Old Provinces, New Modernisms:
Toward an Editorial Poetics of the Maritime Little Magazine

by

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Bachelor of Arts, St. Thomas University, 2012

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

in the Graduate Academic Unit of English Literature

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This thesis is accepted by the
Dean of Graduate Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

April, 2015

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ABSTRACT

As a territory located on Canada’s geopolitical periphery—a territory lacking key points of access to large presses, arts capital, and cultural media—the Maritimes has been disproportionately served by alternative media like little magazines. Nevertheless, while there has been a substantial body of research dedicated to little magazine culture in Canada, its urban beginnings, and its contribution to the emergence of literary modernism, few studies have examined the development and influence of the little magazine in the Maritime Provinces. Taking as representative examples *The Fiddlehead* (1945- ), *Katharsis* (1967-1971), *The Square Deal* (1970-1971), *Sand Patterns* (1972-8), and *The Antigonish Review* (1970- )—little magazines which have distinguished themselves in the region for breadth of readership and authorship, editorial leadership, and cultural activism—this thesis examines the literary, cultural, and political functions of Maritime literary magazines from the mid-nineteenth century up to the 1980s. Paying close attention to the political, social, and economic environments in which these magazines have emerged and to which they have responded, this thesis sets forth an editorial poetics of the Maritime little magazine.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was undertaken with the financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), for which I am grateful. I would like to thank all those at the Harriet Irving Library Archives and Special Collections, especially Patsy Hale. I would also like to thank those whose insight proved invaluable while I was researching and composing this thesis, including Dr. Edward MacDonald, Gerturude Sanderson, Dr. Pat Walsh, Dr. Sheldon Currie, Dr. Stewart Donovan, and Dr. Gail Campbell. A special thanks is owed to Dr. John Ball for his helpful comments, advice, and encouragement. I have benefitted greatly from the advice and encouragement of my co-supervisor Dr. Demetres Tryphonopoulos and I am deeply indebted to my supervisor and mentor Dr. Tony Tremblay for his unwavering support, editorial guidance, and thoughtful advice. I am also forever grateful to my parents, Dawn Russell and Bill Johnson, for their unconditional support, both personal and editorial. And I thank Julia, for her patience and constant encouragement at every step.
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Curriculum Vitae
Introduction: The Canadian Little Magazine, Modernism, and Literary Print Culture in the Maritime Provinces

In a letter of 26 September 1973, Elizabeth Brewster wrote to Alfred G. Bailey recalling the founding of *The Fiddlehead* and the decisive meeting of the Bliss Carman Society on 15 April 1944 at which the magazine was conceived. Having proposed a literary magazine that would be dedicated exclusively to the publication of New Brunswick verse, Bailey, persuaded by Brewster to expand the focus of the proposed magazine, declared that they “would create a New Province” (2). The pun was not lost on the group of aspiring modernist poets who agreed that the magazine was to be a forum for the sort of modernist literature and art initiated in Canada by the Montreal Group and anthologized in *New Provinces: Poems of Several Authors* (1936) by F.R. Scott, A.J.M. Smith, and Leo Kennedy. “It was fairly obvious,” wrote Brewster, “that we were part of that mid-fifties ferment which was responsible for *Preview* and *First Statement* and Smith’s Anthology and E.K. Brown’s book of Canadian verse, and – yes – Desmond’s criticism” (4). This mid-century period of literary efflorescence was identified by Bailey as early as 1947 as one of “cultural and intellectual ferment” (“Faculty” 1). As definably modernist, it took as its primary form of poetic expression modernist verse and as its principal medium of publication the “little magazine.” As Bailey and Brewster’s exchange suggests, however, *The Fiddlehead* negotiated its devotion to the broad principles of modernism that were then guiding emergent cultural formations across Canada with a commitment to regional cultural development. While it had strong links to
the modernist formations in Montreal and Toronto, the magazine was nevertheless established within “the Maritime tradition” (Brewster 4).

*The Fiddlehead* drew on a vibrant history of print culture in the region and was followed by a number of other small literary magazines – including *Katharsis* (1967-1971), *The Square Deal* (1970-1971), *The Antigonish Review* (1970-), *Sand Patterns* (1972-8), *Pottersfield Portfolio* (1979-1985), *Cormorant* (1983-1998), and *The Nashwaak Review* (1994-) – that would come to dominate the literary landscape of the Maritimes in the second half of the twentieth century. Emerging in small cities and towns throughout the Maritime provinces – in places like Fredericton, New Brunswick; Antigonish, Nova Scotia; and Charlottetown, PEI – these magazines were at once connected to the rise of modernism in arts and literature across Canada and made distinct by their geographical distance from the large urban centres of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. Providing not only a forum for emerging Maritime modernists, but also a vehicle for the promotion of modernism in arts and literature from national and international contributors, the Maritime little magazines made a marked contribution to both regional and national literary culture in the latter half of the twentieth-century. This contribution, however, has been obscured by a literary history that has consistently overlooked the significance of emergent cultural formations in the Maritime provinces at mid-century.

As a territory located on Canada’s geopolitical periphery—a territory lacking key points of access to large presses, arts capital, and cultural media—the Maritimes has been disproportionately served by alternative media like small magazines. The unique function that little magazines have performed in Canadian literature and culture has been
examined at length by Louis Dudek, Michael Gnarowski, Dean Irvine, Sandra Djwa, Frank Davey, Tracey Collett, and Ken Norris, among others. Nevertheless, while there has been a substantial body of research dedicated to little magazine culture in Canada and its urban beginnings, few studies have examined the development and influence of the little magazine in the Maritime provinces. Examining the editorial poetics and politics of the medium, both within and outside the Canadian literary landscape, provides a basis on which to explore how and why the little magazine became such a vital outlet for modernist literary expression in Canada generally, and in the Maritime provinces, in particular.

One of the earliest descriptions of the little magazine as a distinct medium of publication was provided by twentieth-century high-modernist poet Ezra Pound. According to Pound’s account of small modernist literary journals in the United States, detailed in his retrospective essay “Small Magazines” (1930), it was with the 1911 founding of *Poetry* by Harriet Munro in Chicago that the modernist “little magazine” was born. The characteristics Pound identifies with these magazines – non-commercial, financially “impractical,” and committed to an “effective program” (“Small” 696) – have formed the basis for most subsequent studies on the history of the medium. Accordingly, Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker observe that the prevailing conception of the little magazine, most commonly derived from Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich’s description in *The Little Magazine* (1947), is that it is “short-lived, committed to experiment, in constant financial difficulties, and indifferent or directly opposed to commercial considerations” (11). Nevertheless, some scholars have sought to alter or expand this definition. In *The Public Face of Modernism*, Mark Morrisson undertakes an examination of a number of
little magazines that served to blur the boundaries between mass market periodicals intended for a wide reading public and modernist magazines intended for a limited number of readers (5-6). Adam McKible and Suzanne Churchill, commenting that little magazines “are vexingly difficult to define,” provide a more expansive definition of the little magazine:

Little magazines are non-commercial enterprises founded by individuals or small groups intent upon publishing the experimental works or radical opinions of untried, unpopular, or under-represented writers. Defying mainstream tastes and conventions, some little magazines aim to uphold higher artistic and intellectual standards than their commercial counterparts, while others seek to challenge conventional political wisdom and practice. (4)

By providing a definition of the little magazine not limited by the duration of a magazine’s lifespan, institutional affiliation, the size of its circulation, or its financial stability, McKible and Churchill provide a more inclusive framework for critical studies of little magazines, particularly those that seek to recover critically neglected modernisms (3). In Canada, where the little magazine has been the subject of various critical endeavours that seek to pinpoint and delineate the ascendance of literary modernism in Canada, such an inclusive approach offers a productive basis on which to question the conventional narrative of Canadian modernism and its relation to print culture.

In their 1967 critical anthology on Canadian modernist poetry, *The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada*, Louis Dudek and Michael Gnarowski assert that “the little magazine in Canada has been the most important single factor behind the rise and continued progress of modernism in Canadian poetry” (203). Perhaps unsurprisingly,
Dudek and Gnarowski’s proclamation echoes an observation made by Pound nearly forty years earlier: “the history of contemporary letters has, to a very manifest extent, been written in such magazines” (“Small” 702). The influence of Pound upon Dudek has been well documented,¹ but the temporal gap between the two declarations is indicative of the ambiguity which has surrounded the emergence of literary modernism in Canada and the appearance of the little magazines in which it was published. The development of modernism in Canada has been a source of much contestation. As a result, the appearance of the little magazine has been the subject of varied and often divergent narratives.

While noting the existence of a number of antecedents that might be called “little magazines,” Dudek asserts that the little magazine in Canada “can be said to have appeared only after 1940” (205). Ken Norris, adopting the narrative of Dudek, argues that literary modernism in Canada didn’t reach maturity until the 1940s and suggests that “avant-garde literary magazines” didn’t appear in Canada until as late as the 1960s (1, 9). Taking a position that Thacker has called the “belated thesis,”² Norris opens his 1984 study The Little Magazine in Canada 1925-80 with the affirmation, “modernism is a development which came comparatively late to Canadian poetry” (1). In contrast with Norris’s belated thesis, Frank Davey, in Louis Dudek and Raymond Souster, suggests that


the founding of *The McGill Fortnightly Review* in 1925 by A.J.M. Smith and F.R. Scott marked the genesis of literary modernism in Canada (160). More recently, Norris’s interpretation has been contested by Dean Irvine, who has sought to expand the conventional narrative of little magazines in Canada by tracing its Canadian origins to the occult magazines of the *fin de siècle*. Irvine identifies *The Lamps* (1910-1939) as the earliest magazine to have eventually committed itself to literary modernism, but offers a discussion of numerous other earlier magazines that exhibited features typically associated with modernist magazines, including small circulation, commitment to experimentalism and non-commercialism, and polemical editorial policies (“Little Magazines” 606-8). Positing a higher degree of continuity between the emergence of modernism and earlier cultural formations in Canada, Irvine both broadens the temporal period traditionally associated with modernist literary publications and draws attention to previously overlooked and undervalued little magazines.

Many of the most fruitful studies in little magazine culture in Canada have come from those who, rather than attempting to define or pinpoint the emergence of a pan-Canadian modernism, have focussed on specific sites and particularly active phases of cultural production. In her doctoral dissertation on the creation of small presses in Montreal during the middle part of the century, Tracey Collett details the establishment and activity of First Statement Press, Contact Press, and Delta Canada, small presses that were each associated with an important stage in the development of modernist literature in Montreal over three decades beginning in the 1940s. These presses, like the little magazines of which they were extensions, were founded by small groups of poets committed to the presses they created and the poetry they published (Collett 2). As such,
these presses “were able to serve as a barometer of the social and literary climate in their
closeness to the pulse of the times” (Collett 3). Similar studies, including Davey’s full-
length study of TISH, Hilda Vanneste’s Northern Review, 1945-56: A History and an
Index, Neil Fisher’s First Statement, 1942-1945: An Assessment and an Index, and
Gnarowski’s Contact Press: A Note on its Origins Check List of Titles, have concentrated
on individual publications, presses, or cultural formations during their most active phases.
Together, these histories illustrate the diverse and often heterogeneous sites of cultural
production that contributed to Canadian modernist and postmodernist formations in the
twentieth century.

Nevertheless, despite the considerable body of scholarship dedicated to
illuminating what Collett refers to as “the dark corners of Canadian literary history,”
there exists no sustained critical treatment of any of the little magazines published in the
Maritime provinces during the twentieth century (2). The cultural formations that gave
rise to these magazines have been relegated to the sidelines in literary-historical
narratives that focus on the bourgeoning literary communities of Montreal, Toronto, and
Vancouver, but which fail to acknowledge the considerable influence that magazines in
the Maritimes have had, and continue to have, on emergent cultural formations both
within the region and across Canada. Maritime little magazines are similarly absent from
the more comprehensive narratives of little magazine history in Canada. Norris’s study
makes not a single reference to a magazine published in the Maritime provinces in its
fifty-five year survey of little magazines in Canada. Irvine, while acknowledging that The
Fiddlehead was “by far the most prominent ‘little magazine’ coming out of Atlantic
Canada,” devotes as much space to documenting “ antimodernist” magazines from the
Maritime provinces, such as *The Song Fisherman's Songbook* and *Parnassus*, as he does to modernist oriented magazines such as *The Fiddlehead* (625). Such magazines as *The Antigonish Review* (TAR), *Pottersfield Portfolio*, *Sandpatterns*, and *Katharsis* go unmentioned.³

In spite of the divergence of critical opinions on the moment at which the little magazine in Canada can be said to have originated, and the paucity of scholarly material devoted to its emergence in the Maritime provinces, many of its functions and defining characteristics are readily agreed upon. As elsewhere, the little magazine in Canada has been widely regarded as an alternative to the larger, more conventional, commercial magazines as a medium for literary expression (Norris 6; Dudek *Literature* 140; Gnarowski 212). However, whether one attributes the genesis of the Canadian little magazine to the *fin de siècle* precursors of the modernist magazine, to the creation of *The McGill Fortnightly Review* and other projects of F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith during 1920s and 30s, or to the literary enterprises of Alan Crawley, Louis Dudek, John Sutherland, and Raymond Souster after 1940, it is clear that the emergence of the little magazine in Canada toward mid-century amounted to more than the creation of an

³ It should be noted here that Irvine’s chapter, “Little Magazines in English Canada,” concludes with a discussion of the *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences* (1951), without discussing in detail those magazines that emerged in the post-Commission period. Thus, it could be argued that magazines published during the 1960s and 1970s, such as *Katharsis, Sand Patterns*, and *TAR*, are beyond the purview of his chapter. Nevertheless, the mention of magazines such as *Alphabet* (1960-1971) would seem to suggest otherwise.
alternative outlet for literature or a forum for literary activity. Rather, according to
Gnarowski, the little magazine supplied the “continuity” and “motive energy” essential
for the beginning of a literary movement (216). Similarly, Irvine claims that modernist
magazines in Canada were the “catalysts” for the development of socially and politically
conscious poetic movements across the diverse geography of modernism in Canada
(“Little Magazines” 613). The independence of these magazines, their willingness to
publish non-traditional verse and prose deemed unprintable in commercially oriented
presses, and the publication of literature from largely unknown authors, had the effect of
“democratizing access to literature, ideas, and publication” (Tremblay and Rose 20).

As mediums for the expression of unconventional literature and ideas, little
magazines offered a forum through which poets and intellectuals challenged the
Canadian literary establishment, which was dominated by the literary modes of British
Romanticism, marked by a strong Protestant reserve, and typified by the activities of the
Canadian Authors’ Association. More fundamentally, however, these magazines served
as the vehicles for emergent cultural formations that positioned themselves in opposition
to hegemonic forms of cultural domination, resisting the central meanings and values that
had until then defined the nature of cultural production and the relationship between
literature and society in Canada. If, as Raymond Williams contends, culture is not simply
derived from an otherwise constituted social order, but is itself “a constitutive social
process, creating specific and different ways of life,” then the dissident cultural practices
of the mid-century modernists can be seen to amount to more than a challenge to the
prevailing aesthetic modes in Canadian arts and literature (Marxism and Literature 19).
Rather, as major elements in the constitution of a given society, such cultural practices
can be situated among the “basic social means – historically variable and always active social forms of language and movement and representation – on which, ultimately, the more manifest social elements can be seen to depend” (Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 139). This is not to suggest that a radically new social order was consequent upon the publication of these magazines, which had limited circulations and were widely unknown to the general public, but to suggest that the cultural practices initiated by these magazines engaged in a reciprocal relationship with the societies in which they were published, being both influenced by and in turn influencing those cultures.

Most literature is, according to Raymond Williams, a form of contribution to the dominant effective culture. Produced and existing across all areas of culture, from the “residual” and the “emergent,” to the “dominant,” literatures “in any period, including our own, contribute to the effective dominant culture and are a central articulation of it” (Williams, “Base and Superstructure” 1434). Likewise, the modernist cultural formations emerging in Canada at mid-century, in spite of their opposition to the mainstream literary establishment, cannot be said to have entirely overcome the pressures and limits exerted by the dominant culture of Canadian society. Such factors as institutional affiliation and funding, no matter how uneasy or oblique those affiliations may have been, meant that outright autonomy from the central formations of the hegemony was unrealistic. Nevertheless, Williams’s framework offers a productive means of formulating the ways in which the cultural practices that gave rise to and which were facilitated by the little magazines, “while clearly affected by hegemonic limits and pressures, [were] at least in part significant breaks beyond them . . . and which in their most active elements [came] through as independent and original” (*Marxism and Literature* 114). As Thacker and
Brooker concur, little magazines “existing on the margins, and part of a stratified counter or subaltern public sphere, contest, appropriate, and negotiate with this dominant realm” of hegemonic or mainstream culture (16). Little magazine cultures, existing within societies governed by dominant cultural attitudes, political institutions, and commercial economies, do not then comprise an area of culture altogether distinct from and opposed to mainstream print culture (Thacker and Brooker 16). Instead, these publications enter into dialogic relationships with dominant cultural forms, relationships involving varying degrees of resistance and opposition, but also involving the interchange of ideas, practices, and values.

The publication of little magazines contributed at different historical moments, and in diverse ways, to significant transformations in the forms of literature, art, and ideas being read and, just as importantly, to the ways in which those new forms were communicated, exchanged, and disseminated within the public sphere. As groups of individuals came together and engaged in cultural production independent from the central and dominant modes of production, cultural formations emerged. Williams defines these cultural formations as “those effective movements and tendencies, in intellectual and artistic life, which have significant and sometimes decisive influence on the active development of a culture” (Williams, Marxism and Literature 117). The medium of the little magazine, easily produced because of the availability of cheaper paper and new printing technologies, facilitated the emergent modernist cultural formations at mid-century. Almost invariably the products of collaborative efforts, little magazines were created by artists and writers who came together to engage in material production undertaken in common pursuit of an aesthetic, social, or political aim. As
Williams observes, cultural process “was, and is, cooperative material production involving many processes of a material and physical kind” (Marxism and Literature 163). That the physical format of the magazine itself allowed for the engagement of literary production with non-literary discourse, however, did not privilege format over content. The medium of the little magazine was not “the message.” New printing technologies that made possible non-commercial printing and allowed for the creation of little magazines did not determine the content of those magazines. This was a point that Pound desired to make clear when he wrote that “the significance of the small magazine has, obviously, nothing to do with format” (“Small Magazines” 689). While Pound’s rejection of the consequence of materiality is likely overstated, the principle holds true: the medium of the little magazine was employed in service of the variable but definite intentions – shaped and influenced by diverse socio-cultural contexts – of those by whom it was produced. “The inescapability of works of art,” writes Williams, “is the irreplaceable materialization of kinds of experience” (162). This responsive component of the medium meant that Maritime little magazines were often as different as they were alike, reflecting both the commonalities and dissimilarities between the socio-cultural conditions of each of the three Maritime provinces.

In the Maritimes, the establishment of little magazines and the literary, artistic, and intellectual programs to which they were committed served not only as a form of resistance against the literary establishment, but also as a response to the varying social, cultural, and political conditions of the provinces in which they emerged. The Maritimes is not a homogenous unit, and each of its provinces lays claim to diverse cultural identities and distinct histories. Nevertheless, economic necessity and the federalist
imposition of a shared identity has often led the three Maritime provinces to act together in matters of politics, economy, and culture. Furthermore, the historical, social, and economic factors shared by the three provinces, in addition to those qualities that differentiate each, meant that the modernist cultural formations that materialized in the region at mid-century and during the decades that followed were distinct from those in Canada’s urban centres. While their oppositional relationship with the hegemonic culture of mainstream society was one they shared with the urban cultural formations that preceded them, the need for alternative channels for publication and speech in the Maritime provinces was more acute, owing to the lack of a local commercial press industry. Little magazines in the Maritimes thus took on the role of encouraging and publishing writers whose unconventional work placed them on the margins of mainstream culture, while also providing access to a readership where no such opportunities for publication existed before. This lack of opportunity for the publication

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4 Such federalist imposition of shared identity onto heterogeneous regions has been largely a matter of perception, but has also taken place at the level of legislation and policy-making. In Inventing Atlantic Canada: Regionalism and the Maritime Reaction to Newfoundland’s Entry into Canadian Confederation, for instance, Corey Slumkoski demonstrates that the federal government invented the region of Atlantic Canada by designating Newfoundland “an extension of the Maritime Provinces” (4). Specifically, Term 29 of the Newfoundland Act stipulated that “it was the Maritime provincial average – not the Canadian one – that would be the new province’s benchmark for social and economic development” (Slumkoski 4). The geopolitical region of Atlantic Canada was thus created by a federal act that sought to merge the new province of Newfoundland with the pre-existing geopolitical region of the Maritime provinces.
of new literary forms, however, was not the result of the absence of an active print culture in the region.

In fact, the Maritime region has a long and vibrant history of print culture whose origins can be found in the rich literary life cultivated in the pages of its newspapers. The *Halifax Gazette*, the first newspaper to be printed in what is now Canada, was founded in Halifax, Nova Scotia by Bostonian John Bushell (Davies, “Literary Cultures” 368). Established on 23 March 1752, the *Gazette* began a tradition of newspaper and periodical printing in the Maritimes that would continue through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. New Brunswick saw the founding of its first newspaper, *The Royal Saint John’s Gazette, and Nova Scotia Intelligencer*, in 1783 by Loyalists John Ryan and William Lewis, and in 1787 James Robertson published PEI’s first newspaper, *the Royal American Gazette and Weekly Intelligencer of the Island of Saint John* (MacLaren xxvi). According to Gwendolyn Davies, by the mid-1800s Maritime print culture was focussed in the “rival literary centers” of Halifax and Saint John “which trumpeted their primacy in the pages of newspapers such as the Halifax *Morning Post* and the Saint John *Morning News*” (382). While not primarily literary publications, these newspapers did provide outlets for emerging local writers to publish verse. In some cases, these literary endeavours led to the publication of trade books – one notable example being Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s *Clockmaker*, which was published by Joseph Howe in 1836 (MacSkimming 27). Perhaps just as significant, as Davies notes, was the role these papers played in fostering a literary culture by exposing Maritime communities to national and international literature, excerpting passages from prominent publications, reprinting poetry from abroad, and advertising the arrival of new books (369). While newspapers
may not have provided sufficient space or freedom for the beginning of alternative cultural formations, they were the forerunners to a number of periodicals that appeared in the Maritimes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The *Amaranth*, founded in Saint John by Robert Shives in 1842, was among the first strictly literary magazines in the Maritime region. Its duration was brief, with 36 monthly editions being published before ceasing publication in 1843. However, as the first literary magazine in New Brunswick “of both quality and duration,” the *Amaranth* pioneered the way for subsequent literary magazines in New Brunswick and the Maritime region generally (Parker 90). Among the more notable publications to emerge in the Maritimes during the period preceding and immediately following the turn of the century were: *Stewart’s Quarterly Magazine* (1867-1872), “one of the best national magazines Canada ever possessed” (Lloyd 486); *Neith: A Journal of Literature, Science, Art, Philosophy, Jurisprudence, Criticism, History, Reform, Economics* (1903-4), the first magazine in Canada to be edited by an African Canadian; and *Kit-bag* (1902-3), a magazine of literature and criticism established by Canadian novelist and poet Theodore Goodrich Roberts. Nevertheless, if the beginning of the twentieth century was marked by a period of relative prosperity for literary publication in the Maritime provinces, the period following the First World War was one of relative decline.

According to Roy MacSkimming, the First World War “gave a tremendous boost to publishing [in Canada] as a surge of patriotism lifted book sales to new heights” (29). However, unlike central Canada, where more than a dozen publishing houses had been established in the decades preceding the war, the Maritimes had relied on its flourishing periodical cultures for literary publication and, as Sandrine Ferré-Rode observes, “that
vitality faded by the First World War” (178). Once again, literary publishing was largely confined to newspapers. Ferré-Rode points to the *Busy East of Canada* (1910-33; later the *Maritime Advocate and Busy East*, 1933-56; and the *Atlantic Advocate* 1956-92) as one notable exception, and to this might be added *The Dalhousie Review* (1921-) and *The Song Fisherman's Song Book* (1928-30). However, while cultural production in the Maritime provinces never ceased altogether, the publishing boom experienced in central Canada during the interwar period had little impact on the establishment of a publishing industry in the geographically distant Maritimes.

If, as MacSkimming argues, the Great Depression “cast Canadian publishing into a state of suspended animation” (30), in the Maritimes, where a strong publishing industry had failed to take hold in the years preceding the war, the Depression only saw an intensification of the economic hardships it had already been experiencing since the first decades of the twentieth century. In spite of the difficulties faced by publishers across Canada, the disparity between publishing industries in Central Canada and those elsewhere was substantial. This history of uneven development at the beginning of the twentieth-century led to even greater disparities in the decades that followed; of the forty English-Canadian book publishers listed in a 1950 issue of *Quill and Quire*, all but two were based out of Toronto (MacSkimming 40). The lack of opportunity for publication in the region greatly inhibited the ability of local writers to reach a broad audience, or to sustain themselves through the publication of poetry and fiction. The result was an outmigration of writers who left the Maritimes to “publish in exile.” During this period writers left the region seeking “a broader readership and greater remuneration” in cities like New York, Boston, and Toronto (Ferré-Rode 181). Such Maritime writers as Bliss
Carman, Charles G.D. Roberts, and Reverend William Benjamin King were among more than one million Canadians to leave Canada for the United States (Mount 6). This period of relative stagnation for the print culture of the Maritimes, however, was just one manifestation of a broader phase of regional deindustrialization and economic decline that had begun much earlier.

The decades between the 1880s and the 1920s were a period of initial growth and subsequent decline in the Maritime provinces. After the implementation of the National Policy in 1879, the Maritime provinces experienced a period of industrial development that seemed to promise a remediation to the dwindling regional economy. Mostly the result of "cooperative efforts by groups of community entrepreneurs," industrial development in this early stage following the national policy was obscured by the deterioration of the region’s staple industries and by the region’s slower rates of population growth relative to other provinces in Canada (Acheson 1). Outmigration during this period, with hundreds of thousands of Maritimers leaving the region for the New England States and Upper Canada, has similarly served to overshadow the economic expansion that occurred there during the 1880s (Frank vii). In fact, though the Maritimes’ overall population growth rate was relatively slow during this period, the population growth in flourishing milltowns, coaltowns, steeltowns, and railtowns was rapid. Furthermore, as David Frank points out, the industrial growth rate of Nova Scotia during the same period exceeded that of any other province in Eastern Canada, and workers in the Maritimes were responsible for ten percent of Canada’s manufacturing output by 1900 (vii-viii).
In “The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes,” T.W. Acheson argues that the traditional industries of shipbuilding, timber production and export, and fishing had begun to decline following confederation, leading to an economic crisis in the 1870s (2). However, the “dramatic growth” of the region’s manufacturing potential, and, later, the development of steel and coal industries, accelerated economic expansion in the 1880s and 1890s. This expansion, however, was relatively short lived. Acheson identifies numerous factors that contributed to the deterioration of the region’s economy in the first decades of the twentieth century. The inability of Maritime entrepreneurs to secure the necessary financing for manufacturers, the prohibitive costs of transporting goods to central Canada, and the loss of the central Canadian market to American business interests during periods of recession all created major obstacles to economic development in the region (11-16). As a result, larger business syndicates in Montreal began purchasing Maritime industrial enterprises with a view to “restricting output and limiting expansion” (14). By 1920 the region’s economy had collapsed, resulting in an economic crisis from which it would never fully recover: “for the Maritimes the Great Depression began early, and since then the region has never fully escaped from its condition of dependence on the Canadian welfare state” (Frank viii).

What Frank’s and Acheson’s studies of regional industry at the turn of the century reveal is the complexity of the multiple factors that contributed to the decline of the Maritime economy in the first decades of the twentieth century. Industrial decline was not simply the result of a subversion of the national policy by central Canadian business interests, nor was it the result of the apathy of the region’s entrepreneurs who, in actuality, were responsible for a brief but intensive period of industrial growth at the end
of the nineteenth century. Rather, a combination of regional structural inadequacies and poorly implemented federal policy meant that the Maritime economy was unable to endure the shifts from external international trade to internal national trade and from industrial capital to finance capital during the early decades of the twentieth century:

The least integrated part of the Canadian economy, [the Maritimes] was the region most dependent upon and most influenced by those policies designated to create an integrated national state.... The tragedy of the industrial experiment in the Maritimes was that the transportation lines which linked the region to its new metropolis altered the communal arrangement of the entire area; they did not merely establish a new external frame of reference, they recast the entire internal structure. (Acheson 25)

A significant aspect of this structural predicament was the failure of Maritime business to establish and sustain a strong regional metropolis (Frank viii). Just as print culture in the region was dominated by the rivalry fought out in the newspapers and periodicals between Halifax and Saint John, so too was the uneven economic development of the Maritimes characterized by the absence of a single central metropolis. In fact, as Acheson observes, this problem was largely the result of the fact that the Maritimes was not really a region at all, “but a number of British communities clustered on the Atlantic fringe, each with its separate lines of communication and its several metropolises” (25).

The amorphous regional designation, “Maritimes,” is the result not of a homogenous cultural identity tied to a clear geographical delimitation, but of a shared history of political and economic disenfranchisement, one which has created a necessity for the three Maritime provinces to act together on matters of economic, social, and
cultural development. The former, however, has oft been derived from the latter and, with a few notable exceptions, the extant historiography of the region has generally adopted what Ernie Forbes has called “the regional stereotype.” Addressing the failure of academic and mainstream Canadian historians to pursue themes that would “readily include the Maritime provinces, or to include the Maritimes in the themes that they did pursue,” Forbes interrogates the stereotype that the Maritimes is distinguished by the “innate conservatism and traditional partisanship of its people” (59). This stereotype was derived implicitly from the “frontier thesis” upon which much post-Confederation Canadian historiography was formulated:

The Maritimes were of interest only as a foil against which to demonstrate the frontier approach; simple logic suggested that, if the frontier approach encouraged progressive, egalitarian, and democratic attitudes, then that country furthest removed from the frontier stage must be conservative, socially stratified and unprogressive. (Forbes 51)

The persistence of this stereotype, exacerbated by “accumulated ignorance” and a failure to examine the extant primary archival material, is evidenced in the work of some of Canada’s foremost historians and is typified by Frank Underhill’s oft cited assertion in his 1967 *Image of Confederation* that, “[as] for the Maritimes, of course, nothing ever happens down there” (Underhill 63; Forbes 53). In spite of numerous instances to the contrary, the assertion of a homogenous Maritime regional identity, essentially ultraconservative and unprogressive, persists in academic literature today. The almost exclusive focus of literary historians on the “antimodernism” they perceive to have dominated cultural production in the Maritimes at mid-century, to the exclusion of other
literary developments in the region, is as much the result of "neglect and stereotype" as are the inadequacies to be found in the political and social histories of the region.

The stereotypes and images of the Maritime provinces as antimodern, conservative, and unprogressive, however, are not simply the result of the work of academic historians and literary critics. What Ian McKay has called the "image of the folk" is also the product of a process of cultural selection occurring within the Maritimes. A category whose origins lie in European thought and work on folklore, and which was subsequently "naturalized by British and American theorists," the Folk denotes the supposed existence of a people "characterized by their own distinctive culture and isolated from the modern society around them" (Quest of the Folk 9). At a more fundamental level, however, the concept of the Folk entails a "certain conception of the world and the social order" whose nucleus is "the essential and unchanging solidarity of traditional society" (Quest of the Folk 12). Consequently, those designated the Folk are not only isolated from modernity, but are its "living antithesis." Within the social context of the Maritime provinces, McKay identifies the concept of the Folk with the interwar cultural production and folklore of Nova Scotia. According to McKay, the antimodernism attendant upon the image of the Folk "coloured virtually all the words and things cultural producers fashioned in the 1920's and 1930's to convey the essence of Nova Scotia" ("Helen Creighton" 1). Significantly, "from its inception in the 1920s," the concept of the folk and its numerous instantiations in mainstream Maritime culture was "connected closely with conservatism and commercialism" (McKay, "Helen Creighton" 3). For the emergent modernist formations of the Maritimes at mid-century, however, the antimodernism that underpinned the work of many Maritime cultural producers was not
only associated with the commercialism against which they resisted, but was also readily identifiable with “provincialism,” a quality which Pound had designated the “enemy” of modernism.

Working to effect a broad-based regeneration of the Maritime cultural tradition by bringing it into step with contemporary literature elsewhere, the emergent modernists in the Maritime provinces employed the little magazine to disseminate unconventional and avant-garde literature. The purpose for this diffusion of unconventional verse and prose can be seen to implicitly draw on Pound’s condemnation of provincialism in his 1917 essay “Provincialism the Enemy.” Provincialism stands for both “an ignorance of the manners, customs and nature of people living outside one’s own village, parish, or nation” and “a desire to force others into uniformity” (Pound, “Provincialism” 159). For Pound, the introduction of experimental creative works had the potential to effect profound changes in the intellectual life of a society. The “ultimate goal” of scholarship and criticism, then, was the popularization of good literature: “popularisation in its decent and respectable sense means simply that the scholar’s ultimate end is to put the greatest amount of the best literature within the easiest reach of the public; free literature, as a whole, from the stultified taste of a particular generation” (168). Of course, for Pound, the best literature was of a certain type; namely, experimental modernist verse. “Honest literary experiment,” wrote Pound, “however inclusive, however dismally it fail,” is imperative for the “intellectual life of a nation” (“Small Magazines” 699). His comments reveal a far more democratic motivation than the elitism with which high modernism has been traditionally associated and which the inaccessibility of his verse might suggest. As
David Moody observes, "he had the idea that the finest poetry would free the populace from the tyranny of mass emotions and received ideas" (qtd. in Monk 347).

Against the perceived and adopted antimodernism of mainstream Maritime culture, the cultural formations emerging during and after the Second World War adopted new literary forms in response to the modernization of Maritime society. Increasingly, those who created the Maritime little magazines felt that the "received ideas" of the cultural hegemony failed to reflect the profound transformations occurring within the Maritime provinces. Rather than attempting to isolate the Maritimes from the "harmful" influence of modernity, these new groups of writers and poets attempted to introduce modern forms in order to combat the conservatism and evangelical intransigence of the dominant Maritime culture. More important, however, was a conviction that dissemination of modern literature and experimental verse had the potential to effect a broad cultural transformation and contribute to the cultural development of the region.

Modernism, it has frequently been claimed after Pound, was inhospitable to regionalism. While in practice this was often the case, the supposed incompatibility of modernism and regionalism was largely the result of a conflation of regionalism with provincialism. Committed to a vague universalist criteria, many modernists committed themselves to the dissolution of difference. In contrast, writing of the need for cultural exchange between Paris and London, Pound identifies difference as a central purpose for cultural exchange. Such an exchange, he observes, would "tend not to making the cities alike, but to accentuate their difference. Nothing is more important than just this amicable accentuation of difference and of complementary values" ("Provincialism" 172). While committed to regional cultural development and to fostering a sense of local tradition, the
Maritime modernists desired neither the isolation of Maritime culture from the international and national influences of modernity nor the uniformity of regional culture. Rather, they sought to reinvigorate, through the introduction of new and imported forms of verse and prose, what they perceived as a tradition whose motive energy had been expended and whose social value had become outmoded.

The compounded effects of inadequate access to large presses and cultural media, regional economic decline, and the reduction of regional culture to a stereotype in the histories of the country culminated in a sense that the Maritime provinces had descended into a period of cultural stagnation. In fact, the opposite was true: economic underdevelopment did not result in cultural underdevelopment in the region. The interwar period was actually one of vitality in literature and arts. As Davies notes in her introduction to the collection *Myth and Milieu: Atlantic Literature and Culture: 1918-1939*, numerous cultural initiatives undertaken in the decades following the First World War evidenced healthy and vibrant local cultures throughout the Maritime provinces:

Competitive drama festivals, community theatre groups (often with links to the Dominion Drama Festival), local branches of the Canadian Authors’ Association, the Maritime Art Association and cottage crafts and handicrafts programmes all came into existence in the inter-war years and stimulated feelings of local pride and aesthetic achievement. (ii)

Thus, it is not without a sense of impending cultural efflorescence that Hugh MacLennan, in his 1941 novel *Barometer Rising*, describes the city of Halifax on the eve of the Halifax explosion in 1917: “[Halifax] periodically sleeps between the wars. There had been a good many years since Napoleon, but now it was awake again” (7). There is in
MacLennan’s description a feeling that this nascent energy, long dormant in the face of a calcified social order, was about to erupt – and so it did. In MacLennan’s Halifax, of course, the explosion literally destroys the old social order and ushers in a new generation represented by the young McCrea. The Canadian literary nationalism MacLennan is so often supposed to have been describing in the novel, however, found little opportunity for outlet or publication in the Maritimes during the first half of the twentieth century. While the Maritimes lacked no cultural momentum during the interwar years, economic constraints placed limits on the development of those initiatives into full-blown cultural formations. So it was that the speaker of Elizabeth Brewster’s 1947 poem “East Coast – Canada” is, not unlike the characters of MacLennan’s novel, “poised between sleeping and waking / here on the continent’s edge” (1).

In spite of the localized cultural enterprises that appeared in the interwar period, however, there persisted a colonial attitude in the Maritime provinces. Intellectually and aesthetically, as elsewhere in Canada, the Maritimes of the 1920s was, as Brian Trehearne puts it, “still very much in the grip of the moral and colonial dogmatists of the Victorian Age” (234). Indeed, the very initiatives Davies identifies with cultural vitality in the interwar period, notably the “local branches of the Canadian Authors’ Association,” were those against which the modernist cultural formations at mid-century positioned themselves with the conviction that these prevailing cultural attitudes failed to incorporate the drastically altered social order of the postwar period.

For the Maritimes as well as the rest of Canada, the First World War had been catastrophic. A whole generation that might have contributed to the civic life of the country had been destroyed. However, the First World War had also radically altered the
consciousness of those who grew up in the predominantly rural communities of the Maritimes. For most of those who had left the Maritimes to fight in Europe, it was the first time they had travelled beyond their local communities, and, for those who remained at home, the war brought the world beyond Canada into sharp perspective. As Davies observes, “already in the 1920s and 30s the forces of globalization were beginning to infiltrate Atlantic Canadian life through the residual impacts of the First World War, foreign investment, expanding communications networks, and travel outside the region for work” (“Introduction” iv). The children of this generation, the mid-century modernists, would bring this new international perspective to bear on the cultural practices they initiated. Writing back to what they considered to be a significant but now exhausted literary tradition, the poets, writers, and editors of Maritime little magazines engaged in a form of literary activism that sought to reinvigorate local culture by exposing their readerships to new and unconventional forms of verse and prose.

It was this perceived disconnect between an increasingly globalized modern society and the dominant cultural modes of Romanticism that gave rise to a sense of cultural inertia for the poets and authors who would spearhead the emergent modernist movements at mid-century. The desire to break free from the strictures of old forms and stultified verse provided an impetus for the creation of new forms of literary expression. Rather than adopt the reactionary provincial approach associated with the Maritime antimodernist movements, however, the poets, authors, and intellectuals behind the little magazine cultures of the Maritime provinces attempted to reconceptualize and modernize the values and meanings that had underpinned the old social order. The prevailing cultural attitudes against which they were working were not confined to the aesthetic
modes of the romantics, but also extended to the “regional stereotype” and the “image of the Folk," those tropes that had served to marginalize Maritime cultural production in the decades leading up to the Second World War. Faced with a lack of opportunity for publication and harbouring little hope for the establishment of a local publishing industry, the little magazine was adopted as the answer to an urgent need for alternative forms of publication.

Taking as representative examples those little magazines that have distinguished themselves in the region for breadth of readership and authorship, editorial leadership, and cultural activism, this thesis examines the literary, cultural, and political functions of Maritime literary magazines from the mid-twentieth century up to the 1980s. Specifically, I seek to identify the contribution of five little magazines to the development of a distinct literary culture in the region, paying close attention to the political, social, and economic environments in which these magazines have emerged and to which they have responded. In linking the functions and contributions of literary magazines to the culture and literature of the Maritimes, I will attempt to address a number of questions throughout this study: To what extent have literary magazines in the Maritimes provided a forum primarily for Maritime authors to gain access to a readership within and beyond the Maritime provinces? Have Maritime literary magazines demonstrated a bias towards Maritime work through restrictive or selective processes of submission and editorial decision-making? How have the literary works in those magazines reflected or responded to the political, social, and economic conditions of the Maritimes, and what common themes and concerns can be identified in those works? How has the inclusion of national and international submissions in Maritime magazines limited their function as a vehicle
for the expression of a distinctly Maritime literary identity? Conversely, how has the inclusion of those submissions contributed to the development of such an identity, serving, in other words, to expand local perspectives? These and related questions of context, editorial intent, and cultural politics form the basis of my inquiries.

The first chapter of this thesis focusses on the emergent modernist formation in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and The Fiddlehead, the earliest and most influential of the Maritime literary magazines to emerge at mid-century. First published in 1945 by Alfred Bailey and the members of the Bliss Carman Society, The Fiddlehead soon moved beyond its initial “private circulation” and, under the direction of Fred Cogswell who became editor of the magazine in 1953, began accepting submissions from across North America (Bailey, “The Fiddlehead” 1). The importance of the Fiddlehead was not only in the modernist poetry it published, but also in the impetus it granted to the publication of subsequent periodicals in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. The first chapter concludes with the end of Fred Cogswell’s tenure as editor in 1967.

The second chapter examines three short-lived Prince Edward Island magazines based out of Charlottetown: Katharsis (1967-1971), The Square Deal (1970-1971), and Sand Patterns (1972-1978). An influential magazine founded in 1967 and edited by professor and poet Frank Ledwell, Katharsis pioneered little magazine culture on the island and provided an outlet for the new literary and aesthetic values that were beginning to take hold in the Maritime provinces during the 1960s and 1970s. The Square Deal was founded by Hilda Woolnough and Réshard Gool in 1970. Though transitory, The Square Deal facilitated a critical dialogue through its publication of political and social commentary alongside poetry and fiction. Involving many of those who had participated
in editing, publishing, and contributing to Katharsis, The Square Deal helped to galvanize the literary and arts communities in PEI while advancing a politically and socially conscious literature and editorial polemic. Sand Patterns, the longest lasting of the three island magazines, was less committed to an explicit editorial program than either Katharsis or The Square Deal. Nevertheless, by remaining committed to the publication of a wide array of island literature, Sand Patterns helped to fill the gap in literary publishing that had been left by the demise of its forerunners. The second chapter concludes with the cessation of Sand Patterns in 1978.

The Antigonish Review, founded in Antigonish, Nova Scotia in 1970 by R.J. MacSween, will form the focus of the third and final chapter of this thesis. Under the editorship of MacSween, TAR not only provided a forum for the publication of Maritime literature, but also helped educate a wide audience about modernism in Canada. Never limiting its content to writers from Nova Scotia or the Maritimes, but remaining dedicated to fostering and cultivating local literary communities, TAR advanced an editorial polemic involving both regional commitment and cosmopolitan values. Defined by its eclecticism and modernist editorial program, TAR challenged the hegemony of reductive antimodernism and Romanticism in the dominant culture of twentieth-century Nova Scotia. In 1980, MacSween passed editorship of the magazine over to George and Gertrude Sanderson. MacSween’s final resignation as poetry editor in 1985 marks the end of the third chapter. Together, these magazines provide a productive basis on which to explore an editorial poetics of the little magazine in the Maritime provinces.
1. “Mounting Tensions”: The Fiddlehead and Emergent Modernism in New Brunswick at Mid-Century

But he had a premonition of coming to a place
Where things could happen,
Where something was going to happen.
Alfred Bailey, “Journey Without Words”

In 1935, when Alfred Bailey arrived in Saint John to take up his position as the Assistant Director of the provincial museum, New Brunswick was the only province in Canada that did not have a provincial archives. The absence of an archival repository in the province, observed Bailey, was “symptomatic” of the stagnating intellectual and cultural environment of New Brunswick during the inter-war period (Bailey, “Interview”). Living standards in the predominantly rural New Brunswick were well below the national average and the province had the highest rate of illiteracy in the country (Forbes, “New Brunswick”). The result was an acute sense of dislocation; the people of New Brunswick during the 1920s and 30s, observed Bailey, “felt déraciné; there was no sense of place” (“Interview”). Unsurprisingly, in his 1927 pamphlet, The Distressed Maritimes, historian John Clarence Webster, under whom Bailey worked at the provincial museum, identified the neglect of Maritime history as the gravest problem then facing the region, a region Webster described to Bailey as an “intellectual and cultural vacuum” (Bailey, “Interview”). Having invested a fortune in compiling books and materials on the history of the province, Webster hoped that bringing the young historian to the New Brunswick Museum would help to remedy the languishing cultural and educational situation in the province by improving the available historiography of the
region (Forbes, “In Search” 56). For Bailey, however, the development and dissemination of a Maritime historiography alone, though crucial, was insufficient to foster the sort of cultural revitalization that he envisioned for the province; rather, Bailey recognized that the development of the region’s historiography would have to be accompanied by a broad-based literary and artistic activism if the Maritime region was to be resuscitated from its ailing sociocultural condition.

As early as 1923 Bailey, then an undergraduate student at the University of New Brunswick, had expressed his dismay that the Fredericton literary tradition that had peaked with the poetry of Charles G.D. Roberts, Bliss Carman, and Francis Sherman in the latter part of the nineteenth century had “sunk to a low ebb” (“Literary” 15). Bailey’s aspiration then was to found a literary magazine, “The Fiddlehead,” that would serve as the vehicle for the renewal of that tradition. It would be more than twenty years before Bailey would see his idea for a literary magazine based in Fredericton come to fruition. The result, however, has been the longest-running continuously published literary magazine in Canada. While *The Fiddlehead* has undergone numerous transformations and passed through the hands of more than ten editors since its establishment in 1945, it was during the first twenty-five years of its existence that it helped to re-establish Fredericton as one of the foremost centres for alternative literary print culture in Canada.

When *The Fiddlehead* first appeared it was a small mimeographed publication containing ten poems, all of which were contributed by members of the Bliss Carman Society (BCS), a small writers' collective that had been established by Bailey five years earlier. Its circulation was negligible and many of the poets whose work appeared within its pages had yet to mature as writers. However, by providing a vehicle for the literary
activism of a small group of emerging Maritime modernists, the magazine facilitated the advent of a period of literary, intellectual, and cultural ferment that would re-establish Fredericton as a centre for literary activity in Canada. Later, under the editorial guidance of Fred Cogswell, the magazine was expanded and opened its pages to poetry, prose, and criticism from writers across the English-speaking world. Cogswell’s editorship of The Fiddlehead continued the efforts initiated by Bailey by providing writers from across Canada access to a readership at a time when few opportunities for publication existed. Through the continued publication of Maritime writers and through the dissemination of an eclectic mix of the traditional and the avant-garde, Cogswell sustained the magazine’s commitment to regional cultural development while offering a forum for the publication of poetry and fiction from across and outside Canada. After the disappearance of Northern Review and Contemporary Verse (CV) in the mid-1950s, The Fiddlehead, along with The Canadian Forum, “effectively sustained the publication of poetry,” and by the mid-1960s The Fiddlehead had established itself as one of the preeminent literary magazines in the country (Woodcock 219). Like most little magazines, however, The Fiddlehead began as a modestly printed journal with a small circulation and represented the collective efforts of a select group of writers, contributors, and editors dedicated to the publication of modernist verse and the renewal of New Brunswick’s literary culture.

Attempting to register the manifold influences that shaped the BCS and The Fiddlehead is complicated by the dynamic and multifaceted environment out of which they emerged. In retrospect, it may appear that the emergence of modernism in New Brunswick not only coincided with, but was also a product of similar movements that had sprung up in Canada’s urban centres. Indeed, the founding of the BCS in 1940 was
connected to the general developments in Canadian literary modernism that saw the appearance of *CV* (1941), *Preview* (1942), and *First Statement* (1942), with the former two magazines providing examples for the founding of *The Fiddlehead* in 1945 (Bailey, “Literary” 5). The impetus that led to the establishment of *The Fiddlehead*, however, derived less from the recent publication of those magazines in Montreal and Vancouver than from the confluence of creative energies that had been germinating in New Brunswick throughout the 1930s and 40s. In spite of drastic deficiencies in the intellectual, cultural, and educational infrastructure of the province, including the absence of any formal and established channels for the dissemination of literary and artistic expression, the New Brunswick Bailey encountered upon his return from graduate studies at the University of Toronto was the site of a small but energetic literary and arts community. During the 1930s the studio of painter Ted Campbell in Saint John became a gathering point for artists, writers, and intellectuals who took an active interest in the arts (Gibbs, “English” 126). Among those who would meet to discuss and critique one another’s work were painters Jack Humphrey, Miller Brittain, and Campbell, potters Erica and Kjeld Deichmann, and poets P.K. Page, Jean Sweet, John Sutherland, and Kay Smith (Djwa 49). In addition to having a formative impact on the subsequent Fredericton modernist formation via Bailey and Brewster,¹ the arts community in Saint John served a

¹ Both Bailey and Brewster were loosely affiliated with this group at different times. Bailey’s work prevented him from becoming a frequent visitor to the studio, but he did manage to establish acquaintances with various members of the group. Kay Smith had met Bailey at a poetry reading at the house of a mutual
broader public function by creating an environment in New Brunswick that was
conducive to literary, artistic, and cultural endeavour. So it was that, according to Bailey,
“a receptivity was created [in the province], as a result of a generalized and anonymous
stimulus” (“Interview”).

Against the social conservatism and puritan religiosity that underpinned the
province’s resistance to modernity, the literary and arts communities in Saint John and
Fredericton were cultivating an atmosphere that was closely aligned with the forms of
representation accompanying the rise of modernism in Canada. This tension formed a
precondition for a period of cultural ferment, a condition that Raymond Williams
identifies as “a sense of crisis in the relationship of art to society… in the very purposes
of art that had previously been agreed to [in a given society]” (163). In “Creative
Moments in the Culture of the Maritime provinces,” Bailey expresses a theory of cultural
change similar to that expounded by Williams:

friend (Gibbs 126). At the request of Allan MacBeath, Bailey also visited John Sutherland, later the
founding editor of First Statement, when Sutherland was in the Saint John Tuberculosis Hospital. There
Bailey read to Sutherland Eliot’s “The Waste Land” and discussed the poetry of Eliot, Pound and Hopkins,
further engraining the interest in modernism that P.K. Page had helped to inspire in Sutherland during the
same period (Bailey, “Literary Memories II” 9; Djwa 55-6). Later on, in 1941, Brewster visited Campbell’s
studio at Page’s invitation after her poem “Flirtation with Silver” was given honourable mention in a poetry
contest hosted by Page and Jean Sweet (Djwa 56). A life-long friendship with Page resulted from
Brewster’s visit to the studio in 1941 and her introduction to the Saint John arts community would shape
Brewster’s later engagement with the Fredericton literary community.
It is necessary for societal elements to coalesce into differentiated and fluid patterns, that the communities that emerge by virtue of the formation of these patterns must experience mounting tensions through the polarity of their parts if there is to be a discharge of creative energy in any field of endeavour. (46)

The opposition between what was perceived to be the staid conservatism of the dominant culture of the Maritime provinces\(^2\) and the collective efforts of the emergent modernists in Saint John and Fredericton can thus be seen to have provided the tension necessary for the emergence of an active and dynamic literary culture in the province. Though it was not the sort of “national crisis” which, in 1943, E.K. Brown had predicted would be required for any “significant expression in the arts,” the bourgeoning cultural formation centred in Fredericton pioneered a unique form of literary modernism that starkly contrasted with the hegemonic modes of Canadian Romanticism (17). The result was a period of energetic creative expression that would eventually find its voice within the

\(^2\) The staid conservativism perceived to be characteristic of the dominant culture of the region was neither typical of nor unique to the Maritime provinces. As Alden Nowlan observes of the region in his essay “Something to Write About,” “we were poor, ignorant, isolated,” but “hundreds of thousands, perhaps even the majority, of Canadians lived as we did in those days” (7). Thus, it was not so much the prevalence of a distinct and deep-rooted regional conservatism as it was the monolithic stereotype of the region as parochial and traditionalist that contributed to cultural tension at mid-century. This is a stereotype that persists today; as Margaret Conrad observes, Atlantic Canada continues to be widely perceived as “backward, conservative, and juiced up on handouts,... a region blighted by location, culture, and identity” (162).
pages of The Fiddlehead. In the late 1930s, however, the emergent modernist formation in Fredericton was only beginning to take shape.

In 1940, two years after moving from Saint John to Fredericton to become the chair of the newly established history department at the University of New Brunswick, Bailey organized the BCS. When Bailey held the earliest meetings of the BCS in December of 1940, the group consisted of only four members: Bailey, Robin Bayley, Linden Peebles, and Dorothy Howe (Bailey, “Literary” 4). The society was modelled on an informal poetry group, consisting of Bailey, Robert Finch, Roy Daniells, and Earle Birney, who had met weekly during the early 1930s at The Diet Kitchen, a popular Toronto tea room, to compose, discuss, and critique one another’s poetry.\(^3\) Carrying out collective exercises in composition similar to those undertaken by the Diet Kitchen

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\(^3\) At the same time that he was beginning to assimilate the influences of modernism into his own work, both as an historian and a poet, Bailey became a member of two groups which would in many respects provide a model for the BCS. The first of these groups was the “Nameless Society,” a literary club among whose members were Roy Daniells, Dorothy Livesay, Stanley Ryerson, and Henry Noyes. Presided over by E.K. Brown, the group was dedicated to the analysis and criticism of literature rather than to the composition of poetry and prose (Pacey 51). The second group was less formal but ultimately more significant to Bailey’s development as both a poet and critic. Each week Bailey, Roy Daniells, Robert Finch, and Earle Birney met at the Diet Kitchen Tea Room to share their poems and engage in mutual criticism. Soon the group began doing exercises in poetry with the view to perfecting their technique and form: “we were following Eliot’s Dictum,” recalled Bailey, “favoring constant practice so that our technique would be ready” (Bailey, Interview 4). These meetings would have a lasting impact on Bailey’s composition and the same exercises were later undertaken by the BCS.
group, the BCS followed Eliot’s maxim that the poet must “be experimenting and trying his technique so that it will be ready, like a well-oiled fire-engine, when the moment comes to strain it to its utmost” (qtd. in Bailey, Forward 1). Accordingly, the group met monthly at Bailey’s house to compose and recite poetry and to engage in mutual criticism. As Bailey recalls, the group was “not really a society but [his] guests” ("Interview"). This intimate setting provided an environment that encouraged literary collaboration between members of the group and the members’ commitment to literary production as a cooperative social process was a crucial component of the BCS during its earliest years. Eventually the group grew to include several more members, most of whom were students at UNB. Among the most pivotal figures to have joined the group during this period were Elizabeth Brewster, Desmond Pacey, and Fred Cogswell. Brewster became a member of the society soon after arriving at the University of New Brunswick as an undergraduate student in 1942. Two years later, Pacey joined the group when he moved to the University of New Brunswick to chair the English Department, and Fred Cogswell, a recent veteran of the Second World War, became a member the following year after enrolling in undergraduate studies at UNB (Bailey, "Desmond" 3). In spite of its expansion, the group’s devotion to the literary-collaborative approach to composition was sustained through the cooperative and participatory nature of its gatherings which were kept small by the implementation of a policy that limited the number of members at any given meeting to seven (Bailey, Forward 1).

From 1940-1944, the group was united by its informal membership and its dedication to improving technique and form through the composition of verse and mutual criticism. Increasingly, however, the group sought to record its development in a physical
format. Bailey began collecting and compiling the poems written and shared at each meeting in the minutes of the society. Until the creation of The Fiddlehead, these mimeographed minutes were the sole physical manifestation of the group’s work and development. In September of 1944, however, the group began to express interest in publishing the minutes as a little magazine. On 26 January 1945, at the suggestion of Bailey, a decision was reached to publish a magazine that was to be named The Fiddlehead (Bailey, “Desmond” 3). Printed on 8½ x 11-inch mimeographed pages, the magazine contained an average of ten poems per issue. The cover featured a linocut print of a stylized fiddlehead, designed and created by then artist-in-residence Lucy Jarvis (Gibbs, “Portents” 11). With few exceptions, all of the poems in the first few issues — and all subsequent issues until 1952 — were written by members of the BCS, which, in 1945, included Bailey, Brewster, Eleanor Belyea, Robert Rogers, Frances Firth, Donald Gammon, Margaret Cunningham and Jack Jeans (Bailey, “Desmond” 3).

Relaying to Bailey the origins of the magazine as she had recorded them in her journal, Elizabeth Brewster wrote that “it’s perfectly obvious… that, if one person was the chief creator of The Fiddlehead, it was you” (Letter to Bailey 3). While the establishment of a literary magazine named The Fiddlehead had been an idea of Bailey’s since his youth, the creation of the magazine was, like most of the BCS’s efforts, the result of a collaborative process that was not unconnected to the general developments in the social and cultural environment of New Brunswick. The Second World War ended in September of 1945 and the beginning of the school year at UNB saw an influx of
veterans attending university with support from the recently created Department of Veterans Affairs. 4 Already in 1944 veterans began to take advantage of the opportunity for a university education at UNB and of the three-hundred and fifty students who enrolled at the university in the fall of 1945, the majority were veterans (Tremblay, “Universities”). According to Tony Tremblay, “UNB was rapidly expanding…, curricula were changing to reflect increasingly nationalist concerns, and the large student body of activist veterans was instigating for broad social change” (“Universities”). The returning veterans brought with them a “healthy and determined optimism” and that energy “so long stagnated by the Depression, had been set into motion by the War and now was being turned into constructive channels” (Cogswell, “Interview”). In the midst of what Bailey called this “ferment of ideas,” various members of the BCS made significant contributions towards the establishment of a literary magazine that could respond to their rapidly changing milieu (Bailey, “Faculty” 1). Edward McCourt, who left the group to teach at the University of Saskatchewan shortly before the publication of The Fiddlehead, had discussed the possibility of a magazine with Bailey in April 1944, helping initiate the discussions that would lead to The Fiddlehead’s publication less than a year later (Brewster, Letter to Bailey 2). Brewster was responsible for persuading the group toward

4 The Department of Veterans Affairs was created in June of 1944 and among its many initiatives was the vocational training and education of veterans. Canada’s “re-establishment program” provided veterans with tuition fees and a $60.00 “maintenance allowance.” As a result, 50,000 Second World War veterans in Canada attended university in the years following the end of the war (McIntosh, “War Veterans”).
a more inclusive editorial policy at a meeting in the fall of 1944. Finally, it was Donald Gammon who took the initiative of putting together the first issue of the magazine (Brewster, Letter to Bailey 1; Bailey, “Desmond” 3). One month after the January 1945 meeting, the first issue of The Fiddlehead was published. Donald Gammon was its editor and he listed as the magazine’s address the Lady Beaverbrook Residence at UNB.

Comprised mostly of short imagistic poems written primarily in free verse, the early issues of The Fiddlehead evince both a fidelity to literary modernism and a marked sense of impending cultural efflorescence. Fittingly, the themes and subjects of the poems included in the earliest issues frequently involve rebirth or regeneration: in Gammon’s “The Fiddlehead,” the “fingers” and “leaves” of “a many fingered thought” “stretch” and “unfold” in the sun (5, 6, 8); in Robin Bayley’s “Spring’s Coronation,” “Spring has this day / received / her crown” and now “walks the hills” (2-4, 7); in Linden Peebles’s “Day and Night at Wegesegum,” at the edge of a “molten sea,” a “golden rose” blossoms “in the east” (4, 8, 10); and in Brewster’s “Only the subtle things,” “medalled heroes die” and “on their sunken graves there grows / the mute tenacious grass” (5, 8). Opening the first issue is a poem by Eleanor Belyea that is particularly representative of the type of verse published in the early issues. Written in free verse, Belyea’s untitled poem relies on concrete images to convey its subject, which is, appropriately, a demand for creative expression. The speaker is situated in “stillness” where “thoughts, wraith-like, / trace a half-sequence, / blotting the smooth sheet / of a sluggish mind” (1, 2-5). Desiring to break the “nerve-shredding silence,” the speaker seeks a voice to articulate these thoughts whose motion starkly contrasts the “leaves… like marble” and the “stiff-statue trees” that populate the poem (10, 12, 13). Driven by the motion of the speaker’s thoughts, the
momentum of the poem builds towards the final lines, with the ellipses in the eighteenth line providing a break that anticipates the rupture demanded in the nineteenth: “Almost I wish... Oh! // Shatter this silence!” (18-19). As the situation of the poem at the beginning of the first issue suggests, the speaker’s demand for a voice did not go unheeded.

While Belyea’s poem in the first issue does not exhibit the economy of language and emotive force evident in the poems of Brewster and Bailey, its significance is unmistakable. The poem at once responds to the devastation of the Second World War “where death rains in steel” (15) and calls for an outburst of creative expression. Belyea’s poem thus provides an apposite beginning to a magazine whose editors were deeply concerned with both affording a voice to emerging poets and responding to the social and cultural milieu in which those poets emerged. While not altogether unconventional formally, the absence of regular meter and end rhyme alone marks a critical break from the fixed forms employed in the Romantic and Georgian poetry that had dominated much of Canadian poetry in the early twentieth-century. Furthermore, the poem strives toward precise imagery and clear language, evidencing Belyea’s efforts to break with the decorative language and discursiveness of the Romantic tradition. She opts instead for an ostensibly modernist aesthetic, one which most of the younger BCS poets had embraced at the encouragement and influence of Bailey, whose own poetry in that first issue subtly articulates the magazine’s broader relationship to modernism and tradition.

On the page adjacent to Belyea’s poem, and complimenting the themes of silence and stillness that her poem employs, is a poem by Bailey titled “Still Life.” Less overt and more difficult than Beleya’s opening poem, “Still Life” provides a complex cogitation on the creative process and its relationship to tradition. The poem is written in
the epigrammatic style characteristic of Bailey’s poetry of the period and conveys its meaning through the description of a solitary scene, a grist mill in wintertime. Trapped in ice, motionless, and inoperative, the mill “will not return this often / a granary for months of ill at ease” (1-2). Bailey employs the mill and its immobilization as an apt but ironic metaphor for the cultural inertia resultant from a stagnating tradition, one that is soon revealed to be that of the Fredericton Confederation poets. This tradition and its oppressiveness are alluded to in the fourth and seventh lines: “the thaw” will offer no reprieve for the mill from the imprisoning ice, “the burden of its coffin,” nor will the mill “gather to its heart its cherished april” (4, 8). The eighth line, with its mention of “cherished april,” can be read as a direct allusion to Bliss Carman’s “Spring Song.” In “Spring Song,” the speaker longs for the regenerative power of spring, “mother April,” in order that he might be made new: “Count my heart beats one by one / Send them where the winters perish / Then some golden noon re cherish / and restore them in the sun” (7, 10-13). Both poets are deeply concerned with rejuvenation, but while Carman wishes for the advent of a metaphorical spring to “revive the days that were” (6), in Bailey’s “Still Life” the regenerative power of spring is unavailable to the speaker who, instead, calls on the reader to perform the task of renewal through composition: “Of it with book and pen record these cries” (8). At the same time Bailey looks back to the Fredericton Romantic tradition, his elegiac treatment of spring evokes the more recent poetics of the high modernists by alluding to Eliot’s “Wasteland” in which “April is the cruelest month” (1). Situated between two opposing traditions, the speaker’s relationship to the mill is an ambiguous one. The mill is at once aligned with an arrested creative process and distanced from the speaker’s capacity for expression by the very fact of the poem, itself a
product of such a process. Thus, Bailey both affirms the necessity of tradition while
calling on the reader to move beyond the confines of that tradition and assume
responsibility for literary expression.

The inclusion of “Still Life” in the first issue of The Fiddlehead is not incidental.
The themes of tradition, change, and renewal evident in the poem reflect the magazine’s
broader fidelity to tradition, experimentation, and the revitalization of regional culture.
Prefacing the first issue of the magazine is an editorial by Bailey describing the BCS’s
devotion to cultural renewal through the preservation and modernization of the
Fredericton literary tradition, a “tradition of poetry which includes, among others,
Jonathan Odell, James Hogg, Barry Straton, Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, Francis Sherman,
Society,” writes Bailey, “was formed in December, 1940, in the belief that this tradition
is worth preserving and continuing” (1). As both “Still Life” and his editorial introduction
suggest, Bailey had not abandoned his undergraduate concern with the revival of the
Fredericton literary tradition, but his concept of “tradition” had been substantially revised
as a result of his increasing allegiance to literary modernism. This commitment to
“tradition,” however, has, at times, been conflated by commentators with a commitment
to “traditionalism.” Clarissa Hurley contends that “although [The Fiddlehead] is widely
held to be a journal that welcomes traditional forms while giving space and voice to more
experimental modes, I would argue that – until recently – The Fiddlehead has feasted on
tradition and fasted from innovation” (5). While Hurley’s observation speaks to the
eclecticism that has characterized the magazine from its inception, her assertion of the
magazine’s preoccupation with traditional content ignores the early commitment of its
editors to the publication of avant-garde poetry that challenged the hegemony of Romanticism in Canadian literature.

In fact, during its earliest years, the influence of T.S. Eliot meant that the BCS’s understanding of tradition was wedded to experimentation and innovation. In his 1921 essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” Eliot re-evaluates the concept of tradition and condemns the singularly mistaken assumption that the success of a poet derives solely from the originality of the poetry that he or she writes. For Eliot, to write in the tradition is not to emulate one’s predecessors, but to assimilate the historical sense that it provides, a sense that all the literature of the past and present have “a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order” (14). The result, argues Eliot, is that tradition is what makes “a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity” (14-15). The impact of Eliot’s theory on the editorial policy of The Fiddlehead is apparent in Bailey’s own formulation of “tradition,” again prefacing the first issue: “By continuing a tradition is not meant a slavish imitation of past themes and methods, nor does it mean a complete break with the past. To continue a tradition is to develop it to the point of contemporaneity” (1). Bailey’s own commitment to modernist aesthetics is evident not only in the form and themes of his own verse and the verse of those poets he mentored, but also in his assertion that, since the point of contemporaneity “is forever in motion the tradition must be forever unfolding by means of constant experimentation” (1). While the BCS’s devotion to experimentation did not always translate into the composition and publication of unconventional verse, it did ensure that a heterogeneous collection of both avant-garde and traditional verse was featured in most issues of The Fiddlehead.
In addition to the influence of the high modernists, the magazine’s commitment to tradition was also shaped by its democratic roots in the BCS and by Bailey’s education in social history. While for Eliot “the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer” constituted a tradition sufficient for the writer of modern verse, Bailey’s understanding of tradition, informed by his anthropological and social-historical work, was more broadly inclusive (“Tradition” 14). As Robert Gibbs observes, Bailey’s vision was not to “extend” the literary tradition of the Confederation poets, but to revive “the nineteenth century local ferment” of which those poets had been a part (“Portents” 16). As such, The Fiddlehead’s early commitment to “tradition” was not a wholly aesthetic or even entirely literary one, but rather a commitment to a particular relationship between literature and society, one that valued cultural activity as an integral and indissoluble element of social practice. Furthermore, for Bailey, creativity is a “sociocultural product” and is most active when it involves interaction and “mutual enrichment” between different cultures (“Interview”). If The Fiddlehead was to serve as a vehicle for the literary activism of the emergent modernists and the regeneration of regional culture, then it would have to provide a forum for the publication and dissemination of an eclectic mix of literary forms: “To become oneself one must first lose oneself – flood oneself in the immediate age, as Whitman puts it – in the vastness and infinite variety of the metropolitan process” (qtd. in Bauer 29). To bring the Fredericton literary tradition to the point of contemporaneity in the pages of The Fiddlehead, then, was to draw on and publish a diverse assortment of poetry. While the magazine’s policy of limiting submissions to members of the BCS served to limit the extent of its eclecticism during the first six years of its publication, this early formulation of the magazine’s relationship to tradition would
serve to underwrite the inclusive editorial policy that subsequent editors of The Fiddlehead would adopt in the years that followed.

From 1945-1947, Gammon edited and published six issues of The Fiddlehead out of the Lady Beaverbrook Residence at UNB. The seventh issue served as a retrospective and consisted of the script of a broadcast performed by members of the BCS for a local radio station, CFNB (Bailey, “Desmond” 4). It also announced Gammon's resignation due to an increasingly heavy workload (Rogers 1). Thereafter, until 1952, the magazine was edited by Cogswell and Robert Rogers, either singularly or together. One exception was the twelfth issue, which consisted of nineteen poems and was guest-edited by Gammon. Under the editorship of Cogswell and Rogers few changes were made to the physical format, content, or editorial direction of the magazine. The Fiddlehead’s foremost objective during this period was to continue to provide local poets with access to a readership. As an organ of the BCS, the magazine continued to function as a space for mutual criticism and experimentation among members of the group. Nevertheless, distribution of the magazine was not, as some critics have suggested, restricted to members of the society, and the impact of the magazine during this initial phase was not restricted to members of the BCS.

Andrew Moore contends that The Fiddlehead “initially served a social rather than a public function” (“The Fiddlehead”). Bailey’s editorial introduction to the first issue would seem to support such a reading: “The poems contained herein are not “published,” but are brought together in this form as a record largely for private circulation among members of the society and their friends” (1). By the late 1940s, however, it was well recognized among members of the society that The Fiddlehead had assumed a public
function. "The Fiddlehead has come a long way since 1945," wrote Rogers in a letter to UNB president A.W. Trueman, "and it is now very definitely a medium of publication" (1). During the first ten years of publication, The Fiddlehead had a distribution of approximately sixty, of which only thirty-one went to regular subscribers (Bailey, Letter to Birney 1; Cogswell, "Editorial" 1). Though its circulation was slight, the impact of The Fiddlehead on the emergent modernist cultural formation in Fredericton was substantial. The Fredericton modernists had not found a large audience through the magazine, but they had found a dedicated audience eager to support the publication of both avant-garde and traditional verse composed and published by local writers. Through the dissemination of modernist verse, many young writers in Fredericton were introduced to modernism for the first time. Recalling his first encounter with The Fiddlehead, Robert Gibbs writes, "in the poems of Elizabeth Brewster and Eleanor Belyea I tasted the bitter and biting pessimism of modernity for the first time" ("Potents" 15). Most importantly, during its initial phase The Fiddlehead had provided a medium for the publication of literature in New Brunswick where no such outlet existed before. The germs of a cultural efflorescence in New Brunswick had been planted and in the pages of The Fiddlehead they had been given the space they needed to grow.

By the 1950s, however, there was a sense that the magazine had become confined by its policy of publishing only material submitted by members of the BCS. On 26 September 1952, poet, critic, and then editor of Saturday Night, B.K. Sandwell, wrote to Robert Rogers responding to a copy of The Fiddlehead that Rogers had sent to Saturday Night for review. Sandwell expressed interest in the magazine but questioned the policy of limiting submissions to the Fredericton area. Fredericton, wrote Sandwell, "seems a
small area to provide good enough poets for a magazine of any periodicity” (1). Sandwell was voicing a concern that both Rogers and Cogswell had been harbouring for some time. In fact, most of the members of the BCS who had contributed to the establishment of The Fiddlehead in 1945 had, by the late 1940s, either grown weary of their association with the BCS or had left the university to continue their education elsewhere (Tremblay, “Fiddlehead”). Brewster had moved to the United States to pursue an MA degree at Radcliffe College, Harvard in 1946, while Bailey had taken on such a heavy workload as both a professor and an administrator that by 1947 he was forced to cease hosting the monthly meetings of the BCS. While both poets maintained their association with the magazine, they ceased to take an active role in its compilation and publication. So it was that in 1952 Fred Cogswell assumed full editorship of the magazine with the view to revamping its format, expanding its size, and opening its pages to contributors and audiences across and outside Canada.

Cogswell had left New Brunswick in 1950 to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Edinburgh. His association with The Fiddlehead during his time in Scotland, however, had not diminished; he had frequently contributed poetry to the magazine while providing critical appraisals of each issue to Rogers. Thus, when he returned to accept a teaching position at UNB in 1952, Cogswell was well positioned to assume full editorship of The Fiddlehead, a position he would hold for the next fifteen years. Recognizing the need to broaden the content and readership of the magazine, Cogswell, at the suggestion of Rogers and Bailey, contacted Alan Crawley, editor of Contemporary Verse (CV). The demise of CV in February of 1953 had created a void in Canadian publishing and Cogswell sought to fill that void, an objective he intimated to
Crawley: “The fact that Contemporary Verse has decided to cease publication gives greater urgency to something that the Bliss Carman Society has had in mind ever since the untimely end of Poetry Commonwealth” (Letter to Crawley 1). Confident that Cogswell and The Fiddlehead would help to remedy the poor state of Canadian poetry publishing, Crawley agreed to furnish the editorial board of The Fiddlehead with the mailing list of CV’s subscribers. In response to Cogswell’s letters, CV’s co-founder and managing editor, Floris Clark McLaren, wrote, “one of the things that Alan Crawley and I both felt sure of when we closed CV was that another magazine would very shortly come forward to take up its work” (1). Determined to do just that, Cogswell set about sending sample copies to CV’s three-hundred plus subscribers and began to renovate The Fiddlehead.

In the first year of his term as editor, observes Moore, Cogswell “literally reshaped the magazine, shrinking its pages to a more conventional size, setting aside space for advertising, and adding literary reviews to the content of each issue” (“The Fiddlehead”). In 1959, as a condition of the Canada Council grant the magazine had begun to receive, Cogswell began publishing short fiction. Initially, Cogswell had the magazine printed by The University Press of New Brunswick, but after discovering that the magazine could be printed at a much lower cost outside North America Cogswell chose to have it printed by Villiers Press of London, England (Cogswell, “Choosing” 35). As a result, the American-based magazine Trace, which was also printed by Villiers, listed The Fiddlehead in its pages. Serving as an index for little magazines published across North America, Trace contributed greatly to the growth of The Fiddlehead (Cogswell, “Choosing” 35).
In the eighteenth issue of spring, 1953, a foreword by UNB President A.W. Trueman announced the intention of *The Fiddlehead* “to open its pages to poets anywhere in the English-speaking world” (2). “There is not only room in Canada for a magazine of this type,” wrote Trueman, “there is need of it” (2). Within two years Cogswell had increased the number of subscriptions by over 650% and alongside the familiar names of former BCS members, including Bailey, Brewster, Cogswell, Cunningham, and Gibbs, there began to appear the names of both emerging and established writers from across Canada (Cogswell, “Editorial” 1). Among those included in the early post-1953 issues were Kay Smith and Ralph Gustafson (issue 18), Dorothy Livesay, Al Purdy, and Robert Finch (issue 19), and Miriam Waddington and John Glassco (issue 20). Soon the average number of poems included in each issue swelled to well over thirty and by 1956, *The Fiddlehead* averaged roughly thirty pages per issue.

According to Bailey, Cogswell had, “in a sense, refounded the magazine” (“Literary” 6). “Working almost single handedly, financing it partly out of his own pocket, writing personal letters of encouragement to all and sundry,” Bailey observed, Cogswell “became almost a national father figure to nine-tenths of the poets in Canada” (“Literary” 6). Indeed, Cogswell’s efforts had drastically altered the operation and scope of the magazine. What had begun as a meagre, regionally committed mimeographed publication with a limited distribution had, under the editorial guidance of Cogswell achieved a reputation as one of Canada’s leading magazines for the publication of poetry. Nevertheless, the principles of eclecticism, tradition, and regional commitment, those principles that were central to the magazine’s inception in 1945, remained a guiding force long after the dissipation of the BCS and throughout Cogswell’s editorship. In part, this
devotion to the magazine’s original purpose was the result of the influence of Bailey and Pacey, whom Cogswell credited with having shaped his “literary judgment” (Letter to Pacey, 5 January 1950, 1). At the same time, the “humanist aesthetic” Cogswell expressed in his own work, combined with his political allegiance to democratic socialism, complemented the values according to which the magazine had been established. The result was a lasting devotion to the democratic, collaborative, and inclusive principles that had defined the emergent modernist formation during the 1940s. Endeavouring to extend these principles to poets from across Canada and abroad, Cogswell had set an immense task for himself.

In keeping with Bailey’s commitment to the “metropolitan process,” Cogswell held the conviction that a multiplicity of poetic voices, regardless of their origin, deserved to be heard. Moreover, he felt that the inclusion of diverse voices would also serve to enrich the cultural landscape of both New Brunswick and Canada. Cogswell later stated that his desire was “to create a potpourri of types, attitudes, ideas and sensibilities within which people could be interested in something other than what they were doing” (qtd. in Tremblay, “Fiddlehead”). Increasingly, a balance was struck between the amounts of traditional and avant-garde verse printed in each issue. The issues published during Cogswell’s first year as editor demonstrate the breadth of form and style that The Fiddlehead undertook to publish. In issue twenty-two, for instance, the juxtaposition of Ralph Gustafson’s “Six Preludes” and Geoffrey Johnson’s “The Cat in the Tree” provides a striking contrast of forms. Gustafson’s syncopated and often paratactic lines forgo any regularity of meter or rhyme and exhibit little formal organization outside their visual arrangement on the page (1-4). Johnson’s lines, however, are written, with little variation,
in iambic tetrameter and employ end rhymes that generally follow an alternate rhyme scheme (4-5). The juxtaposition of unconventional and traditional verse forms was not unusual in these early issues, but neither was the juxtaposition of thematically similar or complementary poems. Poems of similar themes or tone were often arranged in proximity to one another, creating parallels or counterpoints. In the twenty-first issue, for example, Marya Fiamengo’s “The Quality of Halves” is placed adjacent to Dorothy Livesay’s “Easter” (8, 9). Both poems provide complex and allusive considerations on religious belief. While the poems explore two different aspects of Christianity, with Fiamengo’s poem considering Christian iconography and Livesay’s poem articulating feelings of doubt and uncertainty, the central concern of both poets with the nature of belief provides the reader with a sense of coherency. Thus, while the formal variety did, at times, contribute to the disjointedness of certain issues, the editors generally succeeded in maintaining the internal coherency of each issue.

During the mid-1950s The Fiddlehead was one of only a few magazines in Canada that dedicated any substantial space to the publication of contemporary poetry. Nevertheless, the magazine’s eclecticism, in addition to the fact that, by the 1960s, more than 40% of the material published in The Fiddlehead came from outside Canada, drew criticism from a number of Canada’s leading critics (Gibbs, “Portents” 12). In an era of intense literary nationalism, The Fiddlehead’s pluralism, ensured by an editorial policy of printing good poetry regardless of its origin or form, was construed by some as the absence of an editorial policy altogether. In 1958, Northrop Frye accused The Fiddlehead of having become a “dumping ground for otherwise unpublishable American stuff” (447). Similarly, in a 1962 article in Canadian Literature, Frank Davey counted The Fiddlehead
among Canada’s “low-energy literary mags” due to what he identified as its “custom of printing... nearly an equal number of bad poems to good ones” (224). As Moore observes, for these critics The Fiddlehead was at once “un-Canadian and too provincial” (“The Fiddlehead”). Rather than recognize the magazine’s eclecticism as the result of editorial intent, these critics sought to attribute the diversity of the magazine’s contents to a lack of discernment on the part of its editors. Published in a province that is geographically distant from Canada’s cosmopolitan centres, The Fiddlehead challenged the centralization of Canadian cultural production. Its growing renown was thus seen as not only anomalous, but also aberrant. As a result, the quality of its editors was deemed suspect by various members of Canada’s literary elite when, in actuality, the rigour of its review process often distinguished The Fiddlehead from some of Canada’s allegedly more “energetic” magazines.

In practice, The Fiddlehead's liberalism was the result of the catholic editorial policy advanced by Cogswell and the other members of the editorial committee, which, in 1953, consisted of Cogswell, Bailey, Pacey, Rogers, Alec Lucas, and David Galloway. In order to ensure the integrity of the editorial process, Cogswell would retype each poem that was submitted to the magazine, assign each a number, and circulate them among the members of the editorial committee for blind review. Each member of the committee would then give the poem a letter grade ranging from “C” to “A.” If a poem received an A-range mark from at least four of its six editors it would be published. Otherwise, the poem was rejected or returned for revision. In addition to guaranteeing a stringent review process with the view to publishing only the best poetry the magazine received, the editorial policy implemented by Cogswell also meant that no preferential treatment was
given to poets whose reputation might influence the committee. As a result, a number of highly regarded Canadian poets were rejected within the first year of Cogswell’s editorship, including Louis Dudek, Phyllis Webb, and James Reaney (Cogswell, Letter to MacLaren, 1). When James Boyer May, the editor of Trace, suggested that Cogswell should try and publish more celebrated poets in the pages of The Fiddlehead, Cogswell politely dismissed May’s advice. “Names may be important,” Cogswell wrote, “but we prefer not to collect them” (Letter to May 1).

Established and renowned poets, including Dudek, Webb, and Reaney, did appear frequently in the magazine, but as a result of what the editors perceived as the quality of their poetry rather than the status of their name. More importantly, however, many then-emergent literary figures who would come to dominate the Canadian literary landscape in the 1960s and 1970s had some of their earliest works published in The Fiddlehead. Such poets and fiction writers as Alden Nowlan, Al Purdy, Jay MacPherson, Milton Acorn, Joy Kogawa, and Michael Ondaatje, to name but a few, benefitted at different times from Cogswell’s attempts not only to showcase literary talent, but also to cultivate that talent.

The exponential increase in the number of submissions being received by The Fiddlehead during the 1950s and 1960s meant that Cogswell personally read upward of five-thousand poems annually (Tremblay, “Fiddlehead”). In spite of this boost in submissions, Cogswell continued to expend an enormous amount of time and energy attempting to provide contributors with comments and constructive criticism on the poems they submitted. Cogswell’s close consideration of individual submissions and his suggestions for excision or revision evinced a strategy for incubating literary talent that diverged from the reject-or-accept policy implemented by many magazines of the period.
Cogswell’s support, however, was not reserved for contributors to *The Fiddlehead*. The broader cultural advocacy that Cogswell undertook as an extension of his role as editor of *The Fiddlehead* involved support for a wide range of cultural initiatives throughout Canada, but especially in New Brunswick and the Maritime provinces. Cogswell regularly provided assistance, through both financing and publicity, to emergent magazines from across Canada. In a November 1956 mimeographed supplement to the thirtieth issue of *The Fiddlehead*, for instance, Cogswell welcomed the launch of *Yes* magazine. With the termination of *The Northern Review* in 1954 and with *Canadian Poetry Magazine* struggling to find an editor, Cogswell observed that “the only established Canadian magazine that at present devotes the majority of its pages to serious poetry is *The Fiddlehead*” (1). Confident that any new Canadian magazine that could provide an outlet for “a wide range of writers” was worthy of serious attention and support, Cogswell called on the readers of *The Fiddlehead* to devote their attention to *Yes*. Cogswell reminded readers that “the life of any magazine depends upon two things, contributions and subscriptions” (1). This summons for readers to actively support any Canadian magazine willing to lend an ear to the voices of poets in Canada is illustrative not only of Cogswell’s twenty-year editorship of *The Fiddlehead*, but also of the broader cultural stewardship he performed during and subsequent to his time as editor of the magazine.

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Cogswell did not draw attention to the predominance of *The Fiddlehead* in Canadian poetry publishing for the purpose of garnering further support. Rather, Cogswell pointed to *The Fiddlehead*’s singularity as a sign that more needed to be done to support cultural producers elsewhere in Canada. It was in the same spirit that, in 1954, Cogswell, along with colleague Al Tunis, established Fiddlehead Poetry Books in an effort to remedy the declining state of poetry publishing in Canada (Tremblay, “Fiddlehead”). From 1954 to 1981, Cogswell personally published more than three-hundred poetry books, including the first books of Alden Nowlan (1958), Joy Kogawa (1967), Don Gutteridge (1971), and Roo Borson (1977), often financing their publication out of his own pocket (MacSkimming 248). Cogswell’s publishing enterprise, observes Tremblay, was “the logical extension of the periodical” (Tremblay, “Fiddlehead”). Indeed, if Bailey had envisioned and initiated a form of cultural and literary activism that could foster a period of cultural ferment in southern New Brunswick, it was Cogswell who was eventually able to realize that vision. Cogswell’s efforts, observed George Woodcock in *The Literary History of Canada*, had created “a literary ambiance . . . of a kind that had never existed in this country before” (293).

According to Raymond Williams, each transition in the active values of “literature” in a given society “is a historical development of social language itself: finding new means, new forms, and then new definitions of a changing practical consciousness” (54). The product of a literary society that sought to broaden its cultural activism by providing a forum for mutual criticism, education, and exchange, *The Fiddlehead* was, from its inception, defined by its commitment to literary production as a democratic, communal, and fundamentally social practice. Emerging at mid-century.
during a period of growing social and economic unrest, the modernist cultural formation in New Brunswick spearheaded a form of literary modernism in the pages of the magazine in an attempt to reinvigorate the cultural and intellectual environment of the region. By challenging the literary and artistic modes of British Romanticism that predominated cultural production in the Maritime provinces, and by making their own work respond to the rapidly changing milieu in which they were writing, The Fiddlehead group succeeded in cultivating an active and vibrant literary community in Fredericton. Moreover, through their establishment and eventual expansion of The Fiddlehead, they were able to extend their efforts beyond the confines of the BCS and the local literary community in Fredericton, transforming their local efforts into a national enterprise while remaining committed to regional cultural development.

In Changing Concepts of Time, Harold Adams Innis asserts that “the conservative power of monopolies of knowledge compels the development of technological revolutions in the media of communication in the marginal areas” (78). As a province located on Canada’s geo-political periphery, New Brunswick was disadvantaged by its lack of access to a commercial press industry, but it was also well positioned for the development of alternative channels for the publication of literature like the little magazine (Tremblay, “School” 33). As a student of Innis, Bailey was aware of the potential for unconventional communications media like little magazines to engage broadly within the public sphere. Recognizing the absence of any established channels for the publication of poetry, especially modernist and avant-garde verse, Bailey and the other members of the BCS adopted the little magazine as a means of democratizing access to publication. Using the little magazine as a vehicle for their cultural activism, the
BCS formulated and advanced a conception of “tradition” that redefined the relationship between the literary and the social in New Brunswick. As the magazine expanded under the editorship of Cogswell, so too did the function of the magazine shift from fostering a local cultural community to serving as a forum for the publication of an eclectic mix of literature from across Canada and the world. Resisting the “trend towards centralization” that, according to Innis, accompanies “the development of... new medium[s] of communication,” the mid-century New Brunswick modernists moved beyond a strictly regional focus while continuing to foster regional culture (“Plea” 48). The result was that *The Fiddlehead* helped re-establish Fredericton as a centre for literary and cultural activity in Canada.

In the winter 1967 issue, the magazine’s seventieth number, Cogswell announced his retirement as editor of *The Fiddlehead*. Though Kent Thompson, the editor who succeeded Cogswell, would go on to continue the magazine’s legacy of helping to sustain both regional and national literary culture, the end of Cogswell’s term as editor of *The Fiddlehead* marked the end of one generation and the beginning of another. The BCS had ceased to exist in the early 1950s and hadn’t held regular meetings since the late 1940s. By 1967, the foundations of a new reading workshop had been established and would eventually lead to the establishment of the “Ice-House Gang,” a group that met every Tuesday night in McCord Hall on the UNB campus (Tremblay, *Richards* 127).

Furthermore, while Cogswell had extended the local efforts of the BCS by opening the pages of the magazine to emerging writers from across Canada and beyond, by the late 1960s the stature of the magazine and the number of submissions it received made it difficult for young and emerging New Brunswick writers to have their work regularly published.
published within its pages. As a result, a number of locally committed student-run magazines were established, including *Floorboards* in 1968 and *Urchin* in 1971 (Johnson). Under Thompson, Lucy Jarvis’s original cover art was replaced with a new design by Marjory Donaldson, the price per issue increased from sixty-cents to one-dollar and fifty-cents, the magazine grew to over one-hundred pages, and the magazine officially became a publication of UNB (Gibbs, “Portents” 12-13). While many of these developments were necessary in order to sustain the magazine, they were also signs that a new era had begun. The galvanizing energy that had provided the impetus for *The Fiddlehead*’s establishment in 1945 and its expansion in 1953 had been expended. The period of cultural ferment that had been initiated within its pages, however, saw the emergence of new generations of writers and inspired the establishment of a handful of similar publications throughout the Maritime provinces. The “cultural and intellectual vacuum” of the 1930s had been filled and *The Fiddlehead* had helped to fill it.
2. “In the Soil and Very Soul”: Little Magazines and Literary Ferment in Prince Edward Island

Awake, my country, the hour is great with change!
........................................................................................................
The hour of dreams is done. Lo, on the hill, the gleam!
– Charles G.D. Roberts, “An Ode for the Canadian Confederacy”

And I am an Island that
dreams and talks in its sleep
I will soon be only a place
for tourist dollars and nightmares
– Elaine Harrison, I am an Island that Dreams

On 8 November 1973, Prince Edward Island Premier Alex B. Campbell delivered an address to the Empire Club of Canada, the subject of which was the potential for “Cultural Revolution” in the midst of a rapidly changing technological environment. “Over the past several years,” Campbell declared, “all of us as Canadians, and as members of the North American cultural and economic environment, have been to a greater or lesser extent, party to a significant attitudinal change towards our culture” (2). Campbell’s remarks were apt; the technological modernization that had accompanied the era of post-war affluence, the recommendations made by the Massey-Levesque Commission and the creation of the Canada Council in 1957, and the welling up of cultural nationalism following Canada’s centennial in 1967, had all contributed to an unprecedented period of nation-wide “cultural ferment” (New 211). In 1973, however, Campbell’s mind was not on Canada’s centennial year, but on the centennial of Prince
Edward Island’s entrance into the Canadian Confederation. Furthermore, for Campbell, the attitudinal change toward culture resulted not from a realization of technological development’s capacity to better society, but from the exposure of the “fallacy that rapid industrialization necessarily produces a better quality of life” (5). In no province, observed Campbell, were citizens more acutely aware of this dispositional shift toward culture than in PEI, where industrialization had begun slowly, but had advanced rapidly in the post-war years. For Campbell, incautious modernization threatened to do to Prince Edward Island what George Grant had already proclaimed it had done to Canada: destroy local culture by homogenizing modern society into cultural uniformity (Grant 334). However, whereas for Grant such homogenization was a foregone conclusion, for Campbell the potentially deleterious effects of technological modernity were tempered by what he identified as the beginnings of a cultural revolution: “a revolution still in its incipient stages, but hopefully, about ready to blossom out into full bloom” (2).

If the cultural revolution Campbell had envisioned was to be measured by an increase in island literary, artistic, and publishing activity, he would not have to wait long. The 1970s saw an unparalleled period of cultural production on the island, with the creation of small publishing ventures, writers’ organizations, and arts councils, all of which served to bolster the efforts of island writers and artists by providing new outlets and support for literature and art. If the stirrings of this island renaissance could be located within any one medium, however, it was in PEI’s emergent literary magazines, *Katharsis* (1967-71), *The Square Deal* (1970-71), and *Sand Patterns* (1972-78), each of which helped to galvanize the island’s literary and arts communities. These magazines pioneered the publication of new forms of regionally committed and, often, politically
engaged literature. It was in the pages of these magazines that literary modernism and early examples of literary postmodernism first made an appearance on the island, replacing the Romantic pastoral of L.M. Montgomery’s *Anne* series that had become synonymous with Prince Edward Island in the Canadian popular imagination (J. Ledwell, “Modernism”; Frazer 77). As diverse as they were alike, these magazines engaged in dialogue with one another, often exhibiting strong differences in the social and cultural values they advanced. In spite of their differences, however, each of these magazines was committed to providing a channel for the publication and dissemination of island arts and literature where no such opportunity had previously existed.

As if to compensate for the preceding decades in which no local access to publication was available to emerging writers, three prominent little magazines emerged in Charlottetown over the course of five years. The first of these magazines, *Katharsis*, began as a centennial project in 1967. An annual publication that featured poetry, prose, and visual art, *Katharsis* lasted only four issues before going out of print in 1971. Its impact on local literary culture, however, was immense. In the pages of *Katharsis* a new generation of island writers appeared in print – most for the first time – alongside established writers from PEI and across Canada. *Katharsis* was soon followed by two other significant little magazines. In 1970, Réshard Gool and his wife Hilda Woolnough founded *The Square Deal*. Under the politically charged editorial direction of Gool, *The Square Deal* was a polemical magazine with a strong literary bias, featuring articles on political and social issues together with poetry, prose, and book reviews. Published monthly, *The Square Deal* lasted only a single year. During that time, however, the magazine served as a forum in which the cultural, social, and political changes that were
transforming PEI could be challenged, defended, and discussed. Finally, less polemical and more broadly inclusive than its predecessors, *Sand Patterns* was established by Allan Graham and Betty Campbell in 1972. While the impact of *Sand Patterns* was less immediate than its predecessors, it would serve as a lasting channel for the publication of literature and art throughout the 1970s. The longest running of PEI’s post mid-century little magazines, *Sand Patterns* ceased publication after its twenty-second issue in 1978.

Though relatively unknown and short-lived, these magazines, over the span of little more than a decade, provided the foundation for PEI’s thriving literary print culture in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, while the appearance of these magazines may have seemed sudden, the impetus for their creation had its roots in the profound socio-cultural changes that had begun in the preceding decades.

In fact, the unprecedented period of literary and cultural production that burgeoned in the 1970s had already been gaining momentum in the 1960s. The simultaneous rise of island writing and publishing coincided with broader social, cultural, and political forces that had been accelerating modernization in the post-war period, both within PEI and across Canada. The development of PEI’s cultural infrastructure during this period helped to facilitate the work of island cultural producers through the creation of key institutions and initiatives. Like other parts of Canada, PEI had benefitted from the federal funding of cultural activities that resulted from the recommendations of the Massey-Levesque Commission and the tangible support provided by the creation of the Canada Council in 1957 (Lemm 6). Furthermore, the opening of the federally chartered Confederation Centre for the Arts in Charlottetown in 1964, the creation of the PEI Centennial Committee that same year, and the formation of the PEI Centennial...
Commission in 1967 all helped to cultivate a sense of cultural regeneration on the island. In total, between 1964 and 1970, government funding for art galleries, museums, and related institutions increased nearly four-fold (MacLauchlan 7). In 1969, the amalgamation of Prince of Wales College (PWC) and St. Dunstan’s University (SDU) into the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) created a locus for collaboration between island intellectuals and cultural workers. Finally, that same year, the industrialization and modernization of PEI was elevated to the level of official government policy by Campbell’s Liberal Government under the auspices of the joint federal-provincial Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). The financial and cultural capital provided by these initiatives, in addition to the cultural and intellectual ferment that accompanied the modernization of PEI society, served to stimulate a broad array of literary activities, of which PEI’s little magazines were at the forefront.

The wide-ranging political, social, and cultural reforms of the 1950s and 1960s clearly had a direct impact on the establishment of alternative print publications in PEI. It would be wrong, however, to assume that PEI’s little magazines were simply outgrowths of a generalized receptiveness to technological modernity. Rather, the catalyst for the establishment of these magazines was as much a part of the “retrospective zeitgeist” that reacted against the secularization and modernization of PEI as it was a product of the celebratory fervour with which some islanders embraced change (MacDonald, “UPEI”). Among those historical questions that resurfaced in the consciousness of islanders in the
The post-war era was the “PEI Land Question.” Self-reliance and ownership on the island had been hard won after nearly a century of absentee land ownership. This was a system of land tenure that had effectively ended with PEI’s entrance into Confederation in 1873, the effects of which had nevertheless persisted in the island’s collective psyche. The “Land Question” had begun in 1767 with the allocation by the British government of “virtually all of PEI” to private proprietors, on the condition that those proprietors take responsibility for the colonization and development of that land (Bumstead, “PEI Land Question”). As J.M. Bumstead observes, however, “most proprietors remained absentees, their quitrents perpetually in arrears and their colonizing obligations unfulfilled” (“Land Question”). In spite of unrest among PEI’s “disadvantaged and oppressed” tenantry, who viewed absentee proprietorship as an “indignity” and “an affront to their sense of freedom,” the system endured until the creation of the Compulsory Land Purchase Act in 1875 (Baglole and Weale 63-4). With the Land Question effectively resolved, the island community began to experience “an increasing sense of independence and optimism” as island farmers were finally able to call the land they worked their own (Baglole and Weale 69). By the 1970s, however, new changes threatened to replace that “robust spirit of independence” with “a spirit of passivity and dependence” (Weale 5).

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1 The 1970s saw the publication of several books of Island history – most notably *End of an Era: Prince Edward Island's Resistance to Confederation* (1973) by Harry Baglole and David Weale – each of which revisited PEI’s history of absentee land proprietorship and its resistance to Confederation.
In spite of the many benefits modernization brought to islanders, the introduction of external, predominantly American cultural influences, in the form of music, literature, and television and radio programming, threatened to eclipse many indigenous aspects of island culture. Edward MacDonald describes modernization in PEI as “a process, both material and profoundly cultural,” and one that fundamentally altered the cultural milieu of PEI during the post-war era: “[Prince Edward Islanders] were inheritors of a tradition-heavy rural culture that in certain respects had changed very little for hundreds of years. It was this culture, poor but self-sufficient, insular, deliberate, oral in nature, that disintegrated after 1945” (226). Foremost amongst the new cultural influences was the proliferation of television, a medium that “devastated” the island’s oral folk culture (MacDonald 253). As Jane Ledwell observes, “until the middle of the 20th century, the most important mode for communicating local identity through history, stories, and poetry was neither written nor published but oral” (“Oral to Written”). While it would be easy to overstate the impact that the advent of the television had on island identity, by dissolving the significance of geographical borders and thus opening the island to a deluge of outside cultural influences, the spread of mass communications media on the island had profoundly altered the tradition of oral storytelling.

Nevertheless, if the new developments in mass communications media signalled the disintegration of many of the island’s traditional cultural practices, the impact of these new media also compelled the development of alternative print publications in the form of the little magazine. According to Marshall McLuhan, “in moving into the electronic age where all is simultaneous, we also become more sensitive to the values and unused possibilities of print” (“Printing and Social Change” 1959). Accordingly, the proliferation
of television\textsuperscript{2} and the accelerated development on PEI of what Walter Ong has referred to as “secondary orality” – “a new orality . . . sustained by telephone, radio, television, and other electronic devices that depend for their existence and functioning on writing and print” (10-11) – did not result in the loss of PEI’s traditional narratives. Rather, the advent of PEI’s little magazines saw the introduction of new literary forms that integrated the formal experimentation of literary modernism and the content of traditional folk narratives that had previously been a part of PEI’s oral culture. As editor Frank Ledwell observes in the first issue of \textit{Katharsis}, though “the whole world has become our backyard, lying within easy reach of our nearest communications button,” the modern poet is not “out of touch with the past. He can’t avoid it; he is a product of it” (53).

As Walter Ong contends, “writing . . . is a particularly pre-emptive and imperialist activity that tends to assimilate other things to itself even without the aid of etymologies” (11). The preoccupation evident in PEI’s little magazines with recording and preserving island culture within the strictures of poetry and prose thus evinces the tendency of literature to “construe the message of oral and non-written culture” (McLuhan, \textit{Understanding} 15). Accordingly, Jane Ledwell has observed that as a result of the transition from an orally-biased culture to a literacy-biased culture in PEI, the “preservation of previously oral stories has been an important part of literary tradition in the latter half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century” (“Oral to Written”). It was this concern with the

\textsuperscript{2} MacDonald notes that between 1953-1961 the number of families owning at least a single television set skyrocketed from 1 to 16,500, or 70\% of island households (253)
conservation of PEI’s cultural heritage on the one hand, and the desire to make island poetry and prose respond to the rapidly changing regional and national milieu on the other, that defined the earliest post-war forays into little magazine publishing in PEI. “If 1967 just begins to bring us to an awareness of our own past, we shall be the better for it,” writes fiction editor Kenneth Hodge in the opening issue of *Katharsis*, “but if 1967 brings only new beginnings, and permits us to lose our past forever, then we can only cease to be” (4). In 1967, however, *Katharsis* had only just begun and it would be another four years before it would “cease to be.”

The first issue of *Katharsis* appeared in 9.75” x 7” format, ran to 59 pages, and included poetry, fiction, and art from sixteen contributors. Selected from nearly two-hundred submissions, the contributions came primarily from students and faculty at SDU. The issue did, however, include international submissions as well as fiction and art submissions from island writers and artists outside the university community. In the inaugural issue, students Rick Hancox and Kenneth Hodge are listed as the magazine’s editors, with Adrien Arsenault, Frank Ledwell, and Brendan O’Grady forming the magazine’s advisory board. However, it was Ledwell who was chiefly responsible for the magazine’s creation and who would go on to edit all subsequent issues, with artist Henry Purdy designing the layout and acting as editorial assistant. A native of St. Peter’s Bay, PEI, Ledwell was a professor of English Literature at SDU and, later, at UPEI (Martin S13). Though he had been ordained as a Catholic priest, Ledwell left the priesthood in 1969. According to island poet and critic Richard Lemm, in the late 1950s, “Ledwell was beginning a career that saw him become one of the most influential and valued teachers of creative writing through several decades on PEI” (96). Ledwell had established the
Creative writing course at SDU and instituted a similar course at UPEI in 1969 (Calendar 1969-1970 76). By 1971 Ledwell was teaching two courses in creative writing: "391 - the development of a narrative style" and "392 - the development of a poetic expression" (Calendar 1971-1972 126). Ledwell’s creative writing courses put him in touch with the island’s emerging poets and prose writers, many of whom would have their work featured in Katharsis.

In addition to his work at the university, Ledwell’s involvement in island literary circles also put him in contact with artists and writers not associated with SDU, including the artist Henry Purdy and the poet Milton Acorn. In the late 1960s, Ledwell, Arsenault, and Purdy would get together each week at the home of Jim and Connie Little to converse and recite poetry (Lemm 151). Jim Little was the curator of the Confederation Centre Gallery and Connie Little was a poet. Acorn joined the group in 1968 (Lemm 150). Not unlike the creative collaboration and socializing that had characterized the Bliss Carman Society in Fredericton, this informal literary group would provide a stimulus for the creation of the magazine, and each member would later contribute poetry and/or art to Katharsis. Moreover, Ledwell’s involvement with literary and arts communities provided him with key contacts outside the university community. These contacts allowed Katharsis to obtain submissions from a broad range of contributors, making the magazine more “culturally representative,” an aim Ledwell expressed in a call for submissions for the second issue (qtd. in Hornby 6). Nevertheless, it was SDU and then UPEI that facilitated many of the cultural initiatives associated with the magazine, including poetry readings and the Vibrations Creative Arts Festival, with SDU hosting the inaugural 1967 launch of Katharsis at which Canadian poet A.J.M. Smith was
a special guest (“Canadian Poet” 1). The date of the launch, 1967, was not incidental, for
the first issue of Katharsis was launched as a commemorative centennial publication.

Evidencing a strong editorial bias toward the conventions of literary modernism,
confronting directly the social and political conditions of the society out of which it
emerged, and articulating a balance between localism and cosmopolitanism, Katharsis
gave expression to the coincident feelings of anxiety and expectancy with which many
island writers greeted the Canadian centennial year. In many ways it was a prototypical
little magazine in the most restrictive sense: short-lived, committed to experiment,
financially precarious, and antipathetic to commercialism. However, it was also
institutionally affiliated, counted two Catholic priests among its editors (Ledwell and
Arsenault), and was launched as a government-funded commemorative Centennial
project. Thus, when the first issue of Katharsis was launched in April of 1967, it seemed
to embody the contradictions that its editors identified at the heart of the Canadian
Centennial which the magazine was supposed to be celebrating.

The editor’s adoption of the “commemorative” designation was anything but
benign. “We are a nation who has forgotten our history,” writes Hodge, “who have been
encouraged to distort or forget our history by our own historians, politicians, and hate
merchants” (4). Poetry editor Rick Hancox’s caustic poem “Happy Centennial” prefaces
the first issue and adds a level of irony to Hodge’s assurance that a “Canadian identity”
can be found in the pages of Katharsis – “read – here is your identity” (5). Hancox’s
poem is representative of much of the work of the younger island poets appearing in the
first issue:

Grasping brown hands

70
Emerging  like rotting tumors
Growing    at the ends of skinny wrists
Rolling    the sickly veteran
Clutches   among red rotten bed-sores
Clutches   his maple leaf
            and sings
            God
Save the   King

Through typographic arrangement and syntax, Hancox juxtaposes two contradictory visions of Canadian society. The actions of the poem, particularly “emerging,” “growing,” and “rolling,” are suggestive of growth and dynamism, sharply contrasting with the concrete images of “rotting tumors,” “skinny wrists,” and “rotten bedsores,” which evoke a sense of decay and despair. The effect is a disconnection between a forward-looking official rhetoric of optimism, neatly justified along the left margin and associated via the title with the Canadian Centennial, and the stark reality presented on the right and associated with death and forgetting. On the page adjacent to Hancox’s poem appears a charcoal line drawing by island artist Henry Purdy depicting two nude figures, a man sitting with his head lowered toward the viewer and a woman, some distance behind the man, standing with her back to the viewer. The contrasting postures of the two figures, one actively looking backward and the other passively facing forward, reinforce the contrast drawn in “Happy Centennial.” The juxtaposition of the poem and illustration thus provides a good example of the way in which the placement of literature and artwork were used by Katharsis’s editors to create an interplay between the textual and the visual, reinforcing the magazine’s polemics.
Nowhere does visual and textual interplay set off the magazine’s polemics more clearly than on the cover of the first issue. An assemblage piece by Henry Purdy, the cover art on *Katharsis* 1.1 features PEI artist Robert Harris’s painting *The Fathers of Confederation* with an “x” drawn over the face of Sir John A. Macdonald, above which is scribbled Charles De Gaulle’s infamous phrase “Vive le Québec libre.”3 On the bottom right, in the brush script typeface popular in 1950s tourism ads, is a clipping that reads “there’s no way like the American way.” Superimposed around and over parts of the image are several newspaper clippings featuring quotations such as “$5 million gets the US its first Leonardo” and “The Canada Council Grant did enable him to soak up everything in New York.” The image thus powerfully evokes the same skepticism toward cultural selection, commemoration, and tourism expressed by the magazine’s literary contributors. Furthermore, the placement of the horse’s head from Pablo Picasso’s *Guernica* above Harris’s painting, suggestive of an outgrowth, draws an association between the Centennial celebrations and fascistic nationalism. As a result, the cover of this “commemorative” centennial project, as the first issue of *Katharsis* was dubbed, is patently and deliberately anti-commemorative.

3 “Vive le Québec libre” (“long live free Quebec”), a slogan of the Quebec separatist movement, was a phrase used in a speech delivered by French President Charles de Gaulle from the balcony of Montreal City Hall on 24 July 1967. De Gaulle was visiting Montreal for Expo 67, a World’s Fair and Canada’s main centennial-year celebration. De Gaulle’s impromptu speech, which implied his and France’s support for Quebec separatism, caused a great deal of controversy in Canada and also “lent his worldwide prestige to the Québec independence movement” (Axworthy).
The antagonism Purdy and Hancox express towards the celebratory nature of the
Centennial is perhaps unsurprising. PEI writers were well attuned to the contradictions
that lurked beneath the collective remembrance of centenary celebrations; the Canadian
centennial of 1967 was neither the first centennial celebration on the island nor would it
be the last. A decade of centennials had begun with the 1964 commemoration of the
Charlottetown Conference, and the provincial government officially designated PEI “the
place to be in ’73” in preparation for the centenary of PEI’s entrance into Confederation
(MacDonald 318). In 1967, many island writers perceived the paradox: PEI, which had
long held Confederation responsible for regional disparity, was now celebrating the
centenary of the 1867 Confederation that it hadn’t entered until 1873. For many of the
contributors to the first issue of Katharsis, the collective remembering of the centennial
commemorations was accompanied by a form of collective forgetting. In Adrien
Arsenault’s short, elegiac poem “What Plight,” for instance, the speaker asks “What vow
shall I choose to forget / In atrophying exercise of memory” (3-4). John O’Malley’s
fragmented and non-linear dramatic piece, “From See to Se,” incorporates a disjointed
and quibbling conversation between Marshall McLuhan, George Grant, Donald
Creighton, Laurier LaPierre, and others about Canadian “identity” and Canada’s future
(11). Irreverent as Arsenault’s poem is solemn, O’Malley’s piece parodies the centennial-era obsession with defining “the” Canadian identity.

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4 With an average personal income of just $2188.00, the lowest of any province in Canada, PEI replaced
Newfoundland as “Canada’s poorest province” in 1971 (MacDonald 307)
Nevertheless, while the work of Hancox, Arsenault, and O’Malley sets the political tone of the first issue, it is Frank Ledwell’s essay “Poetry for a New Generation” that most fully articulates the magazine’s literary and aesthetic commitments. Ledwell’s initial characterization of contemporary poetry suggests an enduring commitment to the imagistic poetics of the early twentieth century; the modern poet, contends Ledwell, “concentrates more upon the significances of single words and of short collected images than upon poetic form and structures” (54). The name of the magazine similarly evidences a fidelity to literary modernism, with the definition provided at the back of the magazine suggesting a concern with objectivity and “rational order”: 

A writer often alleviates the fears and complexes of daily life by building somewhat of a rational order into a course of events, and by bringing it to the level of objective consciousness. In [this] sense, Katharsis seems to capture the spirit of our publication. (59)

Nevertheless, though drawing on the literature and criticism of Eliot and Yeats, Ledwell not only describes the poetry of Katharsis in relation to the high modernists of the first half of the twentieth century, but also gestures toward the development of a new idiom for post-mid-century poetics, one that anticipates postmodern and deconstructionist skepticism: “The poet of our generation is not content with the visionary idealism of Yeats nor with the occult realism of Eliot. He goes a lot further; he wants to strip truths down to their naked bones and examine their very skeleton with his delicate existential microscope” (53).

The forms and styles of the poetry and prose published in Katharsis reveal a marked shift away from the Romanticism that had previously pervaded the island’s
mainstream culture. If, in New Brunswick, Romanticism had been most closely associated with the Confederation School of Poets, in Prince Edward Island it was the fiction of Lucy Maud Montgomery that seemed to epitomize the decorous, whimsical, and sentimental prose that was anathema to modernist sensibilities. As Carole Gerson observes, in the 1940s and 1950s, “Montgomery was demoted by the rigorous mid-century modernists who . . . attempted to purge the Canadian canon of writing they regarded as sentimental, popular, or feminine” (18). Gerson points to the criticism of Desmond Pacey as exemplary of such emetic censure. Indeed, in his *Creative Writing in Canada*, Pacey dismissed Montgomery’s work as having “all the features of the kind of escape literature which a materialistic and vulgar generation craved” (106). Much recent debate has pointed toward the fact that Montgomery’s fiction was not, in fact, as antipathetic toward the project of literary modernism as early criticism had suggested (Lefebvre 126). Nevertheless, regarded as a feminine and “domestic” Romantic, Montgomery found little acceptance among Canada’s masculinist mid-century modernists, and it was not until the late 1970s that her work began to receive serious critical attention (Gerson 20).

Island writers in the 1960s and 70s were not nearly as derisive toward Montgomery’s fiction as were their mainland counterparts. Montgomery was, in fact, considered by island modernists to be a crucial figure in PEI’s literary tradition, in spite of her devotion to Romanticism. For instance, in addition to reviving interest in such early island writers as Elizabeth Lockerby, Basil King, and Lucy Gertrude Clarkin, Allan Graham’s 1974 *Island Writers’ Series* exhibits an especial regard for Montgomery and her work (11). Nevertheless, Montgomery posited a romanticized image of the island that
seemed to the island's modernists to be entirely out of touch with the realities of island life and modernity. Moreover, the popular success of the Anne Shirley series to the exclusion of other island writers, and the resulting commodification of the series by the island's tourism industry, threatened to reduce popular perception of island culture to a series of stereotypes to be sold as dolls, fridge magnets, and red braided wigs. While Montgomery's reception among academic critics was just beginning in the 1970s, the commodification of images taken from her fiction was already well underway by the 1950s and 60s. As Janice Fiamengo observes, "the tourist trips and profusion of dolls and souvenirs . . . have spawned a massive Montgomery industry" (226). That industry has existed since the publication of *Anne of Green Gables* in 1908, but in the 1960s and 70s a rising tide of Anne-of-Green-Gableism was driven by the implementation of economic development initiatives under the CDP, initiatives aimed at the growth of the island's tourism industry. So it is that in Elaine Harrison's celebrated poem "I am an island that Dreams," the speaker, representative of the island, forecasts: "I will soon be only a place / for tourist dollars and nightmares" (28).

Rejecting the rhetoric of economic necessity behind rapid industrial growth and expansion of the island's tourism industry, many writers, including Hancox, O'Malley, and Harrison, positioned their own poetic in opposition to the official narrative of beneficent modernization. They were not opposed to modernization, but they were markedly suspicious of the rapidity and objectives of socio-cultural change and cultural selection. For most contributors to *Katharsis*, modernist and postmodernist forms were more conducive to an exploration of such change than were traditional forms and Romanticism. These explorations did not, however, necessarily involve polemical attacks
against the transformation of island society. Ledwell’s own poetry, for instance, is less concerned with inveighing against the dominant narrative of industrial prosperity than it is with providing positive articulations of PEI’s cultural heritage. In his preface to The North Shore of Home, the titular poem of which was included in the first issue of Katharsis, Ledwell describes the incorporation of island folk tradition as a distillation of PEI’s cultural heritage. Ledwell’s intention is, “through a few selective brush strokes of tonality and attitude combined with still life portraits of some of the people who lived that history in that setting, to paint a generation as truthfully as possible” (2).

Ledwell was not naive about the consistency of the quality of the verse published in Katharsis – the first issue drew from a relatively limited pool of submissions – but he was optimistic, and rightfully so. Recognizing that many of the younger contributors were still in the process of discovering and developing a distinct poetic voice, Ledwell asserts that “our younger poets are challenging themselves to seek out a style of their own – a rhetoric competent to register the full range of their embryonic feelings, and yet one which will carry those feelings into clarity” (55). Ledwell’s comments, it would seem, reveal as much about the magazine’s commitment to cultivating the talent of emerging poets as they do about the aesthetics of contemporary poetry. While most of the poetry eschewed formal structure and while much of it was unconventional in its use of fragmentation, parody, and iconoclasm, its affinity with both modernist and postmodern literary conventions was more symbiotic than strictly formal. Rather, it was the desire of these young poets to develop a poetics which could give expression to the nascent energy that accompanied the modernization of PEI society that most readily defined their relationship to literary modernism. It was, generally speaking, a socially conscious
literature that resulted from the attempts of these young writers to navigate the precipitous transformation of the society in which they lived. They were involved in a form of cultural insurrection against the dominant cultural narratives propagated by the provincial and federal governments and the business sector, each of which seemed to advocate sacrificing self-sufficiency and autonomy for economic prosperity. The little magazine, then, served as a medium for the dissemination of new literary forms that contested, challenged, and at times defended the dominant cultural practices of island society. Ledwell’s identification of a newly emergent energy within the poetry of *Katharsis* thus captures the dual sense of anticipation and skepticism toward rapid change which many of the magazine’s contributors expressed through their poetry and prose.

Of course, not all of the contributors were concerned with articulating the relationship between regional and national identities, or between the traditional and the avant-garde. Nor was all of the poetry in *Katharsis* written in formally unconventional free verse. E.J. Milne’s “In Praise of Older Forms,” for instance, takes as its form the Petrarchan sonnet and as its subject a defense of traditional metered verse. The poem is, in fact, strongly reminiscent of Fred Cogswell’s “In Praise of Old Music,” published nearly twenty years earlier in *The Fiddlehead*. While much of the poetry in *Katharsis* concerns itself directly or indirectly with island culture, other poems have little to nothing to do with PEI. Frank Turgeon’s “St. Catherine St. 3:35 a.m.,” for instance, is about Montreal, while Fernando Vidal’s “¿Moris morir moris Ay-morir?” is a poem that mixes English and Spanish in a meditation on death and the intellect. Furthermore, by the Spring 1970 issue, *Katharsis* had begun to receive more submissions from writers and poets across Canada. Notably, the work of nationally renowned poets Dorothy Livesay, 78
Frank Davey, and Milton Acorn appeared in the magazine’s third issue. Nevertheless, *Katharsis* maintained its commitment to local literary communities by continuing to publish emerging writers and by increasing the number of established PEI poets included in the third and fourth issues. In addition to work of such writers as Brent MacLaine, Leon Brouillard, Ted Kulik, Jim Hornby, and Frank Turgeon, promising writers of PEI’s younger generation, there appeared the poetry and prose of more established island writers, including Ledwell, Florence Roper, Moncrieff Williamson, Connie Little, Réshard Gool, John Smith, and Betty Campbell. By the fourth issue, *Katharsis* had published most of the island’s leading writers in addition to the artwork of many prominent island artists, including Henry Purdy and Hilda Woolnough. The fourth issue, however, would also be the magazine’s last. Faced with a lack of funding, the magazine went out of print in 1971.

On 10 June 1970, a review of *Katharsis* 1970 written by poet Luella Booth appeared in the first issue of *The Square Deal*. The review, which commends *Katharsis* for its “mixture of beginners and more mature works,” is especially acclamatory of the magazine’s willingness to publish untried forms by unestablished writers: “Here we see talent in the raw, in the primary stages of development” (8). Booth is less enthusiastic about the work of Acorn and Davey, though she does applaud Livesay’s “change of style” over the past several years (8). While Booth’s specific critiques are too general to be of any great critical value, the tenor of her review, which elevates process, development, and social awareness over mastery of technique, was fitting for the first issue of *The Square Deal*, which aimed “to solidly promote, criticize, and generally discuss and publish all aspects of the arts on PEI” (Turgeon 8). *The Square Deal* was, like
Katharsis, dedicated to fostering and showcasing the work of PEI's emergent writers and artists. Accompanying the magazine's commitment to promoting all forms of island literature and arts was a conviction that the quality of literature and art on the island was worthy of publication and of serious criticism.

Indeed, the growing number of writers who had coalesced in Charlottetown and found an outlet for their work in Katharsis represented more than a transitory surge of literary activity on the island. The growth of PEI's literary and arts communities marked the beginnings of a cultural movement that was both pioneering and deeply rooted in the island's cultural heritage. Frank Turgeon, a regular contributor to Katharsis and The Square Deal's art editor, expresses this conviction in The Square Deal's inaugural art editorial:

[To] spite all of the lofty and pedantic preambles that find their way into the works of the scholar, the critic, the creator, or even the man in the street, let us make one bold and pointed assertion: The Arts, like a community of squatters, have firmly imbedded their spirit in the soil and very soul of Prince Edward Island. (8)

Playing on an ironic reference to the Land Question, Turgeon thus affirmed, three years prior to Campbell's address, the burgeoning of PEI's literature and art. The "cultural revolution" Campbell had thought to be in its incipient stages was, in fact, well under way by 1973. In his feature editorial prefacing the first issue, Réshard Gool confirmed Turgeon's confidence in PEI's cultural growth, declaring that local writers and artists "have given birth to a dynamic new cultural life on Prince Edward Island" (4). "Through the pages of The Square Deal," writes Gool, "we hope to keep our readers in touch with
these new developments” (4). In addition to the review of Katharsis, the Arts Section of The Square Deal’s first issue contained reviews of the Confederation Centre for the Arts’ dramatic production of Jane Eyre, a review article on the art of local artist Neil Burnett, and poetry and prose from Milton Acorn, Brian Fitzgerald, and Susan Harris. The diversity and quantity of cultural activities documented in the early issues of The Square Deal are themselves a testament to the growth of PEI’s literary and arts culture in the 1960s and 1970s.

Significantly, many of the same individuals who contributed to Katharsis were central to the formation of The Square Deal. While Stephen Foster is listed as the magazine’s editor-in-chief in the first four issues of The Square Deal, it was Hilda Woolnough and her husband Réshard Gool, both of whom had published regularly in Katharsis, who founded the magazine. Gool would go on to edit all subsequent issues and Woolnough would take responsibility, along with Allan Graham, for the magazine’s circulation. The Square Deal’s arts editor, Turgeon; its business manager, Connie Little; and a number of others credited with having brought The Square Deal to fruition, including Ledwell, Fitzgerald, and Acorn, had all been a part of the literary circle that had spawned Katharsis. Thus, in the same way that The Fiddlehead served as a vehicle for New Brunswick’s mid-century modernists, so too did Katharsis and The Square Deal provide fulcrums for the galvanization of PEI’s literary and arts communities.

The result of this confluence of creative energies was a closely knit collective of writers and artists mutually committed to the publication, preservation, and renewal of island culture. According to Michael Levenson, such collective efforts speak “to the positive conditions of a modernism of small social cells” (Cambridge Companion 6).
Such “positive conditions,” in turn, form the basis for what Levenson refers to as “the micro-sociology of modernist innovation, within which small groups of artists . . . sustain their resolve – or, more than sustain, . . . create small flourishing communities based on the powers of reciprocal acknowledgement” (6). It was precisely such a network of writers and artists that came together to engage in the composition and publication of literature in PEI’s little magazines. During the early 1970s, the house of Woolnough and Gool on University Avenue in Charlottetown served as a nucleus for the island’s literary and arts communities. There the two would host readings by writers and poets from PEI and across Canada, many of whom, such as Al Purdy and Luella Booth, had been brought there by Acorn. PEI arts and literary communities were not without their internal conflicts or divisions, but they were firmly united by a common interest in fostering a thriving literary culture on the island. The public manifestations of that common purpose were little magazines, and after the demise of Katharsis, Woolnough and Gool continued that effort in the pages of The Square Deal.

Woolnough, an English-born Canadian, was an accomplished visual artist and cultural activist who moved to PEI with Gool in 1962. In 1969, Gool began teaching in the political science department at UPEI (Lane 442). Born in London, England, and raised in South Africa, Gool came from a multi-racial background, which, according to Richard Lemm, “had a history of political resistance to racial and economic oppression”5

5 Outside PEI Gool has been better known for his contribution to Canada’s growing body of South Asian Canadian writing than for his editorial and publishing activities. Gool’s novels include Price (1976),
While *The Square Deal* demonstrated a strong literary bias, the primary motivation for its establishment was not the dissemination of literature and art. Rather, it was what Gool identified as the “monopolistic control of the press in the Maritimes,” and its deleterious effects on the coverage of local political and social issues, that prompted the creation of *The Square Deal* (“Editorial” 4). By the 1970s, English-language print media on PEI was dominated by the “Thomson Fleet,” which had acquired PEI’s leading newspaper, *The Guardian*, in 1954 (“The Guardian”). While the monopoly was not as severe as Gool supposed – in 1977 Thomson Co. controlled only 68% of print media in PEI compared with the almost complete monopoly (90.2%) held by the Irving family in New Brunswick at that time (Royal Commission 8) – it was enough to provoke Gool into action. The result of Thompson’s majority control, argued Gool, was consistently biased and insufficient coverage of PEI’s political and social problems. In addition, the apathy of PEI’s mainstream print media toward local cultural initiatives and the demise of *Katharsis* in 1971 further emphasized the need for alternative print publications such as *The Square Deal*.

For Gool, the dearth of alternative print media on the island willing to devote space to literature, arts, and an honest discussion of political and social issues was an effect of the broader cultural colonization of the Maritime region. This conviction was

*Nemesis Casket* (1979), and the posthumously published *Cape Town Coolie* (1990), which explore the political and racial climates of mid-century South Africa (*Price* and *Cape Town Coolie*) and Canada (*Nemesis Casket*).
later expressed in his essay “The Overwhelming Question,” in which Gool posed what he saw as the central question facing the Maritimes in the mid-1970s: “If Quebec goes – manages to leave our present degrading form of Confederation – should the Maritimes follow?” (162). Adopting a position akin to that of Pierre Elliot Trudeau and rejecting the sort of separatist sentiments expressed by Pierre Vallières in Nègres blancs d'Amérique (1968), Gool’s answer was no, for “equality of regions, races, nations” cannot come from “fragmenting, separating; nor will it come from eliminating differences, from centralization or standardization” (165). With regards to literature and arts, it was the centripetal force of cultural hegemony that most threatened PEI’s cultural growth: “In terms of broadcasting and the arts,” wrote Gool, “the [Maritime] region has been totally colonized” (“Overwhelming” 163). The Square Deal was thus founded as a solution not only to the local media monopoly, but also to the broader problem of cultural colonization threatened by the centralization of mass media communications in Canada. The Square Deal, then, aimed to provide both an outlet for island literature and arts and a forum for the dissemination and discussion of alternative and unorthodox socio-political thought. In fact, for Gool, literature and socio-political activism were inseparable: “Writing is one of the highest activities of living,” wrote Gool, and “the wand of the imagination alone can touch civil order with the cures of purpose, coherence, and meaning” (Gool qtd. in Lane 443). In effect, Gool believed that politics, economics, and culture were indissoluble elements of social practice and he held that the purposes of cultural regeneration and social reform were indivisible. Accordingly, The Square Deal was defined by its commitment to the publication and criticism of PEI literature and arts,
on the one hand, and to the coverage and discussion of political, economic, and social issues, on the other.

By the third issue, the Arts Section of *The Square Deal* had begun focusing closely on two or three poets, providing a brief critical-biographical introduction and a selection of poetry from each. While *The Square Deal* did not commit itself to any particular aesthetic or literary mode, the majority of the poetry printed in its pages came from the same poets who had published in *Katharsis* and thus reflected a fidelity to literary modernism. Nevertheless, a number of new poets were also introduced in the pages of *The Square Deal*. These included both published and unpublished poets, as well as young emerging writers. In addition to the work of Ledwell, Acorn, Gool, Woolnough, Brouillard, Smith, and Fitzgerald, there appeared the work of Leone Ross, Paul Inman, Ferne Peake (posthumously), and others. The literary content of *The Square Deal*, however, was not confined to poetry, which actually accounted for a relatively small portion of the magazine’s content. Rather, criticism and reviews of literature, art, drama, and music constituted the majority of the magazine’s arts content. Such articles, like the original art and literature published in the magazine, evinced a manifestly regional focus. Gool’s “Island Portraits” column provided a detailed biographical sketch of “interesting people from across the Island” (Gool, “McAusland” 2). Similarly, Ledwell’s regular column “PEI Gastroscopes” provided a different anecdote or folk story, written in colloquial PEI dialect, in each issue. Less esoteric and more idiomatic than the poetry and prose in the Arts Section, the columns of Ledwell and Gool are demonstrative of their desire to include a broad range of content for a variety of readers. Later collected in a book published by Gool’s Square Deal Publications, these regular columns also reveal a
strong editorial concern with localism and are indicative of the magazine’s ambition to engage directly with citizens across PEI. Reinforcing that concern were the free advertising space *The Square Deal* provided to individuals, the collective and volunteer-run nature of its production, and the editors’ policy of printing articles from a wide range of political viewpoints.

Complementing the magazine’s literary and arts content were extensive and often highly polemical articles from diverse contributors covering a range of cultural and political issues. Like the poetry and prose published in *The Square Deal*, the political, economic, and ecological commentary published there was predominantly regional in its focus. “The Ombudsman” column, for instance, aimed to provide readers—who were invited to write to the editor with questions or concerns—with resources and contacts necessary to combat issues such as unfair or hazardous labour practices, workplace inequity, and discrimination. The unfair wages paid to workers in PEI’s growing tourism industry, an industry vigorously promoted under the CDP, was a recurring theme in “The Ombudsman” column. In fact, many major articles in *The Square Deal* dealt with the effects of the neoliberal policies and values that accompanied PEI’s accelerating industrialization. While Gool noted that “most of [the staff of *The Square Deal*] accept the basic idea of the economic development plan,” he also asserted that “democratic government needs the criticism of an effective and vocal opposition” (“Editorial” 4).

Unlike the island’s commercial newspapers, *The Square Deal* provided a great deal of such opposition. The neglected socio-economic problems affecting the Lennox Island First Nation (issue 1), the ecological impacts of pollution associated with industrial development (issues 2, 4, 11), and the state of daycare services and public education in
the province (issues 3-5, 7, 10) are a few of the more prominent local issues to have been addressed by *The Square Deal* contributors. In addition to provincial coverage, regular guest columns covered national issues, most notably the October crisis and the FLQ, both of which received detailed coverage in the magazine’s 6th and 7th issues. A news-in-brief page titled “The World Scene” also appeared at the back of the magazine and provided brief discussions of world events.

In most issues, the portion of non-literary content far exceeded the amount of poetry and prose, raising the question of whether *The Square Deal* was a “literary” magazine at all. In fact, the magazine was not primarily a literary magazine, but it was undoubtedly a little magazine that challenged conventional cultural and political practices on the island while maintaining a strong literary bias. Furthermore, it was deeply informed by Gool’s conviction that “politics is but a form of art . . . essentially open-textured and various, embracing, in different eras and different countries, different contents” (“Politics” 92). This was a conviction that was reflected in the magazine’s publication of literary non-fiction and of politically charged articles by writers and poets such as Acorn, Ledwell, and Gool himself. *The Square Deal*, then, mediated between the fields of political and cultural expression, escaping conventional definitions as either a literary review or a public interest magazine, but contributing greatly to the emergence and dissemination of socially and politically conscious literature on the island.

In the eleventh issue of *The Square Deal*, Gool announced that the magazine would take a hiatus for several months until enough funds had been raised to publish further issues. Evidently, the editors were unable to raise the necessary funding as Gool decided to focus his energies on the small press, Square Deal Publications, which he had
founded in conjunction with the magazine in 1971. Initially, *The Square Deal* had been financed with assistance from UPEI and an Opportunities for Youth grant (McCutcheon 96). The magazine had also been printed in the relatively economical format of Berliner daily papers in order to avoid high production costs. Nevertheless, low production costs were offset by the fact that each issue sold for only $0.15, more than a daily newspaper, but far less than the average magazine. As a result, the cost of printing and the constant need for more volunteers meant that Gool and the editorial staff were unable to sustain the magazine when the OFY grant ran out (Gool, “Editorial” 2). Beset by financial difficulties from the outset, *The Square Deal* ceased publication after only one year. In spite of its transitory existence, the magazine and its editors had made a marked contribution to local print culture by providing a forum for the dissemination of literature, ideas, and opinions that had been excluded from the island’s mainstream print media.

Within the span of five years, *Katharsis* and *The Square Deal* had helped to initiate an unprecedented period of literary and arts activity on the island and it was not long before the void left by the demise of those magazines was filled. Just months after the publication of *The Square Deal’s* final issue, the first issue of *Sand Patterns* appeared in print. Its editors were poets Allan Graham, a local teacher and the former manager of circulation for *The Square Deal*, and Betty Campbell, a regular contributor to both *Katharsis* and *The Square Deal*. The first issue of the magazine, released in the spring of 1972, contained no editorial comment, forward, or preface. In fact, no editorial would appear in the magazine until a commemorative issue was released more than a decade later in 1983. In its initial issues *Sand Patterns* contained only poetry, prose, and line drawings without contributors’ notes, articles, or critical comment of any kind. The
magazine thus starkly contrasted with *Katharsis* and *The Square Deal*, both of which contained critical and polemical prose pieces in addition to literature. To a certain extent, the absence of editorial comment and the relaxed standards of Sand Pattern's editorial board were suggestive of a lack of editorial direction, but the magazine's broad inclusiveness was also indicative of its central purpose. Even more than their predecessors, the editors of *Sand Patterns* were fundamentally concerned with getting island writers of all ages and skill levels into print.

Like its forerunners, *Sand Patterns* represented the collective efforts of a small group of likeminded writers. In the 1983 commemorative issue, Edward Edmonds, president of the Sand Patterns Publication Association, describes that formation in an introduction not unlike the editorial Frank Turgeon wrote for the first issue of *The Square Deal*:

> The history of Sand Patterns is one of a voluntary organization of a kind deeply rooted in our Island soil. A small group of people, all with a straightforward love of literature, and a desire to express it, came together to explore the idea of a small literary journal. Its primary aim was to give Islanders of all ages, shapes, sizes a little bit of what Robert Bridges aptly describes in his “Testament of Beauty”: “I too will something make / And joy in the creating.” (ii)

Edmonds’s remarks provide a great deal of insight into the relative position of *Sand Patterns* as a regionally committed alternative publication on PEI. Most notably, Edmonds asserts that the convergence of writers and the formation of *Sand Patterns* partook of a tradition “deeply rooted” in PEI culture. Indeed, as the public manifestation of a small group of individuals committed to the composition and publication of
literature, *Sand Patterns* can be seen to have arisen from the same impulse that spawned *Katharsis* and *The Square Deal*. Unlike *Katharsis* and *The Square Deal*, however, *Sand Patterns* was not explicitly concerned with responding to the social and cultural milieu out of which it emerged. To be sure, many of the poets featured in *Sand Patterns* wrote poetry that responded directly to their historical context, and a great deal of the poetry exhibited the influence of literary modernism, but there is no evidence that the magazine’s editors adopted any criteria for the selection of poetry and prose beyond the qualification that it be literature written by individuals from or living on the island. Nevertheless, while the immediacy expressed in the editorials and articles in *Katharsis* and *The Square Deal* was absent from *Sand Patterns*, the latter served an important function by providing a much needed forum for the publication of island literature regardless of aesthetic or political commitment. The frequent publication of poetry written by elementary school children, for example, is a testament to the magazine’s all-embracing approach to publishing island literature. Similarly, the inclusion of a bibliography of island books at the back of each issue after 1973 served to reinforce the magazine’s dedication to publicizing PEI literature. It was likely the magazine’s inclusiveness that garnered subscriptions from nearly two hundred islanders, securing for a while the continuance of the magazine in the face of rising printing costs and making it PEI’s longest-running literary magazine to date.\(^6\)

\(^6\) Such magazines as *Island Magazine* (1976-) did contain literature and have lasted much longer than *Sand Patterns*, but no independent, alternative literary publications since *Sand Patterns* have lasted longer than
In addition to Graham and Campbell, the founding members of *Sand Patterns* included Evelyn MacLure, Florence Roper, and Marjorie Frizzell. All of the founders, with the exception of Frizzell, were poets who had established themselves on the island. Frizzell was an artist whose designs featuring beachscapes would grace more covers of *Sand Patterns'* twenty-two issues than any other. The first two issues of the magazine were published in 1972, the next six in 1973, and four each year for the next three years, with the final volume of two issues appearing in 1978. Issues averaged 30 pages and initially cost $0.50 per copy. In 1974 the price of an issue was raised to $1.00 and in 1977 to $1.50 per copy or $4.00 per year. In 1973, with the help of funding from UPEI and a grant from the PEI Centennial Commission, the Sand Patterns Publication Association was incorporated as a non-profit company (Edmonds ii). Over the next six years the magazine’s editorial board comprised the executive committee of the Association. Consequently, many individuals, including Edmonds, Paul Inman, Russell Stewart, Bill Grant, Kim Eyland, and others, served as editors and contributed to the magazine in various capacities. Of particular note is the contribution of Henry Purdy.

Purdy had designed the covers and layout for *Katharsis* and his pen and ink, charcoal, and pencil line drawings appeared in nearly every issue of both *Katharsis* and *Sand Patterns*. In 1969 Purdy had founded the graphic design program at Holland College and he would later become director of the Holland College School of Visual Arts six years. *Blue Shift* (1998-2000), the most prominent of PEI’s poetry magazines to have been published after the 1970s, lasted for only three years.
in 1977 (Newlands). It was Purdy who, in 1975, was responsible for the involvement of Holland College’s commercial design department in the production and printing of *Sand Patterns*. The department would thereafter print and produce each issue, making for a more appealing, hard-cover 8 ¼” x 8 ½” format, though bringing with it the additional cost of high-quality printing. The magazine thus served as a training ground and forum for the work of island artists and designers in addition to young writers. Like *The Fiddlehead*, which had been designed by Lucy Jarvis and which remained connected to the University of New Brunswick Observatory Art Centre thereafter, *Sand Patterns* was a product of collaboration between writers and visual artists. In fact, many of *Sand Patterns*’ most innovative and avant-garde elements result more from its design and artwork than from the literature it includes. Nevertheless, literature constituted by far the largest portion of the magazine’s content, and though its quality varied, it represented a more substantial group of island writers than any island publication before or since.

The poetry and prose published in *Sand Patterns* often concerned itself with descriptions of island life and landscape. Poems like Leone Ross’s “Cavendish Beach,” in which the speaker describes the “hot sun on ribbed pink sand” and “knife-edged grasses / climbing the dunes,” were characteristic of much of the poetry featured throughout the magazine’s six-year run (4-5). Similarly, prose pieces like Holly Buchanan’s “The Old Fisherman’s Struggle” or F.H. MacArthur’s “The Screeching Wheel,” which are conventional and descriptive, and which foreground their PEI setting, dominate most issues. Nevertheless, not all the poetry and prose in *Sand Patterns* were indifferent to socio-cultural matters, nor was the majority of it formally and stylistically anachronistic. Edmonds’s “Generation Gap,” published in the magazine’s second issue, for instance,
assimilates many of the conventions associated with literary modernism while revealing an acute awareness of social context. Beginning with an epigraph from Eliot’s “The Waste Land,” the story documents in terse and unadorned prose a brief confrontation between the young speaker and an old man, with the speaker prejudicially suspecting the old man of dumping garbage. When he confronts the man, his suspicions are proved to be incorrect and both are left bewildered before the speaker retreats without any further dialogue. Edmonds’s concern with ecological degradation is demonstrative of his engagement with issues broadly affecting contemporary society, but it also evinces a special attention to PEI’s particular vulnerability during a period of rapid industrialization in the 1970s. More broadly, the story explores the cultural disjuncture between the youth of PEI’s post-CDP culture and the province’s tradition-laden older population. Speaking to both the broad socio-cultural currents of contemporary North American culture and to the specific circumstances in which islanders found themselves in the 1970s, Edmonds’s “Generation Gap” is an example of regional literature which transcends political or cultural boundaries while remaining rooted in the cultural context in which it was produced.

The publication of formally innovative literature with a strong social message was not an exception in Sand Patterns – many of the most promising writers published in Katharsis and The Square Deal did, in fact, publish work in Sand Patterns too – but such work did not comprise a large portion of the magazine’s content. More prevalent was poetry written in the decorous and elaborate language of Romanticism, qualities which eventually drew criticism from Ledwell. In an open letter titled “Salting Sand Patterns’ Tail,” published in the magazine’s twenty-first issue of spring 1978, Ledwell inveighs
against what he perceives to be *Sand Patterns*’ lack of editorial standards. Praising simplicity and direct treatment, while condemning “sophistication,” “abstraction” and “maudlin sentimentalism,” Ledwell provides *Sand Patterns*’ editors and contributors with constructive criticism that lays bare his own fidelity to literary modernism (23).

Concluding his letter is a list of “counsels”:

First, a piece of writing that takes five minutes to pen deserves one minute of reading, no more. Second, overweening subjectivity and heavy-handed didacticism ought to be eschewed in any kind of writing, especially in poetry.

Third, the masters of the craft are still our models. (24)

Foremost among the “masters” Ledwell identifies is Ezra Pound. Indeed, bearing a resemblance to Pound’s 1913 essay “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste,” Ledwell’s comments are indicative of the modernist literary values that had come to prevail in the work of such island poets as John Smith, Francis Bolger, and Réshard Gool – writers, notes Ledwell, who, with the exception of several of Smith’s poems in issue eighteen, *Sand Patterns* had failed to publish (21). *Sand Patterns* acknowledged Ledwell’s advice and the poetry of Smith appeared in the following issue for the second time. The editors of *Sand Patterns* would not have the chance to publish Gool or Bolger, however, as the twenty-second issue of *Sand Patterns* would also be the last. Faced with increasing printing costs, the magazine was forced to cease publication in 1978 (Edmonds ii).

The literary values manifest in Ledwell’s letter to *Sand Patterns* provide an important indication of the development of literary modernism on PEI; yet it is the publication of Ledwell’s letter itself that is most representative of PEI’s literary culture during the 1960s and 1970s. In the pages of *Katharsis, The Square Deal,* and *Sand*
Patterns, new literary modes had been championed, helping supplant the sentimentality and Romanticism that had predominated island literature throughout the first half of the twentieth century. However, it was the role that PEI’s little magazines played in the cultivation of vibrant and heterogeneous literary and arts communities that would be their most lasting contribution to island culture. A crucial aspect of that process of cultural regeneration was the critical dialogue in which these magazines engaged with one another. Through reviews and letters like that from Ledwell to the editors of Sand Patterns, this dialogue occurred on the periphery of PEI’s mainstream culture, but it also permeated the public sphere by addressing pressing socio-cultural issues affecting islanders during the post-mid-century period of rapid modernization and a refocussing of the provincial economy on cultural tourism.

With a population of just over 110 000 in 1971,7 Prince Edward Island was and remains by far Canada’s smallest province. It is also the most rural province in Canada, with two-thirds of the island population residing in rural areas well into the 1960s (Dasgupta 249). Its small size and rural population, however, did not prevent the island from becoming host to a dynamic literary movement during the 1970s. In fact, as a community that entirely lacked access to a large publishing industry, and that was geographically and culturally distant from Canada’s large publishing centres, PEI was especially amenable to the formation of alternative print publications like little

7 The population of PEI in 1971, according to the 1971 Statistics Canada Census, was 111,641 (Bassavarajappa).
magazines. While a number of associated small presses soon followed the establishment of PEI's little magazines, including Gool's Square Deal Publications (1971-78), the Sand Patterns Publication Association (1973-78), and Harry Baglole's Ragweed Press (1973-2000), the latter of which was especially valuable and influential, it was the magazines themselves that served as the vanguard for island writers and artists. In fact, for many emerging island writers, *Katharsis, The Square Deal, and Sand Patterns* offered the only outlets for the publication of poetry, prose, and visual art. What is more, the exploration of new literary and artistic forms was accompanied by a commitment to social and cultural activism. Island magazines facilitated a critical dialogue that sought to negotiate the tumultuous social, political, and cultural environment of PEI during the 1970s. Free from the financial pressures that impeded the free interchange of ideas in their commercial counterparts, these magazines readily encouraged alternative perspectives that both defended and contested the discourse of prosperity and progress that underpinned official government and corporate advocacy for the industrialization of island society. In other words, these magazines helped introduce and train island citizens in a poetics of political speech.

According to Godfrey Baldacchino, "being on the edge ... exposes the weakness of mainstream ideas, orthodoxies, and paradigms and foments alternatives to the status quo" (165). As a result, argues Baldacchino, "islands are propelled as sites of innovative conceptualizations, whether of nature or of human enterprise, whether virtual or real" (165). As a small island province located beyond the littoral space of the Canadian mainland, PEI is well positioned as such a site of innovation. Broadly, this peripheral geographic positioning has been reflected in the oblique and often contradictory nature of
PEI’s cultural and political relationship to the Canadian federation. Indeed, the burgeoning of a dynamic literary and arts movement during the 1960s and 1970s clearly coincided with the decade of centennial celebrations between 1964 and 1973. As the first issue of *Katharsis* attests, though, this coincidence was not simply the result of a positive correlation. Rather, the centennial celebrations, coupled with the rapid modernization undertaken as part of the CDP, caused an acute awareness of islandness and island peripherality to coalesce in the cultural imagination of island writers and artists. This heightened awareness of PEI’s political and cultural position within the broader Canadian and global milieu is evident in the articulations of space, locality, and history that can be found in the pages of *Katharsis*, *The Square Deal*, and *Sand Patterns*.

Nevertheless, it would be easy to overemphasize the role of PEI’s geography in determining either the nature of its cultural expression or the medium of the little magazine through which island literature and art was disseminated. Neither *Katharsis*, *The Square Deal*, nor *Sand Patterns* attained the national stature or broad circulation of other, mainland regional magazines like *The Fiddlehead* or *The Antigonish Review*. Nevertheless, their relatively limited impact cannot be attributed to the physical boundedness of the island. Indeed, it would be wrong to suppose that boundedness defined the island’s literature, art, and alternative print media, for geographical boundedness should not be mistaken for cultural insularity. In fact, the very awareness of PEI’s peripheral position exhibited by island writers implies a corresponding awareness of external socio-cultural developments across Canada and beyond. J.M. Bumstead observes that “the tension between the internal, often sentimentalized ‘specialness’ of the island and its need for outside connections has been both powerful and endemic in Island
historiography” (“Prince Edward Island History” 11). The same tension might be identified in island writing. The dual commitment of the island’s little magazines to preserving traditional island culture and serving as a conduit for the introduction of literary modernism, however, provides a salient example of how island writers and editors have successfully negotiated that tension.

The permeability of island culture and society is evident not only in the transmission of literature and ideas between the island and the outside world, but also in the diversity of the post-mid-century cultural movement itself. The heterogeneity that characterized PEI’s post-mid-century cultural ferment is indicative of the receptiveness of the island society to manifold cultural influences. Accordingly, the literary and arts communities that gave birth to PEI’s little magazines were not homogenous, but comprised a diverse mixture of native islanders and off-islanders. Whereas Ledwell, Graham, and Campbell were native islanders, Gool, Woolnough, and Purdy were “from away.” Similarly, contributors to Katharsis, The Square Deal, and Sand Patterns included individuals from all strata of island society, as well as individuals from across Canada and beyond. Rather than detracting from the regional commitment of these little magazines and the literature they published, this multiplicity of voices and cultural perspectives served to reinforce a brand of modernist regionalism that was neither insular nor reactionary, but forward-thinking and responsive. Established, in part, as an alternative to new mass communications media, island little magazines provided a forum where new and at times unconventional literary forms could be tried and published without concern for commercial saleability. Furthermore, they also provided a medium in which a range of unorthodox cultural and political ideas could be discussed and debated.
Accordingly, these magazines versed islanders in a poetics of political speech and encouraged a willingness to speak out against institutional and political power.

Yet it was the cultivation of local literary talent and the establishment of a local literary print culture that would constitute these magazines’ most enduring contribution to the culture of PEI. In his introduction to the 1973 Centennial Anthology of island literature, *Island Prose and Poetry: An Anthology*, Allan Graham poses the question which he believes potential readers will invariably ask: “An anthology of what? We haven’t had any famous writers other than L.M. Montgomery!” (i). Of course, as a high school teacher, as a founding editor of *Sand Patterns*, and as a contributor to both *Katharsis* and *The Square Deal*, Graham knew that such estimations were widely held but entirely untrue. Though short-lived and narrowly circulated, PEI’s post-mid-century little magazines had facilitated what, in 1976, Frances Frazer recognized as “a new explosion in Island writing” (86). Since the 1980s, many island writers such as Graham, Ledwell, Brent MacLaine, Elaine Harrison, John Smith, Réshard Gool, and Deirdre Kessler have gained wider regional and national recognition for their work through anthologization, the publication of full-length books, and their receipt of literary awards. While the magazines in which these writers’ works were first published – *Katharsis*, *The Square Deal*, and *Sand Patterns* – have suffered from critical neglect, their contribution to the naissance of PEI’s post-mid-century “cultural revolution” is unmistakable. Unable to have their work published by “national” publishers wary of publishing literature of “local” interest, island writers adopted the medium of the little magazine in order to get their literature and ideas into print. In time, these magazines gave way to small presses like Square Deal Publications, the Sand Patterns Publication Association, and Ragweed
Press, each of which published an array of books, both literary and non-fiction, throughout the 1970s and in Ragweed’s case well beyond. The result has been a thriving culture of homegrown publishing, one whose roots are to be found in the critical cultural moment that defined PEI during the 1960s and 1970s and which was forged in the pages of PEI’s little magazines.
3. “Beachcombing in the Twentieth Century”: The Antigonish Review

and Eclectic Modernity in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia is thus the most storied, the most deeply grooved part of British Canada. . . . An old Nova Scotian can tell you the history of every family for miles around and, in an almost pathetic fashion, he will take pride in the local celebrity.

– Bruce Hutchinson, The Unknown Country: Canada and her People

I speak of the golden days
now hidden in eastern mist
there I see my youth
in its trajectory towards silence

– R.J. MacSween, “warnings,” The Secret City

In his first substantial work of criticism, New Bearings in English Poetry (1932), F.R. Leavis identified “urban conditions, a sophisticated civilization, rapid change, and the mingling of cultures” as those conditions which had precipitated modern poetry in the twentieth century (61). In the decades that followed, Canadian critics readily adopted the assumptions of British critics like Leavis to describe the new developments in Canadian literature. These critics maintained that it was in response to the complexities of the large industrial metropolis, what Desmond Pacey called “the world of slums, soda-fountains, and pool parlours” (42), that the Canadian modernist idiom would develop. Accordingly, in 1969, poet and critic Louis Dudek identified the development of Canadian modernism with the emergence of a manifestly urban literature: “in this century, and in this country, it was mainly poetry of the city . . . that marked the shift from sentimental Romanticism to the more ironic and critical poetry of the twentieth century” (240). In many respects, the assumptions of critics like Dudek accurately reflected the trend toward urbanization.
which had transformed the landscape of twentieth-century Canada. With 50% of Canada’s population already living in urban areas by 1931, the decades following the Second World War witnessed a drastic reorganization of Canada’s demographic geography. Increasing urban agglomeration meant that by 1961 75% of Canada’s population was living in urban and suburban areas (Camu 53). While the Maritimes had not been unaffected by migration from rural villages to small towns and cities, it was a region that had long resisted the trend toward urbanization. The Maritimes was, and remains today, a region of small towns. Into the 1980s, the population of the region’s largest urban area, Halifax-Dartmouth, remained well below 300,000 (Statistics Canada).

Thus, according to the dominant narrative of modernism in Canada, if Halifax could not provide the supposedly requisite conditions for the emergence of a modernist cultural formation in Nova Scotia, it seemed unlikely that such a movement could take root at all. However, it was not Halifax, but the small village of Antigonish that would provide the setting for the province’s most compelling and influential little modernist magazine in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Located one-hundred and sixty kilometers north-east of Halifax, one half hour from the Canso Causeway, the village of Antigonish seemed an improbable host to the sort of “urban conditions,” “sophisticated civilization,” and “rapid changes” identified by Leavis as preconditions for modern poetry (61). In the 1970s, Antigonish was predominantly rural, had a population of less than 6000, and had long been characterized by a deep Catholic conservatism. Nevertheless, the real obstacles faced by writers in Nova Scotia in the 1970s were neither a lack of “sophistication” nor an intransigent traditionalism. Instead, it was economic disparity and a lack of access to a broad
readership that impeded cultural growth in the province. The remoteness of Antigonish from the political and economic centres of both Halifax and the nation only exacerbated the lack of cultural resources and publishing opportunities that had long forced writers out of the region. For Cape Breton poet, editor, professor, and priest R.J. MacSween, the solution to these problems was a matter of self-sufficiency; local culture could be reinvigorated and modernized, but it would require the collective action of a committed group of local writers, the public manifestation of which would be a little magazine of international stature. MacSween acknowledged the barriers separating writers in the post-mid-century Maritime milieu from what he called "the world of culture" and pointed to the little magazine as the solution: "In this region we haven’t the wealth or the population to break into that world. But we could start a magazine" (244). So it was that as early as the late 1940s, MacSween had the idea of founding an international literary magazine that would introduce modernism into Nova Scotia and introduce local writers to audiences across Canada and beyond.

It would be more than two decades before MacSween saw his idea for a local literary magazine materialize as *The Antigonish Review (TAR)* in 1970, and even then MacSween would not assume editorship of the magazine until its second volume in 1971. Under MacSween’s ten-year editorship, however, the impact of the magazine was immense and reflected the enormity of his vision. In a 1985 interview for *The Casket*, the local Antigonish weekly, MacSween stated that TAR had been “the most important part of [his] career” (qtd. in Donovan 217-18). Like most little magazines, however, TAR was not solely the work of an individual; rather, it represented the collective efforts of a group of dedicated writers whom MacSween had recruited for the express purpose of founding
and sustaining such a magazine. Over time, each member of this cultural formation would make distinct contributions to the character and composition of the magazine. When the first issue of TAR, edited by Father Brocard Sewell, appeared in the spring of 1970, it exhibited the determination of its editors to produce a magazine that was, from the outset, of astonishingly high quality. In contrast with most fledgling little magazines, the first issue of TAR was professionally printed, ran to well over 100 pages, and featured contributions from such varied and well-known poets as Penelope Shuttle, Lionel Kearns, Frances Horovitz, and Fleur Adcock. Nevertheless, it was under the editorship of MacSween and his successors, George and Gertrude Sanderson, that the magazine made its most marked contribution to the bourgeoning of a local and regional cultural movement.

Eclectic, regionally committed, and devoted to the cultivation of new and emerging talent, TAR provided a medium of publication to a new generation of writers that had been struggling to reach an audience. Adamant that TAR should never be confined to Nova Scotia or the Maritimes, MacSween nevertheless made it the magazine’s priority to seek out and publish local writers whose work could compete with the best national and international submissions. Moreover, as a polemically modernist magazine devoted to an avant-garde cultural program informed by the high modernists – most notably Ezra Pound – TAR challenged the currency of reductive antimodernist narratives of Nova Scotia and its history. In opposition to the image of Nova Scotia as unchangingly traditional and quintessentially Scottish, an image promulgated by the provincial government and the province’s ever-growing tourism industry, TAR advanced an editorial policy that was outward-looking and distinctly unprovincial.
At the same time, and not without resultant contradictions, the magazine was informed by the Catholic intellectual tradition in which MacSween, a Catholic priest, had been raised and educated. *TAR* was from the start institutionally affiliated with St. Francis Xavier University (StFX), a school that had been founded as a diocesan Catholic college by the descendants of Scottish Highland Catholics in 1853\(^1\) (Cameron 55). Though not always amicable, the magazine's relationship with StFX provided it with a cultural and intellectual nucleus that had its roots in the Catholic educational tradition and a history of sociopolitical activism via the liberal-Catholic Antigonish Movement. Not unrelated to this Catholicity was the ardent devotion of MacSween and George Sanderson to the communications theories of Marshall McLuhan. Recognizing the decreasing currency of print periodicals in an era increasingly dominated by electronic and digital media, MacSween incorporated into the magazine both formal innovation and visual heterogeneity, affecting a mosaic approach to the organization of the magazine's aesthetic, symbolic, and textual dimensions. Poetry, prose fiction, essays, and criticism were thus intermingled with photographs and visual art to produce a variegated amalgam of content. The result was a magazine which distinguished itself in both content and form, and whose polemical and unconventional editorial program positioned it in

\(^{1}\) St. Francis Xavier College was initially founded at Arichat, a small Nova Scotian village on Isle Madame. The college was moved to its permanent location in Antigonish two years later (Cameron, "Erasing Forever" 55). The college was granted university charter powers and the ability to grant degrees in 1866 (Cameron, *History* 47).
opposition to the hegemony of Romanticism in the popular literature and mainstream culture of Nova Scotia.

Of course, the literary activism undertaken in the pages of TAR by MacSween and the literary community at Antigonish was not without precedent. Apart from the more recent modernist formations that had emerged in Fredericton in the 1940s, and in Charlottetown in the 1960s, Nova Scotia had its own history of polemical and activist print culture. The origins of literary print culture in the province can be traced back to the rich literary life cultivated in the pages of its pre-Confederation newspapers. Canada’s first newspaper, The Halifax Gazette, had been established in Halifax by John Bushell in 1752. Though constrained by censorship imposed by the colonial government, Bushell did not altogether avoid publishing social and political commentary or material that “reflected badly on the government” (Jobb 205). Such early forays into print culture were soon followed by what D.C. Harvey has termed “the intellectual awakening of Nova Scotia” – the period after 1812 during which Nova Scotia saw the rapid development of its cultural and political infrastructure, and, eventually, the achievement of responsible government in 1848 (543).

As Gwendolyn Davies observes, the impact of Nova Scotia’s “intellectual awakening” was two-fold, raising the socio-political conscience of the province while also contributing to a “flowering of cultural activity” (“Literature” 48). These cultural developments culminated when Joseph Howe, long-time editor of Novascotian, was charged in 1835 with “wickedly, maliciously, and seditiously contriving, devising, and intending to stir up and excite discontent and sedition among His Majesty's subjects” (Howe 29). Upon his acquittal, Howe famously declared, “The Press of Nova Scotia is
Free" (Kernaghan, “Nova Scotian”). Closer to Antigonish, the Scottish-born Presbyterian minister Thomas McCulloch had established the Pictou Academy in 1816. When the province refused to provide financial support or grant authority to the academy to confer degrees, McCulloch founded the *Colonial Patriot* (1827), a reform newspaper in which McCulloch and his supporters vigorously advocated for the public support of educational institutions beyond Anglican schools and colleges (Lochhead, “McCulloch”). In addition to his extensive work in education and education reform, McCulloch also wrote the satirical “Letters of Mephibosheth Stepsure,” which were serialized (22 Dec 1821-Mar 1823) in *The Acadian Recorder* and which would later influence Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s *The Clockmaker* (Lochhead, “Haliburton”). Thus, these early endeavours in print culture in Nova Scotia established a tradition of literary publication that was integrally tied to social and political activism in the province.

For MacSween, these developments, in addition to the later literary contributions made by the Confederation School of poets, helped to establish a literary tradition in Canada that would inevitably influence, even while the Romanticism of the latter remained antithetical to, the work of Canada’s modern poets. “Our Canadian cultural history is rather brief,” wrote MacSween in 1965, “but already a number of landmarks can be discerned within it. Certain events and certain men have not vanished into the past; they endure, they remain close to us, they feed our personalities and give substance to the air we breathe” (“Landmarks” 138). Thus, MacSween, like Alfred Bailey and the *Fiddlehead* group in New Brunswick, embraced a sense of “tradition” that was analogous to that which T.S. Eliot had defined in “Tradition and the Individual Talent.” This was a tradition that was not to be emulated by the modern poet, but one that, once
acknowledged and assimilated, would make the writer more acutely aware of his or her own “contemporaneity” (Eliot 15). In his own poetry, MacSween rejected the Romantic ideals of “innocence, loyalty, and courage,” and he accused the Confederation School of poets of being “unable to face the new frontier which each man carries within himself, the psychological and mystical border country, the hunting ground of the modern artist” (“Landmarks” 139). Nevertheless, his rejection of their poetic mode did not prevent him from crediting these Romantic forbears with the activation of a tradition: “The new poetry is busy creating its own ideals of honesty, heroism, and beauty. These are its vindication. But what is rejected does not die; it lives on in what has conquered it; and, being invisible, it is more potent than before” (“Landmarks” 145).

The enduring effect of activist print culture in nineteenth-century Nova Scotia, then, was to establish a cultural environment in the province that was receptive to socially and politically conscious literature. However, though MacSween and the Antigonish group were acutely aware of this tradition, they were separated from it by more than a century. More immediately, it was the impact of the Antigonish Movement and the direct influence that the movement’s leader, Moses Coady, had on MacSween that would provide the socio-political impetus and principles of self-reliance that underwrote TAR’s commitment to the revitalization of regional culture. As Stewart Donovan observes, it was the work of two Cape Breton priests, J.J. Tompkins and Moses Coady, “that would help set the tone of the times that MacSween grew up in,” and Coady, in particular, would have “a profound influence on [MacSween’s] career as a professor and writer” (44). A social and economic grassroots movement established through the extension department of StFX, the Antigonish Movement was centred on adult education and the
organization of co-operative enterprises. Initially led by the pioneering work of J.J. Tompkins, the Antigonish Movement was formalized as a viable socio-economic movement when the StFX Extension Department was established in 1928 under the direction of Coady (Dodaro 20). Throughout eastern Nova Scotia, an area coextensive with the Diocese of Antigonish, the creation of study clubs gave way to the establishment of cooperatives throughout the 1920s and 1930s. By the late 1930s the movement had gained momentum throughout Atlantic Canada and, in the 1940s and 1950s, efforts to publicize the movement and a series of publications made it known in Europe, South America, and Asia (MacPherson, “Movement”).

Apart from the concrete economic and social developments it had affected during the 1920s and 1930s through the establishment of study clubs, housing projects, and cooperatives, the Antigonish Movement had created in eastern Nova Scotia a generalized stimulus toward cultural activism (Walsh, “Interview”). At a time when conservatism dominated the Roman Catholic Church, the liberal-Catholic Antigonish Movement was radical in its staunch support for the education and mobilization of working-class Nova Scotians. Community-based, and undergirded by the principles of self-reliance, education, and collective action, the Antigonish Movement evinced a commitment to many of the same principles that had underpinned early twentieth-century modernist endeavours into little magazine and small press activism. Furthermore, though primarily economic in its implementation, the Antigonish Movement was not divorced from cultural concerns. In fact, couched in utopian language, the amelioration of economic adversity under the auspices of the Antigonish Movement was framed as a precondition for a society in which cultural and spiritual activities could be pursued by all: “If we
assist the people to raise themselves to new levels of creative thinking, we need not worry about the geniuses . . . . From the people, raised to new levels, will arise poets, painters, and musicians to give expression to the new and eternal truths that beat within their breasts” (Coady 119).

The integrative social, economic, and cultural philosophy of the Antigonish Movement would have a profound impact on both MacSween and the modernist cultural formation that developed at StFX in the decades following the Second World War. MacSween had first heard Coady speak at his high school in Glace Bay and subsequently studied Coady’s *Masters of Their Own Destiny* at Sacred Heart Seminary in Halifax (Donovan 62). Thus, he had already been deeply influenced by Coady and his work when he was appointed – at the recommendations of his uncle, StFX President Pat Nicholson, and Coady himself – as a professor of English Literature at StFX in 1948 (Donovan 99). Nevertheless, whereas Coady believed that economic progress would inevitably give way to a resurgence of cultural activity, MacSween recognized the need for a literary publication that could act as both stimulus and outlet. For MacSween, without exposure to new developments in modern and contemporary literature, and without a forum through which local writers could reach an audience, there was little hope for a cultural emancipation to complement emancipation through economic self-reliance. The little magazine provided the ideal medium with which to accomplish these objectives. After his ordination in 1941, MacSween began to order books and periodicals from the Gotham Book Mart in New York City. In addition to keeping him in touch with the most recent trends in contemporary and avant-garde literature, this connection introduced MacSween to some of the foremost modernist magazines of the twentieth century (MacSween,
“Interview” 236). Long-standing magazines such as Poetry, as well as then-defunct magazines such as The Little Review, thus served as models for what MacSween imagined could be a regionally based magazine of international scope.

A full teaching load, a chaplaincy at the nearby St. Bernard’s College, responsibilities as a counsellor for students, and, most importantly, the absence of a dedicated literary community at StFX prevented MacSween from founding a magazine upon his arrival in Antigonish in 1948. During the 1950s and 1960s, however, a number of developments helped to facilitate the emergence of a cultural formation at StFX dedicated to fostering local literature. Broadly, Nova Scotia benefitted from the same national cultural policy reforms implemented throughout the 1950s and 1960s that had helped support the emerging literary and arts community in PEI. Nevertheless, as Jan Marontate and Catherine Murray observe, provincial support for culture in Nova Scotia was often focussed on the direct support given to “economic development initiatives” (329). As a result, many of Nova Scotia’s cultural endeavours during the period began as private initiatives (239). In Antigonish, the university provided an alternative source of intellectual and financial support. The 1950s and 1960s were a period of rapid expansion for StFX as post-war enrollment continued to contribute to the growth of the university (Cameron 307). As a result, when MacSween was appointed Chair of the English Department in 1962, he was permitted to hire as many faculty as was necessary to manage the university’s increasing enrollment (Donovan 154).

Already by the 1950s MacSween had begun building up a small literary community at StFX among faculty and students. Foremost among his efforts was the cultivation of literary talent through both academic and creative writing courses. In 1956,
at the suggestion of student Patrick Walsh, MacSween initiated a Wednesday-night discussion group. The group would grow to include George Sanderson and Sheldon Currie, forming a basis for what would later become the editorial board of *TAR*. The same year, MacSween established one of the first for-credit creative writing courses in Canada\(^2\) (Walsh, “For Gert” 116). Among those students who would later benefit from MacSween’s creative guidance were Linden McIntyre and Alistair MacLeod, but in 1956 the class comprised Walsh, Sheldon and Dawn Currie, and George Sanderson (Donovan 143). Though each student left to pursue further study in the years that followed, they would not be gone for long. In 1962, when Mac Sween was appointed Chair of the English Department, he began hiring faculty with a view to bringing into the department enough writers to form “a good nucleus for the magazine [he] intended to start” (MacSween, “Interview” 244). By 1969, Walsh, Currie, and Sanderson, as well as future associate editors Gertrude Sanderson, Bill Tierney, Kevin O’Brien, and James Taylor, had all secured teaching positions at StFX. That year, MacSween brought a proposal before the Dean of Arts, Rev. Malcolm MacDonnell, who successfully petitioned the University Council for financial support (Sanderson, “*TAR*” 21).

\(^2\) The creative writing seminar created by MacSween was one of the first of its kind in Canada. However, Earle Birney appears to have established a similar for-credit course as early as 1948 at the University of British Columbia (McWhirter xxiii).
The first issue of *TAR* appeared in the spring of 1970. With the help of Walsh, who had experience in printing and design, printing of the magazine was undertaken by Jack MacMillan of The Casket Publishing and Printing Company, Ltd., Antigonish’s only print shop (Walsh, “Interview”). Printed in 5 ½” x 8 ½” format and bound in olive green cover-stock, the first issue was both sober and academic in appearance. On its cover appeared the title of the magazine and its contents. The issue contained essays, short fiction, poetry, and book reviews — each organized into discreet sections — and was devoid of visual art. Tellingly, the titles of articles and stories, and the names of their authors, were given prominence through their central position on the cover, while poetry was relegated to the bottom of the page. The marginalization of *TAR*’s poetry content was reflective of the editor-in-chief’s desire to place greater emphasis on the magazine’s academic prose content. Its associate editors were Edo Gatto, Charles Plummer, Gertrude Sanderson, and George Sanderson; its editorial board comprised Tierney, Walsh, and MacSween; and at its helm, as editor-in-chief, was Rev. Brocard Sewell. After having been suspended by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster for publicly demanding the resignation of Pope Paul VI for having upheld Church orthodoxy in his encyclical on contraception, Sewell arrived, in exile, in Antigonish in 1969 (Higgins 51). As a liberal

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3 Walsh had learned to handset type while working as a printer at a printing company in Massachusetts throughout high school and during his summers home from university. While a sophomore in high school, Walsh also took art lessons from commercial artist Leo Blake in Stockbridge, Mass. These experiences laid the foundation for Walsh’s later work with *TAR* (Walsh, “Interview”).
and unorthodox Catholic, and as the former editor of *The Aylesford Review*, Sewell appeared to be a good match for MacSween and the Antigonish group, each of whom saw the value in having an internationally respected English editor as the co-founder of *TAR*. Sewell’s editorial direction, however, soon proved to be at odds with MacSween’s vision for a modernist, non-academic magazine directed toward the development of regional literature and art.

Although the first issue of *TAR* was not devoid of regional and Canadian content – it did contain fiction by Currie and poetry by Tierney, MacSween, Walsh, and Lionel Kearns – it evidenced a clear editorial bias toward an academic British audience. Of the twenty-one contributors featured in the first issue, fifteen were British. Furthermore, the issue exhibited Sewell’s preference for the work of nineteenth-century Aestheticism and figures associated with the Decadent Movement, especially Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley. Prefacing the first issue is a lengthy essay by Brian Reade titled “The Beardsley Foreground.” In it, the author announces the revival of interest in “Decadent Aestheticism” and proceeds to provide a history of the movement’s development in relation to the titular Beardsley (5). Specialized, comprehensive, and mildly abstruse, Reade’s article is highly academic and patently non-literary. It is, in fact, precisely the sort of academic writing against which MacSween had hoped to position *TAR*. Read’s essay, however, was the first of a number of similar articles that would appear in the next four issues of the magazine and it advanced an aesthetic prejudice that would be upheld by subsequent contributors.

After the first issue, and likely at the behest of MacSween and other members of the editorial board, the proportion of British content decreased slightly and regional and
Canadian writers were given more space. Alongside the work of writers from within the Antigonish group appeared poetry and prose by Alden Nowlan (no. 2), Peter Van Toorn (no. 4), Mike Doyle (no. 2), and Gaston Miron (no. 3). Nevertheless, Sewell continued to favour British writers and critics, while retaining the academic focus on Aestheticism evident in the first issue. Visually, the magazine was austere, but not unpleasant. With the exception of the fourth issue, for which Walsh designed a cover that incorporated a Victorian filigree design in order to reflect the magazine’s focus on Decadents, covers featured only text, and visual art within the magazine was rare. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suggest that the magazine under Sewell was of poor quality. On the contrary, the first volume of TAR demonstrates Sewell’s highly capable editorship. Some very prominent British poets of the period published their work in the first four issues; in addition to Shuttle and Adcock, the first volume featured the work of Thomas Merton, Peter Redgrove, Jack Clemo, and Ann Quin. Nevertheless, under the editorship of Sewell the magazine had utterly failed to fulfill the purpose for which it had been founded.

For MacSween, Sewell’s bias toward British poets and his focus on British Aestheticism made the magazine more appealing to a British audience than to the magazine’s Maritime and Canadian subscribers. Moreover, Sewell’s penchant for publishing academic criticism rendered TAR largely inaccessible to the average non-academic reader. In February of 1971 MacSween sent a letter to Sewell in which he expressed his condemnation of the editorial program Sewell had advanced:

[I]t is those outside of academe to whom we must go for creative insights in criticism. They are without exception those who have earned their rank in the first place in the creative field. I am for them to the utmost of my ability. I am not
against criticism – their style of criticism – but I am against academic criticism, the product of establishments . . . . I simply took for granted that you would realize these matters much more clearly than I could. I know now that I was mistaken . . . . I do appreciate what you have done. Nevertheless, you definitely look toward your English readers rather than the great bulk of our subscribers. I would be very happy if the English readers like the magazine, but they have many others to choose from, whereas our community has almost nothing. (qtd. in Donovan 218)

As MacSween biographer Stewart Donovan observes, the letter illustrates MacSween’s “fierce desire to have a cultural magazine of wide reach; and his equally fierce support for creative writers and artists” (218). Rather than the rigorous and specialized prose of the academic, MacSween advocated for a more eloquent prose style marked by clarity and precision. MacSween’s objective was not to replace intellectualism with a populist literature of mass appeal; rather, for MacSween, the aim of the critic was, as MacSween’s literary exemplar Ezra Pound had described it, “popularisation in its decent and respectable sense . . . to put the greatest amount of the best literature within the easiest reach of the public; free literature, as a whole, from the stultified taste of a particular generation” (“Provincialism” 168). Such popularization, however, was unachievable if the critic failed to effectively communicate his or her ideas to a broad audience. Thus, just as Coady had striven to democratize access to economic resources in the region, MacSween aimed for the democratization of culture by providing accessible and engaging criticism on often difficult and esoteric literature. Unable or unwilling to
work toward that end, Sewell was at odds with TAR’s editorial board and its associate editors (Walsh, “Interview”).

In 1971, after having edited only four issues of TAR, Sewell left Antigonish and returned to England. Beginning with issue five, MacSween took over as editor of the magazine, a position he would hold for the next ten years. Needless to say, the second volume of TAR marked a radical departure from the preceding numbers. Affecting a more balanced representation of regional, Canadian, and international content, the editors mitigated the preponderance of critical articles by drastically increasing the proportion of poetry. Criticism remained an integral part of the magazine, with short book reviews occupying a considerable section at the back of each issue, but became subsidiary to the magazine’s creative content. The first noticeable difference in issue five, however, was the visual transformation of the magazine. For the fifth issue, Walsh designed and printed a cover featuring multi-coloured flowers, the stems of which comprised the titles of featured poems and their authors. Working with a single-colour Heidelberg offset press, Walsh and Jack MacMillan manually applied the coloured ink to the roller, washed the roller after twenty copies had been printed, and applied new colours to the roller for the next twenty copies (Walsh, “Interview”). The resulting covers anticipated the organization of the magazine’s contents and revealed the determination with which the editorial board attempted to create a magazine that was innovative in both form and content.

Within the magazine, line drawings, pen and ink, and pencil sketches accompanied poems, essays, and short fiction, all of which were intermingled to create what George Sanderson later described as the “literary and visual mosaic that the modern
sensibility requires” (“Eclectic” 8). According to Marshall McLuhan, one of the magazine’s guiding muses, “the instant consequences of electrically moved information . . . makes necessary a deliberate artistic aim in the placing and management of news” (Understanding Media 182). For the editors of TAR, what McLuhan had said of news media similarly applied to the little magazine in the electronic age – namely, that “The massive theme of the press can be managed only by direct contact with the formal patterns of the medium in question” (Understanding Media 183). Describing McLuhan’s insights, George Sanderson observed that “the implications for literary reviews were clear, as television spearheaded the emerging hegemony of electronic media” (“Remembering” 7). If the magazine was to appeal to the individual living in the electric “global village,” the serial logic of print would have to be disrupted. This disruption was achieved by making the “mosaic form” the organizing principle of TAR. In The Gutenberg Galaxy and Understanding Media, McLuhan had described the “mosaic” form as “a highly participational form of expression” in which “co-existence and interplay among the figures in the flat field create a multi-levelled and multi-sensuous awareness” (Understanding Media 151; Galaxy 63). It was precisely such an interplay that MacSween, Walsh, and, later, George and Gertrude Sanderson, attempted to affect by juxtaposing a variety of content on the page and by “break[ing] up the print with graphics” (Sanderson, “Remembering” 7). As Sanderson notes in a 1985 special issue of TAR dedicated to McLuhan, “From its inception in 1969, The Antigonish Review was sympathetic to McLuhan’s insights” (8). Nevertheless, it wasn’t until the magazine’s second volume that those sympathies were incorporated into the visual and formal
composition of the magazine itself, underpinning the eclecticism that would henceforth define the magazine’s editorial policy.

In addition to underwriting the formal and visual dimensions of the magazine, eclecticism would also come to characterize the diversity of modes, genres, and styles of literature published in the post-1970 TAR. As before, submissions were garnered from across Canada, the United States, and Britain, but the second volume of TAR demonstrated a marked concern for getting regional and Canadian authors, both emergent and established, into print. Poetry from then-emerging writers and poets like Nova Scotia writer Alistair MacLeod and the West-coast poet Stephen Scobie featured alongside poetry and fiction from established poets such as Dorothy Livesay, George Bowering, and Louis Dudek. While traditional verse forms appeared less frequently than free verse, the magazine was marked by a catholic editorial policy. The fifth issue exhibited a diversity of content. Formally conventional and evincing a deep religiosity, Judy O’Donnell’s “Sabbath” and Richard Marchand’s “Jonah” stand in relief against the unconventional and iconoclastic concrete poetry of Peter Van Toorn. Similarly, George Bowering’s brief, carefully constructed look at the mundane in “Constantinople Boots” contrasts with Robert Schwab’s mythological and spiritual pilgrimage in “A Knowledge of Radha.” Nevertheless, while the magazine’s eclecticism meant that the editors never limited its content to any single aesthetic mode, the first issue edited by MacSween evinced an unmistakable allegiance to literary modernism.

Brief and imagistic, Livesay’s “On Cleaning a Chicken (for A.M. Klein),” which appeared in the second volume of TAR, is at once exemplary of the modernist aesthetic practised by many of TAR’s contributors and significant for its articulation of the poet’s
relationship to the modernist tradition in Canada. In it, Livesay replaces the “marvellous / dawn-cracking rooster” of A.M. Klein’s “The Psalter of Avram Haktani” with a chicken that the speaker must slaughter and eviscerate “only to make a meal / and to wish / on a wishbone” (1-2, 6-8). Juxtaposing the virile, masculine rooster with the domestic image of a dead chicken being prepared for a meal, Livesay’s poem seems to indict the imperious masculinity of early twentieth-century forays into Canadian modernism. At the same time, the poem’s central metaphor – that of tradition as creative and artistic sustenance – reveals the contradictions that result from working within an exclusionary literary tradition. Bereft of geopolitical substance, Livesay’s poem nevertheless gives expression to a predicament shared by the Antigonish group, a modernist cultural formation engaging in literary and artistic production on the fringes of the Canadian cultural landscape. Indeed, employing a modernist aesthetic to challenge the hegemony of a male-dominated urban modernism in Canada, Livesay’s poem complements TAR’s polemically modernist editorial program.

As if to serve as a corrective to the Victorianism that defined the first volume, the fifth issue of TAR placed an unusually strong emphasis on its modernist ideology. Suggestively, the first poem in issue five is “A Persona for an Imagiste” by Ellen Williams. Alluding to the early poetry collection Personae (1909) by high-modernist Ezra Pound, Williams’s poem and its placement at the beginning of the issue are indicative of TAR’s commitment to an avant-garde cultural program. Scattered throughout are several quotes from Pound’s letters and prose. Precepts taken from Pound’s letters to Harriet Munroe, such as “the glory of any nation is to produce art that can be exported without disgrace to its origin” (20) and “artists first, then, if necessary,
professors and parsons” (98), helped to set the tone of the issue while reaffirming MacSween’s support for creative endeavour above all else. At the same time, the poetry of MacSween, Livesay, Dudek, Williams, and Norman Mallory exhibited a patently modernist aesthetic and reflected an acceptance of Pound’s condemnation of abstraction in verse, a denunciation quoted in the same issue: “Language is made out of concrete things. General expressions in non-concrete terms are a laziness” (84). It would be wrong, however, to suppose that TAR was exclusively concerned with publishing modernist verse.

The editors set a high standard for publication, but they espoused a liberal editorial policy that was informed by the magazine’s guiding principle of eclecticism. Accordingly, the editors did not discriminate against literature that was not aesthetically or ideologically modernist. In fact, much of the poetry and prose produced within the Antigonish group itself, such as that of Currie, Walsh, and George Sanderson, did not conform to the impersonal and objectivist aesthetic standards of high modernism. Likewise, a considerable portion of the poetry published in TAR shared as much in common with traditional verse, confessionalism, projectivism, or language poetry as it did with high modernism. In practice, the modernism to which TAR’s editors were dedicated was less a determinant of the magazine’s aesthetic content than it was a function of their broader cultural vision. Therefore, that the editors chose to feature Pound and to highlight modernist dicta in the first issue edited by MacSween is significant. Not only did it signal a shift away from the Aestheticism championed in the first volume under Sewell, but it also reinforced a crucial but largely implicit objective of the magazine under MacSween’s editorship: to repudiate twentieth-century cultural
selection in Nova Scotia and to contest the hegemony of Romanticism and antimodernism in the province’s popular literature and culture. Thus, in addition to recovering and embracing a tradition of literary and social activism in the province, the Antigonish group was also reacting against an entirely different tradition, one whose insidious influence had long contributed to the popular, critical, and financial neglect of avant-garde cultural production in the province.

*TAR* was founded, first and foremost, as a publication dedicated to providing both an outlet for local and regional writers and a forum for contemporary and avant-garde literature in the province. Nevertheless, the negative pressures of what Ian McKay has termed “the Folk” and “Tartanism” gave urgency to the need for an alternative literary publication that was polemical and activist in its support for cultural renewal. Just as the Antigonish Movement had emerged in response to poverty, rural depopulation, and capitalist underdevelopment in the province, so too did the modernist impulse that motivated the *TAR* group arise as a reaction to the cultural malaise that resulted from the commercialization and commodification of the province’s culture. The portrayal of Nova Scotia as a quaint idyll populated by unsophisticated, traditional, and predominantly Scottish fisherfolk was not new in the twentieth century, nor was it entirely inaccurate. In 1913, Nova Scotian poet and labour activist Colin McKay lamented what he perceived to be the “placid somnolence” of Nova Scotia’s “intellectual life”: “we are still sunk in intellectual apathy; we are still shut out from the world of modern thought” (276). More than fifty years later, however, and in spite of the transformation of Nova Scotia into a modern industrial society, there persisted the popular image of “the Folk” – a people “characterized by their own distinctive culture and isolated from the modern society
around them” (Ian McKay, _Quest_ 9). In twentieth-century Nova Scotia, the image of the Folk, always closely connected with commercialism and conservatism, gained currency as the result of interwar cultural production and folklore (“Creighton” 1), and by the 1930s, it had been augmented by what Ian McKay refers to as “tartanism.”

In “Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954,” McKay argues that tartanism – “the system of signs testifying to the supposed Scottish essence of Nova Scotia” (6) – was the result of a process of cultural selection that began with Angus L. MacDonald’s efforts from the 1930s through the 1950s to re-brand Nova Scotia for the purpose of bolstering the tourism industry and mitigating animosity between Protestant and Catholic Nova Scotians (McKay 19; Hodd 201). According to McKay, tartanism was “the most visible and obvious element of a more general antimodern dispensation in which history became a function of racial and ethnic identity” (Province 254). Of course, Scottish cultural practices in the province are not simply the invention of the modern tourism industry; between 1770 and 1840 thousands of (mostly Highland) Scots settled in Nova Scotia, particularly in Cape Breton and in Pictou and Antigonish counties, bringing with them a cultural heritage whose influence remains today (McKay 7). However, in positing an essentially Scottish provincial identity, the cultural selection undertaken by the provincial government, and perpetuated by the province’s tourism industry, served to efface the cultural diversity and plurality of the province by ignoring the substantial portion of the population that was of English, Irish, Acadian, African, and Mi’kmaq descent. Furthermore, by endorsing a romanticized vision of the province as inherently traditional, unprogressive, and antimodern, tartanism excluded forms of cultural production that responded to and
reflected the modernization and industrialization of Nova Scotia society. By proclaiming the existence of a homogenous provincial identity, this manufactured image of the province suppressed the tradition of literary activism there, concealed social unrest and racial prejudice in the province, and ignored progressive social and political developments like the Antigonish Movement.

Given their desire to foster and modernize local and regional culture, the Antigonish group, not surprisingly, chose to advance an editorial program in *TAR* that was antithetical to the antimodernism and Romanticism that predominated in the province’s mainstream culture. As such, the relationship of *TAR* to the dominant culture of Nova Scotia can be understood as a relationship between “anti-environment” and environment, respectively. If, as McLuhan suggests, the creation of art is the creation of an “anti-environment,” then, in the context of twentieth-century Nova Scotia, it was the hegemonic “romance” of the province, grounded in tartanism and the Folk, against which the *TAR* group positioned their own cultural production – an emergent anti-environment. For McLuhan, in order to raise to the level of consciousness the sociocultural conditions and technological effects of a given environment, it is necessary to construct an anti-environment through the production of art: “Art, as an anti-environment, is an indispensable means of perception, for environments, as such, are imperceptible” (“Emperor’s Old Clothes” 90). Without art, or anti-environments, the “power [of environments] to impose their ground rules on our perceptual life is so complete that there is no scope for dialogue or interface” (“Emperor’s Old Clothes” 90). Thus, by adopting the little magazine as a medium for the dissemination of an eclectic mix of contemporary literature and art, the Antigonish group facilitated a dialogue in which the
dominant cultural forms of the province, their meanings and values, could be acknowledged and contested. Perhaps ironically, then, antimodern cultural selection in twentieth-century Nova Scotia created an environment that compelled, rather than impeded, the emergence of an anti-environment and the production and dissemination of new cultural forms.

For MacSween, contesting the hegemony of antimodernism in Nova Scotia entailed eschewing literature and art grounded in the particularities of place in favour of literature that was outward looking, anti-provincial, and anti-rural (Tremblay, “Email”). As Kenneth Donovan observes, “of his more than one hundred reviews and essays and his six books, only the novel, *Furiously Wrinkled* (1976), is located in Cape Breton” (37). MacSween’s poetry, which was almost invariably published in issues of *TAR* throughout the 1970s and 80s, reflected his desire to transcend localism in an attempt to achieve a more universal literature. Reflective of his strong Catholic faith, but often evincing religious doubt and a tragic tenor, MacSween’s poetry was acclaimed by critics like Dudek for being “directed toward ultimate things, toward the great mysteries of life and death, entangled in the human and the everyday” (“Tragic Mode” 103). Representative of this concern is MacSween’s “The Secret City”:

I am peopled like a city
with many inhabitants
these repeat endlessly
the actions of my memory
from the tunnel of the past
a flood of beings stand before me
in the different liveries of time (1-7)

“The Secret City” expresses an intensely personal reflection while remaining, in the words of Pound, “austere, direct, [and] free from emotional slither” (“Retrospect” 12). The “place” described by the speaker, a city, exists internally and is accessible only through a descent into memory, “the tunnel of the past” (5). Reminiscent of the narrative *katabasis*, 4 or descent into the underworld, employed in Classical epic – and used by Pound as a structural paradigm in his own epic, *The Cantos* – MacSween’s poem is less concerned with articulating an alternative depiction of his sociocultural environment than it is with transcending that environment in search of greater unity. Of course, for MacSween, unlike Pound, such transcendent unity is manifest in the Catholic conception of the divine, but the overarching concern with fundamental truths remains the same. Significantly, the poem is deeply concerned with the importance of community, and yet it is abstracted from the specificities of the milieu in which it was produced. This is a

4 MacSween’s “The Secret City” is, in fact, very similar to Dudek’s long poem *Atlantis*, in which the speaker states, “I do not love my fellow-men / but only citizens of Atlantis / or those who have a portion / of the elements that make it real” (10). According to Dudek, the Atlantis of the poem functions as an unrealized “potential” for a *paradiso terrestre*, or earthly paradise (“In a Nutshell” 116). Taken together, Dudek’s *Atlantis* and MacSween’s *The Secret City* reveal a striking similarity of purpose and intention. Notably, both poems exhibit the influence of Ezra Pound, whose own epic *The Cantos* is deeply concerned with the civic ideal and the construction of a *paradiso terrestre*, variously identified with cities both real and mythic, including Dioce, Ectaban, and others.
typical feature of MacSween's poetry and prose, and one which he valued in the literature of others.

While for MacSween, to counteract cultural selection in the region through poetry was to abjure localism and advance an aesthetic and ideological position akin to that of the high modernists, such an approach was not shared by all members of the Antigonish group. MacSween never swerved from his commitment to publishing local writers, but his rejection of thematically regional literature may have led him to overlook the subversive potential of that literature; he believed, incorrectly, that regionalism and provincialism were coextensive. Nevertheless, MacSween's devotion to eclecticism and his support for emerging writers took precedent over his anti-provincialism, and regionalist literature frequently appear in *TAR*. In fact, it was regionalist literature, more than any other, that helped to undermine the hegemony of Romanticism in the province. Nowhere was this subversive potential more evident than in Sheldon Currie's short story, "The Glace Bay Miners' Museum."

The Glace Bay Miners' Museum opened in 1967 and was constructed as a Centennial project under the Federal-Provincial Centennial Grants Program. Intended to commemorate the region's miners and "the mining industry's vital role in the community," the Miners' Museum "was celebrated as a spectacular centennial achievement" (Beaton 41). However, the rationale behind the Museum's construction was also rife with contradiction: it at once sought to memorialize an industry that had exploited its workers, maintained hazardous working conditions, and bred social unrest in Cape Breton, while also commemorating those miners who had worked for meagre compensation and often given their lives to that industry. More than anything, however,
the Museum was a tourist attraction where visitors encountered a romanticized version of an industry that “continues to breathe . . . and still contributes to the economic life of the area, the province, and the country” (Cohen qtd. in Beaton 41). What the Museum did not celebrate, nor even mention, was that the abandonment of Cape Breton in the 1960s by central Canadian companies like the Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation had resulted in economic decline and mass out-migration (Muise, “Cape Breton”). It was the illogic that underwrote this commemorative project that formed the basis for Currie’s story.

Published in TAR’s winter 1975 issue, “The Glace Bay Miners’ Museum” is set in Reserve, a small mining town in Cape Breton. It tells the story of Margaret MacNeil, a young girl who lost her father and brother in the same mining accident years before and whose grandfather is now bedridden with coal workers’ pneumoconiosis, or black lung. Now a teenager, Margaret watches her younger brother, Ian, and her husband, Neil Currie, go to work in the same mine that killed her father and brother. A brief but nuanced portrayal of Scottish descendants living in industrial Cape Breton, the story incorporates Scottish cultural elements while undermining the currency given them in romanticized images of Nova Scotia. When Neil first plays the bagpipes for Margaret, for instance, Margaret observes, “I never seen bagpipes before. Never knew there was any. Never heard them before” (39). Margaret’s comments are evocative of Hugh MacLennan’s (likely overstated) claim that “it is a plain fact that the kilt was never worn in Cape Breton before the tourists came” (222; McKay, “Tartanism” 13). Such subtle weakening of the authority of tartanism in Currie’s portrayal of the region provides the text with a subversive quality. It is the climax of the story and the establishment of the titular museum, however, that effectively exposes the contradiction inherent in the
memorialization of Cape Breton’s coal mining industry. When Neil and Ian die in a collapsed mine and her grandfather chokes to death from black lung, Margaret removes the blackened lungs from her grandfather’s body and severs the youthful appendages from the bodies of Ian and Neil. Placing the pickled body parts on shelves in her small shack, she opens a museum. Brief and shocking, Currie’s story serves as a tragic reductio ad absurdum, transforming the benign images of miners who moonlight as drunken fiddlers and tartan-clad pipers into the grotesque reality of blackened lungs and severed appendages. Ironically, it is not Margaret’s museum, but the historically revisionist Glace Bay Miners’ Museum which, by contrast, becomes the perverse symbol of capitalist underdevelopment in the region. Deeply rooted in its setting and profoundly responsive to the sociocultural conditions of Cape Breton, Currie’s story is exemplary of the kind of subversive regionalist literature that MacSween’s work enabled but to which MacSween himself was indifferent.

Few stories published in TAR would garner the same critical reception or go on to reach as broad an audience as Currie’s “Glace Bay Miners’ Museum.” Nevertheless, the publication of Currie’s story is illustrative of TAR’s crucial role as a forum for previously unpublished or emerging writers from the region. In fact, while the story’s regional content may not have perfectly aligned with MacSween’s aesthetic preference, it did

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5 Currie subsequently expanded “Glace Bay Miners’ Museum” into novel form. In 1991 it was adapted into a radio drama by Wendy Lill. Finally, in 1995 it was produced as a play under the same name by Lill and as a feature film by Marilyn Belec under the title Margaret’s Museum.
reflect MacSween’s steadfast devotion to publishing emergent writers. In a 1985 interview with Pat Walsh, MacSween stated that he had two primary objectives when editing the magazine: “the immediate one is to get out the magazine. The other one is some kind of hope that some budding writer gets a good start” (247). With regards to both objectives, TAR proved to be a success; Currie was not alone in having gotten a start in the pages of TAR. In 1972, having tried unsuccessfully to have his fiction published in The Fiddlehead, David Adams Richards submitted his short story “The Promise” to MacSween for consideration (Richards 273). A story of a young rural couple crippled by poverty, “The Promise” is not unlike Currie’s in its brief glimpse into the devastating effects of economic determinism in the rural Maritimes. MacSween published the story and, according to Tony Tremblay, “Richard’s successful appearance in The Antigonish Review spurred critical acceptance at home” (Richards 132).

Currie and Richards, however, were but two of countless writers from the region who published their early work in TAR. Throughout the 1970s, in addition to frequently featuring those writers within the group itself, TAR published the work of New Brunswick writers such as Brian Bartlett, Robert Hawkes, Alden Nowlan, Liliane Welch, and M. Travis Lane; Nova Scotia writers such as Alistair MacLeod, Harry Thurston, Fraser Sutherland, Lesley Choyce, and Gregory Cook; and Prince Edward Island writers such as Ted Kulik, Richard Lemm, and Milton Acorn. In many cases these early appearances in TAR helped to launch successful careers. Furthermore, regional writers – some of whom were soon to be poets and writers of national stature – appeared alongside some of the leading writers and poets of the period elsewhere in Canada. In addition to poets who contributed regularly, including Scobie, Bowering, and Dudek, MacSween’s
editorship also saw the publication of renowned non-Maritime poets and writers like David Solway, Irving Layton, Greg Hollingshead, Gary Geddes, Jack Hodgins, Pat Lowther, Carol Shields, Cyril Dabydeen, and Roo Borson.

Accompanying the large representation of Canadian writers was considerable American and international content. Notably, for issue eight, MacSween acquired “Prayers for a Dead Brother,” a previously unpublished poem by Ezra Pound that had been written for his friend Sherri Martinelli on the death of her brother (Taylor 45). Appearing in TAR just over a month after Pound’s death in Venice, the poem reads as a dirge for Pound himself. Poetry from outside North America also appeared frequently. As a doctoral student in Ireland in the early 1970s, Walsh garnered submissions from several major Irish poets, including Seamus Deane, Thomas Kinsella, and Brian Moore (Donovan 221). Nevertheless, though TAR regularly featured celebrated poets and writers, MacSween remained faithful to the magazine’s founding purpose of providing a voice to those who might otherwise go unheard. “I’m not very anxious to get the writers that are considered important,” MacSween told Walsh in 1985: “those people crowd out the lesser-known people” (“Interview” 246).

Throughout the 1970s TAR retained the eclecticism that had come to define the magazine in its second volume. While Walsh had been chiefly responsible for the magazine’s design and layout, and had contributed the majority of the artwork contained in early issues, the magazine garnered an increasing number of visual art submissions in the years that followed. Other early contributors of artwork included Maureen Lonergan, John McCarthy, and editorial board member Charles Plummer. Artwork was also frequently incorporated into the poetry itself, or functioned on its own as a visual
narrative. The most notable examples of the latter were George Sanderson’s “X-Otics,” a series of simple line-drawings that sought to visually and often humorously render complex ideas and abstract concepts. It was Sanderson who, in 1973, secured for the fourteenth issue of TAR the artwork of Hungarian-born Montreal artist béla egyedi (Sanderson, “béla” 144). A miniscule line drawing of an owl that accompanied his poem “The Birth of a Poet,” it would prove to be the first of dozens of egyedi’s drawings that would appear in TAR until his death in 1982. Beginning with issue sixteen, in which his graphics were featured on both the cover and a centerfold, egyedi’s work appeared in nearly every issue of the magazine during the 1970s.

In addition to artwork and graphics, a crucial component of the magazine’s eclecticism was its inclusion of translations, which were published alongside original poems. Indeed, the presentation of a variety of languages and the publication of writers from around the world was a testament to the magazine’s cosmopolitanism, a quality that complemented TAR’s formal and stylistic eclecticism. TAR’s role as an early promoter of Southeast Asian literature in Canada, through its publication of such writers as Rohinton Mistry, reinforced this cosmopolitanism, even while the magazine remained firmly rooted in its regional milieu (Goellnicht 31). The principal force behind the addition of translations was Gertrude Sanderson. Soon after becoming a founding member of TAR’s editorial board, she began contributing translations and reviews of Quebecois and French literature. While Sanderson was not the first to contribute translations to TAR, she was the most prolific of the magazine’s translators, and her efforts were integral in introducing Quebecois literatures to an Anglophone audience. In issue seven she secured and translated “Art Poetique” by Gaston Miron, an integral figure in Quebec’s Quiet
Revolution. In the following issue she contributed translations of five poems by the Quebecois poet Jacques Brault. (She would later win the 1986 F.R. Scott Translation Award for her translation of Brault’s *L’en dessous l’admirable.*) Apart from prominent Quebecois poets, *TAR* published translations of writers as diverse as German playwright Bertold Brecht, the c. 5th-century Sanskrit poet Bhartrhari, Brazilian modernist poet Murilo Mendes, and 8th-century Chinese poet Li Po. Regular contributors of translations included Sylvia Diez, William McNaughton, and contributing editor Bill Tierney. While reprinted work comprised a very small portion of the magazine’s content, many of the translations were taken from previously published works, and previously published English-language works by major Anglophone writers also appeared in the magazine, including the work of Denise Levertov, W.B. Yeats, and others.

While poetry continued to dominate the pages of *TAR* throughout the 1970s and 1980s, criticism of regional, national, and international literature remained a prominent feature of the magazine’s content. Most of the editors, including the Sandersons, Currie, Walsh, and Tierney, were contributing editors who frequently published reviews and criticism in *TAR*. However, there were also several regular contributors of criticism from outside the group. Some of the most significant criticism to appear in the magazine focussed on the high modernists. Dudek frequently submitted articles along with his poetry, and articles by McLuhan and leading modernist critic Hugh Kenner also made more than one appearance in *TAR*. The most prolific of the magazine’s contributors of criticism, however, was MacSween himself, who used the reviews and articles section to explore a range of writers, but especially modernist poets like Pound, Hemingway, and Eliot, and Catholic writers such as Evelyn Waugh and Cardinal John Henry Newman.
Indeed, MacSween’s criticism reflected the immense breadth of his reading and the variety of his own taste in literature. Nevertheless, the twin influences of modernism and Catholicism always underpinned the magazine’s eclecticism, even after MacSween relinquished his position as editor.

Exhausted from a decade of editing the magazine and wishing to devote more time to his own poetry, MacSween resigned as editor of TAR in 1981. Editorship of the magazine was turned over to George and Gertrude Sanderson. George Sanderson became the editor-in-chief and Gertrude Sanderson became managing editor. They would edit eighty-two issues of the magazine over the course of more than twenty years until their retirement in 2001 (Sanger 145). The Sandersons were MacSween’s natural successors, and the transition was relatively seamless. Both had been founding members of the editorial board and both had contributed immensely to the character of the magazine under MacSween’s editorship. Furthermore, just as Fred Cogswell had benefitted from the mentorship of Alfred Bailey before assuming editorship of The Fiddlehead in 1952, George Sanderson had been mentored by MacSween since his undergraduate days at StFX. Indeed, the longevity of both TAR and The Fiddlehead might be understood to have resulted from a form of intellectual continuity, fostered by an intimate and sustained mentorship. Sanderson shared MacSween’s Catholic faith and cultural politics, and he was an even more vocal supporter of the communications theory of McLuhan than MacSween had been. As a result, the magazine did not undergo any significant changes when MacSween moved into the background. In fact, MacSween continued to serve as poetry editor for several years. Nevertheless, under the guidance of Sanderson the magazine continued to grow and to reach broader audiences across Canada and beyond.
while continuing to dedicate a portion of its space to content from local and regional writers and poets. Of course, no writer was published, regardless of origin, if work did not meet TAR’s editorial standards. As Peter Sanger observes, the magazine under Sanderson “featured no coterie, no pandering to the cliques. It contained writing which cut across entrenched regionalisms, both Canadian and international” (145). As a result of this unswerving policy of publishing an eclectic mix of good poetry, prose, criticism, and artwork, Sanderson’s editorship of TAR was, according to Sanger, “one of the most sustainedly attentive acts of continuity in Canadian literature” (145). Just as it had been under MacSween’s editorship – and as it is with most little magazines – the success of Sanderson’s editorship resulted from the galvanization of the local literary and arts communities. The Sandersons could not sustain the magazine alone, but, as Jeanette Lynes observes, “[George] created a community – no small feat in an era of atomization, dispersal, and alienation” (149). The continuity of the magazine’s editorial staff alone, with most editors serving for more than a decade, speaks to the existence of an integrated, co-operative, and dedicated community behind the production of TAR.

Prefacing a special double issue of TAR 1985 is an editorial by George Sanderson titled “Eclectic Dreams.” In it, Sanderson defends TAR against critics who have “accused” the magazine “of being too eclectic” (7). These critics felt that the editors’ “selections should be justified according to reasoned criteria” (7). Under such a policy, wrote Sanderson, “the gentle reader would proceed, guide firmly in hand, so as not to be cast into a state of puzzlement or alarm by exotic or unexpected scenes” (7). The accusation was, of course, ironic given that eclecticism had been the principle that had distinguished the magazine – later to be dubbed “Canada’s eclectic magazine” – since
MacSween assumed editorship in 1971. 1985 was a significant year for TAR, for it was the final year that MacSween would serve as the magazine’s poetry editor. Later that year Peter Sanger would carry on MacSween’s efforts as poetry editor, a role he still occupies. The magazine would not, however, abandon eclecticism, which Sanderson, reaffirming TAR’s commitment to McLuhanism, identified as “the natural child of our electronic world” (7).

Sanderson’s editorial is important, for it articulates a fusion of the magazine’s commitment to regional cultural development with its catholicity. “[B]eachcombing” was the word that Sanderson used to describe the role TAR played in searching out, discovering, and displaying, like beach-glass, a heterogeneous mix of regional, national, and international literature, artwork, and criticism. Eclecticism had governed an activist editorial polemic informed by the often difficult and controversial high modernism of Pound, while also allowing the magazine to appeal to a broad audience. Moreover, from the periphery of Canada, what Dudek called MacSween’s “small corner of Nova Scotia” (“Tragic Mode” 103), TAR strove to reflect, often successfully, the increasing cultural and social plurality of Nova Scotia, the Maritimes, and Canada. Unlike the “hairy, honest, manifesto-laden little mags of the forties,” TAR responded to a sociocultural environment that was becoming increasingly complex as rapid developments in technology and communications media seemed to threaten alternative print media with extinction (Sanderson, “Eclectic” 7). Of course, such developments have not yet undermined the value of print publications, and TAR continues to be published today. Nevertheless, TAR was both a product and influential cultural force of the 1970s. It resisted the nationalism of Canada’s post-Centennial era and contested the reductive antimodernism of post-war
Nova Scotia. At the same time, the editors of TAR recognized the debt they owed to a history of literary activism in the province and to a Catholic tradition of social activism in the region. It was a tradition they sought to recover and modernize. What Sanderson wrote about the importance of McLuhan to contemporary culture readily applies to TAR during its first decade and half of publication: it was a magazine that “always made one look forward and backward; [it] affirmed the continuity of history and the persistence of culture, while demanding a continuous attempt to overcome merely traditional ways of perceiving” (7).
Conclusion: Toward an Editorial Poetics of the Maritime Little Magazine

In his preface to a 1974 special literary supplement to the Halifax weekly The 4th Estate, Donald Cameron laments the obscurity of Atlantic Canadian writers. “With few exceptions,” writes Cameron, “Atlantic writers are remarkably little known in the region itself” (3). Cameron offers a number of plausible reasons for the relative neglect of Atlantic Canadian writers in the decades following the Second World War, including a lack of “good book stores” and the “indifference” of newspapers to “books and writing” (3). It is the first reason he cites, however, that is particularly revelatory of the state of literary print culture in the region: “Why [are Atlantic writers unknown]? Essentially, because imaginative writing in the Atlantic provinces is published almost exclusively in little magazines of miniscule circulation” (3). Cameron’s assessment is partially correct: in the post-war era most Maritime writers did publish “almost exclusively” in little magazines whose circulation was negligible. The recompense for their publication in those magazines, however, has not been obscurity. Today’s reader of Cameron’s comments can rest assured that the publication of Maritime writers in the pages of little magazines like The Fiddlehead, Katharsis, The Square Deal, Sand Patterns, and The Antigonish Review has not resulted in their neglect. Just over a decade ago, the editors of Coastlines: The Poetry of Atlantic Canada (2002) proclaimed the advent of a new renaissance in Atlantic Canadian writing. At the same time they celebrated this new renaissance, they acknowledged what they saw as “the lasting effects of that earlier renaissance,” the post-war renaissance “heralded” by “the oldest literary magazine in
Canada, *The Fiddlehead*” (“Introduction” 16, 15). It was *The Fiddlehead*, and in those Maritime little magazines that surfaced in its wake, that the “familiar, cherished voices” of now-established Maritime poets were first heard (16).

The import of Cameron’s observation is implicit: the region’s writers were not unknown because they had appeared in little magazines, but because the little magazine was the only forum available to them. From the 1940s through the 1970s there existed no other opportunities for writers in the region to reach a broad audience. Cameron is wrong, however, to equate “miniscule circulation” of magazines with the critical and popular neglect of the authors they published. As such, his remarks gesture toward a paradox that has characterized the medium of the little magazine since its inception. Upon the demise of his little magazine *Criterion* in 1939, T.S. Eliot wrote that “For the immediate future, perhaps for a long way ahead, . . . it must be the small and obscure papers and reviews, those which are hardly read by anyone but their own contributors, that will keep critical thought alive, and encourage authors of original talent” (271). As lofty as Eliot’s assertion may be, it is not hyperbolic. The little magazine has been the catalyst for the most significant literary movements of the twentieth century, and few poets of that century achieved acclaim without having first appeared in a little magazine; and yet, little magazines in their time are read by almost no one. Read by very few outside the coteries that produced them, little magazines served as the primary vehicles for the dissemination of unconventional and avant-garde literature. This was no less true in Canada than it was internationally and, contrary to Cameron’s introduction, it was especially true of the little magazine in the Maritime provinces.
Unlike in Canada’s urban centres, however, in the rural Maritime it was not merely the unwillingness of commercial publishers to print literature that was unpopular, unsalable, or controversial that impelled the adoption of alternative print media, it was the absence of a commercial publishing industry altogether. Thus, the little magazine, a medium of slight distribution but diffuse influence, provided the ideal forum for the modernist cultural formations that emerged in the post-mid-century Maritime milieu. The result was the establishment, over the course of three decades, of several little magazines in the region that were both similar to other little magazines across Canada and made distinct by their geopolitical distance from Canada’s large urban centres. Of course, each magazine within the region also responded to its own particular environment and often diverged in editorial direction from other magazines within the region. Nevertheless, a number of commonalities that cut across these sectional differences can be readily discerned as forming a basis for an editorial poetics of the Maritime little magazine.

Intent on establishing dynamic and responsive literary and arts communities in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, the cultural formations that produced Maritime little magazines shared, first and foremost, a commitment to regional cultural development. Indeed, if there was an overriding purpose that was common to all of the Maritimes’ post-mid-century little magazines, it was the dedication of their editors to fostering regional literature and art by providing writers with access to a readership where no such access was available. It was the lack of opportunity for local Fredericton writers to publish their poetry that prompted Bailey and the Bliss Carman Society to found *The Fiddlehead* in 1945, and it was the recognition of a similar situation in Nova Scotia, where MacSween saw that writers had “almost nothing” with regards to
publishing opportunities, that stimulated the establishment of TAR twenty-five years later (qtd. in Donovan 218). In PEI, too, the editors of Katharsis, The Square Deal, and Sand Patterns, though greatly divergent in their editorial directions, were united in their desire to provide a voice to emergent Island writers. Attendant upon this devotion to cultivating local talent and to bringing local cultural forms into step with the current literary and artistic trends elsewhere, was the recognition of a need to preserve a sense of regional and local tradition while exposing local readers to contemporary developments in national and international literatures.

These coincident objectives – to uphold tradition while modernizing regional literature – were variously expressed by the editors of the region’s little magazines. For Alfred Bailey, it meant the “continuation of tradition,” not by “slavish imitation of past themes and methods, nor . . . a complete break from the past,” but by “develop[ing] it to the point of contemporaneity” (“Foreword” 1). Similarly, for Ledwell, this dual aim was to be accomplished by integrating the Island’s oral tradition into the formal experimentation of modernist and postmodernist poetics. This approach evinced an appreciation for the fact that the modern poet “is not out of touch with the past,” but “a product of it” (Ledwell, “Poetry” 53). For Gool, the relationship between local tradition and modernity was best negotiated through the facilitation in Square Deal of a critical dialogue, and through the promotion of socially and politically conscious literature that aimed to preserve a sense of local history while welcoming beneficial modernization on the Island. Meanwhile, in Sand Patterns, where no such editorial direction was ever made explicit, the publication of both Romantic and modern verse forms evidences, at the least, an interest in promoting a diversity of content from Island writers, both traditional and
contemporary. Finally, MacSween recognized the inevitability of local and regional tradition and, via Pound, the need to "keep the intelligence in touch with the live culture of the past," while advocating for the production of a regional literature that transcended the particularities of place ("Ezra" 132).

The strategies employed by the editors of these magazines are indicative of the divergent editorial practices of each magazine, but they also exhibit an acute, shared awareness of socio-historical context, the distillation of which is most often identified with "tradition." The limited scope of an established or canonized tradition, however, inadequately captures the diffusion of cultural stimuli that engender periods of literary ferment. In the twentieth-century Maritime provinces, accompanying the palpable influence of an established literary tradition was a more subterranean socio-historical impetus, part of a phenomenon that Bailey attempts to capture when he writes of the cultural tradition that had given rise to The Fiddlehead: "The identity of sources of inspiration in earlier generations could, and often does become lost, while their effects persist as anonymous increments, mingling and enriching each other until a point of conspicuous endeavour is reached and passed" ("Literary" 1). With regards to the Maritimes' modernist cultural formations, such "anonymous increments" can be identified with preceding periods of social and cultural activism in the region, including the activist literary print culture in the region during the nineteenth century, the Catholic intellectual tradition in Eastern Nova Scotia, the Protestant educational reforms in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the modern arts movement of the 1930s in New Brunswick, the oral traditions of Prince Edward Island, and the liberal-Catholic Antigonish Movement in Nova Scotia.
In each case, these residual cultural and social forms provided Maritime little magazines with an activist impulse, compelling them to challenge the "selective tradition" of the dominant effective cultures in which they were produced. According to Marxist literary critic Raymond Williams, the selective tradition of a given society is formed through a process of cultural selection, whereby, "from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded" (1428). Bailey's comments regarding the socio-historical influences that contributed to the emergence of little magazine culture in the region would seem to suggest a parallel with Williams's cultural materialist perspective that culture, as a nexus of social values and forms, is a mix of dominant, residual, and emergent social practices. Under such a perspective, the modernist cultural formations in the Maritimes can be understood to have redeployed a combination of residual and emergent cultural forms in order to challenge the hegemony of Romanticism and antimodernism in the dominant culture of the region. Their incorporation of unconventional and avant-garde cultural forms and their publication of socially and politically responsive literature placed them in an oppositional relationship with the dominant cultures to which they responded. Of course, it should be noted that, even as they rejected Romanticism as outmoded and stagnant, the editors of these magazines did recognize and pay tribute to the dominant literary tradition of Canada and the region, a tradition best exemplified by the Confederation poets Bliss Carman and Charles G.D. Roberts. Furthermore, they drew heavily on an increasingly entrenched twentieth-century literary tradition marked by the ascendancy and canonization of international literary modernism. Indeed, the editorial poetics of Maritime little
magazines are best understood as having emerged in response to both pre-existing regional precedents and external cultural influences.

According to Andrew Thacker, the history of little magazines in Canada "points to the more general issue of how the modernist 'little magazine' as a generic form of publication spread across the diverse geographies of modernism, being inflected along the way by individual national cultures" (599). In so far as Thacker identifies the adoption of the little magazine throughout Canada as having been heavily influenced by continental and international modernism, his observations readily apply to little magazine culture in the Maritime provinces. However, it would be incorrect to suppose that the traditions of social activism and activist literary print culture in the Maritimes merely "inflected" an imported modernist print medium. Rather, the relationship between localism and cosmopolitanism in these magazines demonstrates the editors' attempts to negotiate their embrace of international modernist dicta with their commitment to regional cultural development. As such, the editorial poetics of Maritime little magazines involved a hybridization of imported and domestic meanings, values, practices, and forms.

In "Creative Moments in the Culture of the Maritime Provinces," Bailey gestures toward a poetic of cultural hybridity by invoking his concept of the "metropolitan process":

At the creative moment the interacting elements out of which the society is composed are suddenly transcended, and a proliferation of forms ensues that are new and different from any that could have appeared at an earlier period in the community’s course. Like metropolitan societies, which tend
to be worlds-in-themselves, small communities must become as mature as their narrow limits allow before they can fulfill the purpose that is within them. (46)

For Bailey, such maturation necessarily involves a confluence of diverse internal and external cultural stimuli, for cultural innovation “is best where two cultures interact, mutually enriching each other” (“Interview” 1). As M. Travis Lane observes, Bailey had “a strong sense of history as multi-cultured, multi-layered . . . [and] as a fluid and altering web of interactions rather than of stable patterns” (5). These positive reflections led Bailey to propose the “metropolitan process” as a normative concept,¹ as a process toward which the poet and society should aspire: “to become fully oneself, one must first lose oneself . . . in the vastness and infinite variety of the metropolitan process. Instead of trying to achieve identity by building a Chinese wall around one’s home territory, one should open one’s mind to all the winds that blow” (qtd. in Bauer 29). While Bailey provides the clearest and earliest articulation of what can be interpreted as the hybridity

¹ The so-called “metropolitan thesis” or “Laurentian thesis,” which holds that metropolitan centres have served as the major catalysts in Canada’s political and economic history, is grounded in the work of Bailey’s mentor Harold Adams Innis and in the later work of Donald Creighton. It was first articulated as a school of thought in J.M.S. Careless’s “Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History” in The Canadian Historical Review 35.1 (1954): 1-21. Careless does not, however, propose the metropolitan thesis as a normative concept, whereas Bailey seems to suggest that metropolitanism is a process that can be redeployed in order to culturally enrich societies – such as Fredericton – existing on Canada’s geopolitical and cultural periphery.
of Maritime little magazine culture, it was a feature that characterized nearly all of the region’s little magazines, revealing a relationship between the region’s little magazines and the region itself that is far more complex than the oft-used “regionalist” designation would imply.

In fact, the Maritime region itself is less a homogenous cultural entity than it is a nebulous constellation of heterogeneous communities. As Herb Wyile observes, “region is increasingly being viewed not as a geographical/cultural/political given but as a construct, a kind of imagined and at times strategic sense of cohesion and community, projected usually from without but also from within” (8). For the Maritime provinces, this homogenizing process has often resulted from the imposition of the regional designation onto the provinces by federalist forces. Nevertheless, popular and antimodern cultural production within the region itself, often in service of the tourism industries of the three provinces, has also contributed to the misconception that the provinces comprise a homogenous cultural region coextensive with the political boundaries of the combined provinces. Little magazines in the three Maritime provinces, however, offer a striking instance of intraregional and intraprovincial cultural differentiation. Nowhere is such internal conflict more evident than on PEI, a province typically cast as a uniform community characterized by geographical boundedness and cultural isolation. The establishment over the course of just five years of Katharsis, The Square Deal, and Sand Patterns, magazines whose divisions and conflicts were as marked as their similarities, is a testament to the existence of interconnected but ideologically distinct literary and arts communities within the province. Given the cultural and social differentiation within PEI alone, it is unsurprising that the editors of Katharsis rejected the cultural nationalism that
swept Canada in the post-Centennial era in favour of a more critical editorial polemic. This is not to suggest that the region-as-construct was not employed strategically by the editors of these magazines. On the contrary, a shared sense of disenfranchisement, the absence in all three provinces of a commercial press industry, and their geopolitical marginality meant that the cultural formations in the post-mid-century Maritime milieu shared a unique sense of place that was both rooted in the local and receptive to outside cultural influences.

In fact, the hybridization of localist cultural concerns with a diversity of imported cultural meanings, values, and forms is suggestive of a sense of place more closely aligned with concepts of “rooted cosmopolitanism” than with a nationalistic regionalism. According to Will Kymlicka and Kathryn Walker, “in the contemporary world human beings often combine profound local, ethnic, religious, or national attachments with a commitment to cosmopolitan values and principles that transcend those more local boundaries” (1). This recognition, that communal affiliations are formative elements of cultural identity that do not preclude a fidelity to cosmopolitan values, led to Anthony Appiah’s formulation in the 1990s of “rooted cosmopolitanism” and to the subsequent proposal of Homi Bhabha for a “vernacular cosmopolitanism” – a “cosmopolitan community envisaged in a marginality” (Kymlicka 2; Bhabha 195-6). Debated and discussed primarily as a normative concept attentive to contemporary transnationalism and globalization, the notion of “rooted cosmopolitanism” can nevertheless be used to re-evaluate literary-historical narratives that have attempted to place Canadian modernisms
into one of two mutually exclusive camps, “the native tradition” or “the cosmopolitan tradition.” Under such a narrative, Maritime little magazines have been generally dismissed as narrowly regionalist publications of local interest. However, a more in-depth examination of the editorial practices of these magazines reveals an outward-looking cultural program founded on a version of rooted cosmopolitanism that involved the hybridization of local tradition with imported cultural forms – a cultural particularism “capable of acknowledging broader allegiances” and extraterritorial influences (Weinstock 87). At the level of form and content, this rooted cosmopolitanism was integrated into the magazines according to the principle of eclecticism, a principle that encouraged these magazines to publish local and regional writers alongside Canadian and international writers, and which welcomed a diversity of traditional and contemporary literary modes from within and from without the region.

2 This notorious division and the debate it engendered can be traced to A.J.M Smith’s introduction to *The Book of Canadian Poetry* (1943). In it, Smith had divided Canadian poets under the headings “The Rise of a Native Tradition” and “Modern Poetry: the Cosmopolitan Tradition.” John Sutherland, who felt that it was modern Canadian poetry rather than 19th-century Romanticism that was local and particular, attacked Smith in his Introduction to *Other Canadians* (1947). The resulting division, which saw Patrick Anderson’s *Preview* take up the cosmopolitan cause against the nationalist modernism of Sutherland’s *First Statement*, has been exaggerated and, according to Dean Irvine, the “two magazines were in reality far less divisive” (617). Nevertheless, the perceived division is demonstrative of the way in which urban-cosmopolitanism has often been aligned with literary modernism in Canada’s literary-historical narrative, tending to obscure marginal, peripheral, or postcolonial modernisms such as those that emerged in the Maritime provinces at mid-century.
In a 1973 letter to the editor titled “For Literary Anarchy” and published in *Canadian Poetry*, Fred Cogswell defended Canada’s literary magazines, and *The Fiddlehead* in particular, against Ralph Gustafson’s accusation that writers within but especially beyond Canada “now have too easy a time in getting their work published in Canada” (Cogswell 128). It was a criticism that betrayed the nationalist sentiments that held sway in the post-Centennial era and one that was at odds with the rooted cosmopolitanism endorsed by the editors of little magazines in the Maritimes. Cogswell’s rejoinder reaffirms the inclusiveness that had defined his decade-and-a-half editorship of *The Fiddlehead*:

> It seems to me that after the dearth and difficulty of publication in the 1930’s and 1940’s, and the kind of literary straight jackets imposed on publishers and reviewers in the 1950’s by the influence of Smith and Frye, Canadian poetry at last is emerging into the kind of eclecticism (for which *The Fiddlehead* was a pioneer and of which Fiddlehead Poetry Books are an exemplification) where “every bird/on every spray/can sing his own song/in his own way.” (128)

For Cogswell, the publication of literature from both inside and outside Canada held out more promise for the future of Maritime and Canadian literature than “any practice of limiting publication to only those poems which fit the dimensions of some preconceived procrustean bed which exists in a critic’s mind as the proper shape and size for poetry” (128). Of course, Cogswell had not been criticized for having explicitly endorsed a concept of rooted cosmopolitanism, a concept that did not yet exist in the 1970s. Rather, what Cogswell had been criticized for was the eclecticism of *The Fiddlehead*, and it is eclecticism that provides the clearest manifestation of the ideological commitments that
underwrite an editorial poetics of the Maritime little magazine. This was an eclecticism of form, of content, and of contributors, whose communal affiliations and origins had little bearing on whether or not their work would be published in Maritime little magazines. Eclecticism thus involved an editorial allowance whereby both the rooted and the cosmopolitan received equal space.

In fact, eclecticism was a guiding principle that also reflected the plurality of individuals involved in the production of Maritime little magazines, many of whom were not from the Maritimes at all – Bailey had been born and raised in Quebec, Desmond Pacey was born in New Zealand and raised in England and Ontario, Pat Walsh was from Massachusetts, George Sanderson was from Montreal, Gertrude Sanderson and Hilda Woolnough were from Ontario, and Réshard Gool was from South Africa. Prior to their establishment of literary periodicals, these diverse individuals came together to engage in a dialogic exchange of literature, art, and ideas that helped to galvanize local literary and arts communities. The Bliss Carman Society in Fredericton; the houses of Jim and Connie Little, and Réshard Gool and Hilda Woolnough in Charlottetown; and the discussion groups hosted by MacSween in Antigonish all evidence what Michael Levenson calls “the positive conditions of a modernism of small social cells” (6). Little magazines became the public manifestations of these collective “social cells,” in which the cooperative material production of literary periodicals “democratiz[ed] access to literature, ideas and publication” in the region and beyond (Tremblay and Rose 20).

Given the heterogeneous character of the cultural formations that produced little magazines in the post-mid-century Maritime provinces, it is perhaps unsurprising that an inclusive and eclectic editorial program was a defining feature of those magazines.
Of course, it must be admitted that it is unlikely that little magazines could have taken hold in the already-conservative Maritime milieu without embracing catholic editorial policies that made the publication of good writing, regardless of form or genre, the first priority of the editors. Eclecticism was not only a function of rooted cosmopolitanism or aesthetic innovation, it also addressed a need to represent Maritime writers regardless of the literary styles and forms in which they chose to write. Indeed, this desire to be representative of contemporary regional, national, and international writing was more fundamental than the need to appeal to a conservative readership. Furthermore, the eclecticism of each magazine was often justified in divergent ways. The most unequivocally eclectic magazine of them all, *TAR*, justified its eclecticism by reference to the communications theory of McLuhan. At the same time, its inclusive editorial policy also reflected the faithfulness of its editors to the Catholic intellectual tradition. All the while, MacSween united these influences with that of literary modernism, identifying in the work of Ezra Pound the same “immensely assimilative” tendency that was apparent in each issue of *TAR* (“Ezra” 133). In contrast, *The Square Deal* grounded its eclecticism in the liberal democratic principle of free expression, arguing that “any democratic government needs the criticism of an effective and vocal opposition” (Gool 4). Different still was the eclecticism of *The Fiddlehead*, a feature initially promoted by Elizabeth Brewster and subsequently elevated to the level of editorial policy by Cogswell. Bailey’s own ethnographic-historical work also informed the magazine’s eclecticism via his fidelity to both to localism and cosmopolitanism – or, to adapt Bailey’s term, metropolitanism. In fact, in light of the catholicity that
undergirded the editorial policies of Maritime little magazines, it might be asked whether these magazines were “modernist” at all.

If understood to denote the existence of a strict modernist criteria governing the formal, aesthetic, and ideological components of the literature they published, the “modernist” appellation is hardly tenable when applied to Maritime little magazines. While some, namely The Fiddlehead, Katharsis, and TAR, exhibited a strong editorial bias toward the publication of modernist verse, none of the post-mid-century little magazines in the Maritimes limited their content to literary modernism. However, if “modernist” is understood to denote these magazines’ adherence to a polemical cultural program directed toward “servicing new writing, introducing readers to new movements in the arts across different continents, engendering debate, disseminating ideas, and challenging settled assumptions,” then the Maritime provinces’ little magazines were unequivocally modernist (Thacker and Brooker 3). In fact, the qualities that these little magazines shared most with Anglo-American modernist magazines of the first half of the twentieth century were also those qualities that complemented their efforts to reinvigorate and develop regional culture.

Contrary to the mistaken assumption that modernism necessarily entails the acceptance of “enlightenment rationality” and “traditional ‘elitist’ notions of aesthetics,” Vicki Mahaffey and Cassandra Laity point out that contemporary understandings of modernity suggest “a highly contradictory movement, often characterized by startling juxtapositions and incongruities, whose criticism and theory both affirmed traditional notions of ‘high’ art and drew links between the modernist poetics of change and the culture at large” (658). What Mahaffey and Laity call “the modernist poetics of change”
can help to situate Maritime little magazines within the broader cultural and historical context of modernity. For regardless of their aesthetic sensibilities, the mid-century cultural formations in the Maritime provinces shared a conviction that the literary activism they undertook in their magazines had the potential to effect broad changes in their respective communities. They had the notion that by challenging the values and meanings of the dominant culture and by modernizing the stagnating literary tradition of the region, they could contribute to the betterment of the societies in which they lived. Whether or not they were able to effect such broad-based socio-cultural reform is questionable, but what is undeniable is the immense contribution they made to the cultural history and literature of the region, and of Canada at large.

For many of those who participated in twentieth-century Maritime cultural formations, the impact of their endeavours is best measured by the number and quality of local writers whose literary careers began in the pages of the region's little magazines. Nevertheless, the contributions of Maritime modernist formations to local and regional culture were not confined to the literary activism undertaken in little magazines. Their broader ideological commitment to fostering an environment that was receptive to creative innovation and cultural pursuit also manifested itself in a variety of initiatives beyond periodical publication. Such extra-literary endeavours included, but were not limited to, the expansion of libraries, such as Bailey’s work at UNB’s University Library (the Harriet Irving Library since 1967) and MacSween’s work at StFX’s College Library (the Angus L. Macdonald Library since 1965); the creation of provincial archival repositories, most notably the New Brunswick Provincial Archives for which Bailey had been the primary advocate; the creation of arts centres, such as Lucy Jarvis’s Observatory
Art Centre at UNB and Hilda Woolnough’s George Street Gallery in Charlottetown; and the establishment of provincial arts councils, writers’ federations, and the institution of the Maritime Writers’ Workshop in 1975. Finally, the expansion of little magazines into small press publishing enterprises has led to the establishment of a small but flourishing press industry in the region. Fiddlehead Poetry Books, established and run by Fred Cogswell as an extension of The Fiddlehead in 1954, published more than three hundred poetry books before Cogswell’s retirement in 1981. Peter Thomas, who assumed control after Cogswell’s retirement, added fiction and non-fiction to the press’s catalogue under the imprint Goose Lane Editions (MacSkimming 248). In PEI, Gool’s Square Deal Publications produced more than thirty titles between 1970 and 1980, and, as Roy MacSkimming observes, “Square Deal’s niche was assumed almost immediately by Ragweed Press” (264). The Antigonish Press and Sand Patterns Publication Association, while not as prolific as Fiddlehead or Square Deal, similarly contributed to the publication, dissemination, and critical recognition of regional literature. Significantly, all of these initiatives were formed by or in collaboration with editors, writers, or artists associated with Maritime little magazines and were named after them as an indication of their origin.

In addition to demonstrating the breadth of the modernist enterprise in the region, these initiatives serve to underscore the centrality of educational institutions in the history of regional cultural development. Though The Fiddlehead began as an independent publication, it was always closely associated with the University of New Brunswick and became an official publication of that institution in the late 1960s. Similarly, though Katharsis began as a centennial publication, it was funded first by St. Dunstan’s
University and then the University of Prince Edward Island, and was always edited by members of the university community. Like St. Francis Xavier University, SDU had been founded as a Catholic diocesan college in 1855 before becoming a small liberal arts university in the 1940s, eventually merging with Prince of Wales College to form UPEI in 1969. *The Square Deal* was never officially affiliated with a university, but Gool was a professor of political science at UPEI and many contributors, including Ledwell, were also faculty members there. Similarly, *Sand Patterns* was not officially funded by any single university, but its layout, design, and printing were undertaken by Purdy and other members of the design program at Holland College. Finally, though MacSween was a fierce and vocal critic of university institutions, *TAR* was, from the start, a publication of StFX.

The institutional affiliation of the region’s little magazines has tended to earn them the pejorative epithet “university mag,” a term which incorrectly implies a lack of editorial autonomy and a consequent inferiority to independent magazines. In reality, Maritime little magazines often maintained oblique and at times uneasy relationships with the institutions that funded them as a result of the editors’ insistence on editorial autonomy. More importantly, however, in a region without access to commercial publishing, arts capital, or substantial cultural resources, universities have been crucial sources of financial and intellectual capital. Providing loci around which intellectuals, writers, and artists could coalesce and collaborate, universities have often been necessary for the galvanization of the region’s diverse literary and arts communities. Nevertheless, as universities in the region continue to be plagued by decreasing enrollments, tuition caps, and static government funding, the implementation of austerity measures by
university administrations threatens to cut off financial support for the region’s little magazines, which are largely seen as “unsustainable” in a neoliberal marketplace.

In June 2013 a Presidential Task Force responsible for “Sustaining the Academic Priorities of St. Francis Xavier University” was established with a view to determining future resource allocation for departments and programs within StFX by identifying those programs that were sustainable and those that were not. When the final report was released in October 2014, TAR was listed as “unsustainable” and was “recommended as a candidate for phase out” (“Sustaining” 58). Predictably, the university received negative feedback from readers, supporters, contributors, and editors of TAR. Among those who responded directly to the report was Sheldon Currie, one of the original editorial board members of MacSween’s group. Pointing to the fact that TAR had become “one of the most prestigious literary reviews in the country” and “a starting point for now well-known writers in Canada, United States, England and Australia,” Currie appealed to the university to uphold the value of arts and culture in the face of a “digitally dazed public” (1). “The undeniable value of The Antigonish Review to writers in every province in Canada and beyond, and boon to the reputation of the university,” wrote Currie, “is certainly an asset worthy of serious consideration” (2). The problem, as Currie saw it, was not the unprofitability of a review that sustained itself primarily from external funding anyway, it was the failure of the university to cultivate the appreciation of arts and culture that TAR had helped to create. This lack of appreciation, however, is symptomatic of the critical neglect of Maritime little magazines and their contribution to Canada’s literary history.
Little magazines have long been mined for insight into prominent literary figures and their earliest publications. Moreover, within the broader field of modernist studies, the little magazine has become increasingly recognized over the past decade as a significant cultural and historical phenomenon in its own right. This growth in interest has resulted partially from improved access to early little magazines through digitization projects such as The Modernist Journals Project at Brown University (American) and The Modernist Magazines Project (British). In Canada, the nation-wide collaborative project Editing Modernism in Canada Project (EMiC) has sought to recover critically neglected modernisms through the digitization of unpublished or out-of-print modernist publications. Under the auspices of EMiC, Graham Jensen at Dalhousie University is currently working to establish the Canadian Modernist Magazines Project. Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker also point out that the so-called “materialist turn” in modernist studies has led to “increased questions of text and historicity” (6). As George Bornstein observes, the study of modernist magazines and the invaluable insights that can be gained from direct engagement with the primary texts of modernism demonstrates the importance of “examining modernism in its original sites of production and the continually shifting physicality of its texts and transmissions” (1; Thacker 5).

Given the immense and especially vital role that the little magazine has played in the publication and dissemination of literature in the Maritime provinces, it is reasonable to presume a scholarly interest in the twentieth-century Maritime little magazine among the region’s literary critics and scholars. Such interest, however, is all but non-existent. There currently exist no sustained critical treatments of either The Fiddlehead or TAR, while Katharsis, The Square Deal, and Sand Patterns go almost entirely unmentioned in
the literary history of Canada. Furthermore, while these magazines were particularly representative and influential, they were neither the first nor the last little magazines of their kind to emerge in the twentieth century. Such magazines as *The Dalhousie Review* (1921- ), an academic journal with a strong literary bias published out of Halifax, and *Pottersfield Portfolio* (1979-85), an influential little magazine published out of Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia, by Lesley Choyce, are but two of several significant little magazines that have contributed to the region’s print culture. Others include *Direction* (1943-6), *Cormorant* (Saint John, 1983-99), and, more recently, *The Nashwaak Review* (Fredericton, 1994- ) and *blue SHIFT* (Charlottetown, 1998-2000).

Together, Maritime little magazines represented the vanguard for the publication and dissemination of literature, art, and ideas in the Maritimes, and they have been central to some of the most vibrant creative moments in the history of the region. Developing a distinct editorial poetic marked by a commitment to regional cultural development, rooted cosmopolitanism, eclecticism, modernism, literary activism, and broad cultural stewardship, these “little magazines of miniscule circulation” made an incalculable contribution to regional and national culture (Cameron 3). The critical neglect in which they now languish, however, has obscured this vital role and the contribution they made to the literary history of Canada. The need for studies of twentieth-century print culture in the Maritime provinces is particularly acute. What is at stake is not only a recognition of the formative role played by little magazines in the history and development of the region, but also the preservation and continuation of a cultural tradition that has the potential to inform and enrich contemporary efforts to foster cultural renewal and regional identity.
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