no legendary tales of those that came before us" (153). These periodicals understand themselves to be creating historical associations in real time, archiving their own cultural work as they go along in order to rescue it from future oblivion. A.J. Christie summarizes this position in the preface to the fourth volume of the *Canadian Magazine*: "Periodical publications are the germs of historical details. They catch events as they rise, note them at the moment with a strict adherence to fidelity of relation. . . . But it is not for the future historian alone that such publications are useful. They are the epitomes of the literature, arts and sciences of the days in which they appear."

To view the periodical scene of the 1820s and 1830s through the prism of imitation and dependence is also to discount these periodicals' own sense that their efforts are not directed towards making up a cultural deficit, but are situated within a long historical trajectory, in the course of which British culture will serve not only as a model for Canada to emulate but as one which it may one day supersede:

Nations, who now give jurisprudence and learning to all the habitable parts of the earth, were once Colonies of a more extended Empire. When the tide and the buffetings of time shall have beat for a little longer upon the more ancient nations of the world, who knows but that the wild and unpeopled provinces of this modern Continent may become the refuge of the sciences and the mother of the arts? (Chisholme 4)

When this concern with temporality is taken into account, Scottish literary reference points no longer appear emblematic of a pre-national phase, destined to be left behind by the onward march of Canadian history. Rather, as John Kent's "Editor's Address" makes clear, they help to underwrite that history:

The severe trials of an early settler, and a daily warfare with mental and physical difficulties, may have super-induced a crust of roughness over the outward man; but the same feelings which the settler brought with him from his native land, or which the Canadian-born inherits from his parents, exist, though perchance it may be, in a latent state. Such a man I cannot believe to be forgetful of

the past, or indifferent to the future; on the contrary, I believe that he will welcome with pleasure an honest chronicler who, like Old Mortality, will remove the moss encroaching upon the carved memorials of the tomb, — a chronicler who will rescue from oblivion's stream those floating fragments, which some Canadian Hume or Robertson will hereafter search for, when composing the annals of his country. (1-2)

Old Mortality, from Scott's 1816 novel of the same name, is a stonemason living during the eighteenth century who maintains the graves of Covenanter martyrs of the "Killing Time" of the 1680s. Old Mortality's safeguarding of the recent past acts as a model for the cultural work of the *Canadian Literary Magazine*, self-consciously assembling a repository of raw material for a Canadian analogue of the Scottish Enlightenment historiography of David Hume's *History of England* (1754-62) and William Robertson's *History of Scotland 1542-1603* (1759) and *History of America* (1777). Scottish literary models are still present in this Canadian future; they are, in fact, the means by which it is imagined, providing a template for the recovery of early-nineteenth-century Canada once it has receded into the past.

NOTES

¹ *The Scribbler* (1821-27), an idiosyncratic "weekly essay" by Samuel Hull Wilcocke, had lasted for six years, but as a single-authored paper that foregrounds local gossip and allegorical accounts of events in Wilcocke's own life, and which bears a greater generic resemblance to *The Tatler* or *The Spectator* than to any of its Canadian contemporaries, it is something of a special case.

² William "Tiger" Dunlop (1792-1848) was a Canada Company official and author of *Statistical Sketches of Upper Canada, for the Use of Emigrants, by a Backwoodsman* (1832). John Richardson (1796-1852) was the author of the early Canadian historical novels *Wacousta* (1832) and *The Canadian Brothers* (1840).

³ The *Canadian Literary Magazine* was edited by John Kent, a teacher at Upper Canada College.

⁴ David Chisholme was a major figure in the literary scene of 1820s Montreal: in addition to the *Canadian Magazine* he was the editor of the *Montreal Gazette* newspaper. In 1824 he left both positions to take over the *Montreal Herald* and to launch the *Canadian Review and Literary and Historical Journal* (1824-26). He was succeeded at the *Gazette* and the *Canadian Magazine* by A.J. Christie, who had himself been editor of the *Herald* from 1818 to 1821. See Ballstadt.

⁵ R.C. Dallas, *Recollections of the Life of Lord Byron from the year 1808 to the end of 1814* (1824); Thomas Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron: noted during a residence with his Lordship at Pisa, in the years 1821 and 1822* (1824); Leigh Hunt, *Lord Byron and some of his*

contemporaries; with recollections of the author's life, and of his visit to Italy (1828); Thomas Moore, *The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron; with Notices of his Life* (1830); John Galt, *The Life of Lord Byron* (1830).

⁶ The “anticipated era” is most likely the legislative union of the two Canadas, a measure which had been proposed in the British House of Commons in 1822 and rejected early in 1823.

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