

The Rising Village and Acadia:
Representations of the Canadian Maritimes before
Evangeline

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Published in 1847, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Evangeline* has influenced the construction of images the Canadian Maritimes. While *Evangeline*'s Acadian-oriented literary images of the Maritimes came to be a part of commercial image of the area and have attracted serious academic attention, the earlier literary images of the area unaffected by *Evangeline* have been less studied. Therefore, this article attempts to explore two of the representative long poems written in English before the publication of *Evangeline*: Oliver Goldsmith's *The Rising Village* (1825) and Joseph Howe's *Acadia* (1874) to reveal the images of Canadian Maritimes untouched by the American poem.⁽¹⁾ Unlike *Evangeline*, which focuses on Acadians in the eighteenth century, the early Canadian poems do not willingly refer to the French people who had been living there before the arrival of British settlers to emphasize the Britishness of the Maritimes: Goldsmith totally ignores French culture and fancifully invents a British colony from the wilderness; Howe also starts the narrative of the European settlement in the Maritimes with the arrival of the British although he shows sympathy for Acadians who lost their homeland in their battles with the British.

1. Oliver Goldsmith's *The Rising Village*

Oliver Goldsmith's *The Rising Village* (1825) is the first Canadian book of poetry published in London in (Goldsmith xi) while the author held a position in the British Marine's commissariat (1810-1855). Born as a great-nephew of the Anglo-Irish author Oliver Goldsmith, Canadian Goldsmith was born in St. Andrews, a port town established by Loyalists in New Brunswick after the American Revolution, in 1794.

He died in Liverpool, England in 1861.⁽²⁾ His father, Henry Goldsmith, was a Loyalist who left Ireland for New York in 1776 to fight for Britain during the American Revolution and later immigrated to a newly established British colony of New Brunswick in 1785. The family experienced fire and flooding in the frontier and was forced to move to Annapolis Royal, and then to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in search of a better life. It is clear that the experience of the Goldsmith family in the New World heavily influenced the creation of *The Rising Village* as Goldsmith states in the dedication to his brother that the poem was written to “describe the sufferings which the early settlers experienced, the difficulties which they surmounted, the rise and progress of a young country, and the prospects which promise happiness to its future possessors” (4).

As it reflects the British character of Maritimers in the earlier nineteenth century before Joseph Howe’s *Acadia*, this examination uses the reprint of the first edition published in London, instead of the 1834 first Canadian edition which was updated and revised (xxviii).⁽³⁾ Exploring each stage of the development of a village and the change of the landscape along with it in the poem, this section will show that Goldsmith’s representation of the development of the Maritimes is thoroughly constructed from his British point of view. As Goldsmith reconstructs the process of the development, the First Nations, who are simply called “the Indians,” are chased away from the village as a part of the wilderness that is increasingly marginalized; and Acadians who contributed to the development of the area more than any group of Europeans are virtually ignored in his narration.

The Rising Village was written as an answer poem from the New World to his great-uncle’s *The Deserted Village* (1770), a heroic couplet which laments the decline of an Irish farming village Auburn whose residents have left there for elsewhere. The poem was not solely published for the sake of literature. As the 1825 preface by John Inglis indicates, it was written in his attempt to fund his “aged and widowed” mother (2). In addition, his excessive praise for the Earl of Dalhousie (Governor of Nova Scotia, 1816-1820) who called Goldsmith back to Halifax in 1818, implies his hope for career progress along with his political stance, which was not far apart from that of the colonial elites of the 1820s.⁽⁴⁾

The Rising Village is made of 33 verse paragraphs of 582 lines. There are two major reasons for his writing this poem in heroic couplet, a poetic form most often

used in eighteenth-century Britain, in nineteenth-century Canada. Firstly, it is used to evoke *The Deserted Village*, which sung in the same form. Second, as Kenneth J. Hughes persuasively argues, the heroic couplet represents the well-ordered British society whose social and political structures Goldsmith hoped to transplant in Canada (31).

The poem's layered structure also parallels to the political structure that the poet hoped for the colony. The poet's confirmation in the last paragraph that Acadia's future development is with Britain shows that the model of development is obviously Britain. To make this policy clear not only in its content but also in its structure, Goldsmith frames the development of Acadia with a well-cultivated British landscape and condition, a model for Canadian development (Paragraph 3 and Paragraphs 30 through 32). The framing paragraphs also internalize a symbolical structure in which the poet celebrates British landscape and then switches his vision to rapidly developing Canadian landscapes. The poet's intention here is to justify the British rule which enabled such development. The paragraph 32 which begins with "Oh, England!" (553) praises England as follow:

The nurse of science, and the seat of arts,
The home of fairest forms and gentlest hearts;
The land of heroes, generous, free, and brave,
The noblest conqu' rors of the field and wave;
Thy flag, on ev' ry sea and shore unfurl' d,
Has spread thy glory, and they thunder hurl' d.

(550-60)

Significantly, this paragraph finishes with the lines that validate British colonization: "To sinking nations life and freedom gave,/ 'Twas thine to conquer, as 'twas thine to save" (567-68). After these lines, the poet's eyes suddenly shift to Acadia:

Then, blest Acadia! ever may thy name,
Like hers, be graven on the rolls of fame;
May all thy sons, like hers, be brave and free,
Possessors of her laws and liberty;

Heirs of her splendor, science, pow' r, and skill,
And through succeeding years her children still.

(569-74)

Thus, the poet hopes the area to be the heir of Britain.

Another layer can be found further within. The description of the development of Acadia is divided into two segments: between Paragraphs 4 and 16 and Paragraphs 27 through 28. Changes in the social lives of villagers are depicted inside this framework of Acadian development. British settlers, whose success model is that of Britain, develop the Maritimes, and that developed society raises its members.

In the narrative, Goldsmith reconstructs his version of early Acadian history from a British perspective. The beginning of *The Rising Village*, in which someone called “you” is crying over “Auburn’s village” (14) in *The Deserted Village*, emphasizes the connection of the new village in the Maritimes and the old world. The poet recommends “you” to leave the village where “their early joys can never more regain” (16) for the new village “where happier prospects rise,” that is, for the “the Rising Village” (26). Contradictory to such invitation, the poet does not celebrate the beauty of nature in Acadia but denounces it as “dark and drear” (43) “desert woods and wilds” (44) in which “savages” and “beasts” (45) reside. Such negative description of Acadian landscape is compared to the British landscapes associated with positive adjectives such as “chaste” (27), “charming” (29), “splendid” (29), “bright” (30), and “boundless” (30) and its sophisticated terrain with “[c]ities” (31), “plains” (31), and “majestic palaces” (45).

From Paragraph 4 to Paragraph 6, the poet depicts the two major struggles of newly arrived settlers “in search of wealth, of freedom, and of ease” (52): the pioneers’ life in the wilderness to cut down the trees and start cultivation and their confrontation with the Indians, who probably are the Mi’kmaq considering the setting of the poem. Acadians who arrived here earlier had a friendly relationship with the Mi’kmaq, so it is reasonable to conclude that the settlers described here are the British as Goldsmith’s reference to Auburn also indicates.⁽⁵⁾

Goldsmith’s representation of the Indians is generally demonic. Unlike Howe’s which will be discussed later, he shows little sympathy for the Indians. Notably, Goldsmith carefully avoids depicting the settlers as villains. No allusion to the British

as intruders in the land of the Indians is made, nor is settlers' chasing away of the Indians described. Instead, the settlers are depicted as honest hard workers against the Indians as rogues who interrupt the short rest of settlers. The Indians are directly linked to the image of death. They, the "murd'rous band" (85), attack the village with "death and terror" (82). The poet further demonizes the Indians whose calls are "hideous" (85) and whose "bloody footsteps" "desolate the land" (86). In addition, the Indians are described as animals which belong to the wilderness rather than human civilization. They are described as nocturnal animals who prefer to work through the night and whose cries, with those of "savage beasts" (95), scare the settlers in the night. As they are treated as wild animals, the Indians move away to "far distant wilds" in search of their prey and safety when settlers turn the forests into fields. Here, Goldsmith carefully constructs the narrative so as to describe the relocation as the Indians' own decision.

The development of the area is typically described as the enlargement of the fields for cultivation and the growth of population along with it. At the end of the fourth paragraph, an agrarian community emerges with great speed, rapidly clearing the forest to cultivate corn fields in which "the golden corn triumphant waves its head" (71-72). Then "the settlers' humble cottages are spread" (124) on the land where they used to lived in lonely homes "amid a wilderness of trees" (69) or later in "scattered huts extend" (105). The change in the form of residence from a "hut" to a "cottage" also suggests the improvement in the quality of their lives in the village.

Following the expansion of the fields, the increase of village members and prosperity (128) is the beginning of the village "social life" (128-29). The poem, which only describes the "work" up to this point, begins to describe the changes in the social lives of villagers in-between Paragraphs 17 and 26. Places of socialization begin with a "tavern" (133) for travelers and a bonfire on a winter day (157-56), and finally a church is erected in Paragraph 10 (167). As the creation of "prosperity" from farming suggests, the arrival of a commercial stage in the community soon turns the village into a town-like village (220). There, a "[p]edlar" builds his store and becomes a merchant (208), a doctor with "doubtful skills" starts his business (221), and unrefined teachers teach in a village school (235). The poet who compares the condition of the village with that of Britain, however, shows his dissatisfaction with the qualities of doctors and teachers.

What happens next to the village where institutions for socialization are established is mating. In this part, the lives of lovers and married couples are described. As if stressing the importance of mating in the development of the village, it is located in the heart of the poem. However, the relationship between Albert and Flora, which is described at length in the core of the poem (287-444), is disastrous (339-40).⁽⁶⁾ There have been active debates over the interpretation of this episode. While R. E. Rashley simply puts that it is a device to include the moral lessons in the most important part of the poem (29), Hughes, a nationalist critic, tries to parallel their relationship to that of Britain and Acadia (34-35). Opposing Hughes's understanding, W. J. Keith interprets the failure of the relationship as a warning to the village, which had been experiencing only success (11). Gerald Lynch, who reads this poem from a different angle, argues that the poem's central theme is the control of external and human "nature," thus the episode is an example of the failure of such control (35-36). Although the possibility of interpretation is infinite, I propose to understand this episode as a warning that the maturity of the Acadian external society heavily influences the moral condition of the members of the society: the unsatisfactory education system as well as the vice brought to the society by the material success may prevent the further development of the village (Jackel 163).

After the episode of Albert and Flora, the development of the village enters a new phase. It is typically represented as a change of landscape into that of a picturesque painting in Paragraph 27. There, the panoramic view of the village from the hill has been conquered and organized within the poet's perspective and well set within a picturesque convention. The poet, remarkably, from "some easy hill's ascending height" (456), depicts "marsh" (455), "meads" (457), "orchards" (461), "gardens" (463), "rill" (478) and "vale" (475). The poet refers even to a "saw-mill" (466) which predicts the arrival of the age of industrialization and "graves" (471) which impress readers with the fact that the village finally has its own history.

The poet, however, comes to show his fear over the shadow of industrialization as he negatively describes the saw-mill "rude," the adjective he uses for the Indians as well (466). Moreover, nature, which has been the subject to be developed, changes its character to "nature to be protected" in this stage. This is typically represented in the poet's attitude toward silence, which had once been featured as a part of lonely and dark forests (63). In this phase, the poet wishes that future possessors of the land

will keep the “sweet tranquil charm” (485) of Acadia (480-89). The poet thereby shows that the ideal society for him is agrarian, not fully industrial.

Thus, *The Rising Village* describes the development of Acadia under the governance of the British. However, Goldsmith’s reconstruction of the history of this area clearly lacks a crucial factor in its history: Acadians and their contributions to the development of the Maritimes. Despite his habitual use of the word “Acadia,” the English name of the French colony “Acadie” whose territorial expansion covered the most of the current Maritime provinces, he never mentions the word Acadian(s) or their history within the poem. His sole reference to the word “the French” is, strikingly, in a note in the margin of page 34 when he uses the word “Scotia” (531) instead of Acadia: “The provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick now comprehend that part of British North America, which was formerly denominated Acadia by the French, and Nova Scotia, by the English. I have here used the name of Scotia, as more convenient and applicable to the subject.” This note clearly tells that Goldsmith has sufficient knowledge to reconstruct the history “correctly” and his deletion of Acadians from the literary landscape is intentional. His insensibility to use Nova Scotia and Acadia interchangeably, in addition to his minimization of the explanation of the French heritage in the margin, particularly symbolizes the attitude with which he has been reconstructing the area’s development: Anglocentrism. The absence of a pastoral stage with cattle in this poem, of which D. M. R. Bentley has pointed out (35-34; Meek 230), may be a result of Goldsmith’s neglect of Acadians who were known to be good cattle farmers (Griffiths 26).

Acadians had cultivated the land since their arrival in Port Royal in 1605. Goldsmith’s depiction of Acadia as perfect wilderness at the arrival of the British settlers does not match with reality. This description neglecting the French may be possible if the title of his poem is *St. Andrews, NB* or *Nova Scotia* as it clearly associates the image with the British settlers. However, the title of the poem is *The Rising Village*, which is a nameless, generic village in the area called “Acadia” instead of “Nova Scotia” throughout the poem. Therefore, it is hard to avoid its French-associated images.

Poetry is fictional so that its historical correctness should not be questioned. There is nothing to restrict a Loyalist descendent from writing of the glory of the British Empire in a heroic couplet without referring to the French residents who lived

there before. However, considering that poetry can distort the “fact” to visualize the “truth” desired in the poet’s imagination, as Hughes insightfully puts (28), Goldsmith’s treatment of Acadians in the poem should not be overlooked as an example of the “genesis” of the colony imagined by colonial elites who shared their idea with him. Thus, Goldsmith rewrote the beginning of the settlement of Acadia as a heroic British battle in the wilderness mastered by the Indians. The British successfully took over the central role in the “genesis” of the Maritimes as a Europeans’ colony.

Indeed, Oliver Goldsmith is not the only one poet from the pre-Confederation Maritimes who rewrote the early history of Maritimes in their poetic imagination. As it will be discussed in the following section, Joseph Howe, another Loyalist descendent from Nova Scotia, reconstructed the history in a similar manner.

2. Joseph Howe’s *Acadia*

Joseph Howe’s *Acadia* is another example of ante-*Evangeline* representation of the area by an English Maritime poet written after *The Rising Village*. Although the poem was published posthumously in 1874, M. G. Parks, with his massive research of the author’s manuscripts, estimated that most of the poem was written between 1832 and 1833 (xii). In this section, the representations of the Maritimes by Howe, particularly changes in its natural and cultural landscape caused by development, will be compared with those of Goldsmith to find commonalities expressed before the publication of *Evangeline*. How the poet constructs each stage of the development and the poet’s intention behind recurring application of similar scenes in the different stages of the history will be focused on. Although the poem has been criticized for its structural looseness, this analysis will show that it has a certain structural integrity when it is read as a poem which represents “the love for homeland” as it has been asserted by critics as early as J. D. Logan in 1924 (60-61) and V. B. Rhodenizer (46) in 1930.

Critically neglected for a long time, the close reading of Joseph Howe’s *Acadia* started when the full-text of *Acadia* was included in David Sinclair’s *Nineteenth-Century Narrative Poems* (1972) and Howe’s *Poems and Essays* was republished (1874; 1973) in the nationalistic atmosphere of the 1970s (Zenchuk 50). For their chronological,

thematic, and geographical proximity, some of the previous studies, such as those by R. E. Rashley, Fred Cogswell, and Janice Kulyk Keefer, briefly compared *Acadia* with *The Rising Village* (Rashley 35-36; Cogswell 121-22; Keefer 67). However, they did not devote sufficient pages to their comparisons between these poems. Therefore, this part of the article is written in my hope of presenting a new perspective of the nineteenth-century homeland representations in the Maritimes.

Preceding the textual discussion of the poem, the biographical information of Joseph Howe is briefly given to help the understanding of *Acadia*.⁽⁷⁾ He was born in Halifax in 1804 as a Loyalist descendent. Unlike Goldsmith, whose father was the first generation immigrant, Joseph Howe was the sixth generation of the Howe family well established in North America. His father was a King's Printer, Postmaster-General, and newspaper owner from Boston who came to Nova Scotia after the Revolution. Although his formal education was limited to summer months for two years at a grammar school in Halifax, it was enough for him to be involved in his father's lines of business. Apprenticed to the newspaper business at thirteen, he owned two colonial journals, *Acadian* and *Novascotian*, in his twenties. Later in politics he served as a federal minister and Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, the position he held until his death in 1873.

Howe's attitude toward Canada's independence was ambiguous. While he was known for his strong love for Nova Scotia and for his advocacy on its establishment of the first responsible government in North America, he kept his British patriotism for life. His British patriotism was clearly evident in his political activities against Confederation, which weakened Canada's tie with Britain. Howe's dual love for Acadia and Britain, which is not illogical as a colonial Nova Scotian, is represented in *Acadia*.

Acadia is written in heroic couplet, a form often used in topographical poems which describe and praise a particular landscape (Aubin 365-77). *Acadia* and *The Rising Village* belong to its subgenre, the topographical-region poem whose focus extends from a particular place to the whole region, district, and country (xiii). Both poems chronologically depict the development of their homeland by the British along with the topographical change of the region.

Howe divides 64 verse paragraphs of 1030 lines into two major parts to represent different stages of the development respectively: Acadia before and after the

arrival of European settlers, namely the British and French. An often observed criticism is Howe's inclusion of seemingly unrelated episodes in *Acadia*. The first 732 lines chronologically describe the shifting occupancy of Acadia by the Mi'kmaq, British, and French, then an apparently irrelevant episode of a local fisherman living there after the Expulsion follows (xxviii-xxix). Furthermore, problematizing his "divided sensibility," typically shown in his sudden change of attitude towards the Mi'kmaq in the second part, Susan Gingell-Beckmann goes on to dismiss *Acadia* describing it as badly flawed both aesthetically and thematically (2). It is true that the poem loses its earlier tightness in the last quarter; and that his sympathetic characterizations of minorities and his justification of British colonization are conceptually perplexing. Nevertheless, focused on Howe's framing technique, the poem is not as fractured as it appears to be both in its content and structure (xix-xx).

Not uncommonly, as a topographical poem, the love of homeland and its landscape is the backbone of the poem. Therefore, all of its episodes are structurally framed by the descriptions of the natural beauty of Acadia through which Howe expresses his love of homeland and by which he pierces through four stages in the development of the colony (Paragraphs 1-14, Paragraph 64). This framing by Acadian landscape, which clearly differentiates itself from *The Rising Village* with a British framework, preserves the thematic and structural integrity throughout the poem. Even in the interior of the poem, landscapes of beloved homelands connect otherwise irreconcilable episodes. For example, the adored memory of Britain furnished with a decaying stone castle (459) connects the episodes of the British settler's happy family life and the sudden massacre of the family by the Mi'kmaq who had been forced to vacate their homeland for the British. Howe also inserts the description of Acadian landscape around Lochaber in-between the aftermath of the Acadian Expulsion, in which Howe declares the occupancy of Acadia by the British, and the story of a local fisherman (819-52).

Howe describes each stage in the development of Acadia to express his love of the homeland. Of the Part First, which is made of 23 paragraphs, Howe uses the first 14 paragraphs for the celebration of Acadia's nature through the four seasons. As it is typically shown in the third verse paragraph in which the speaker offers the flower wreath to Acadia, the land is represented as a beloved woman in this poem (39-42).⁽⁸⁾ Howe's recurring use of phrases to connect Acadia, his love, with himself such as "my

Country” (40, 52, 57), “my Acadia” (42), “my own Acadia” (64), and “my native land” (58) in this part of the poem strongly impresses his sense of possession as well as his adherence to the homeland. Another point to be noted regarding Howe’s description of Acadian landscape is his cataloging of the particulars of native plants (Paragraphs 8 and 10), trees (Paragraph 9), and animals (Paragraph 13), which most critics approve as his strength as a poet (Gingell-Beckmann 29; Keefer 67; Parks xix; Woodcock 32-33). Howe’s specifying the tribe of the indigenous people as the Micmac (another spelling of “Mi’kmaq”), instead of simply calling them the “Indians,” is also part of this project. These details are not included in *The Rising Village* which aims to cast Acadia into the British mold and therefore applies British poetic dictions.⁽⁹⁾

In the rest of the Part First, Howe depicts Acadia from the days of Mi’kmaq rule and their first encounter with European settlers. While Howe applies an othering expression “dusky Savage” (161) and treats the Mi’kmaq as a part of Acadian wilderness whose “hardy limbs are equal to” his prey (192), they, whom the poet compares to “Patriarch” (229) in the Bible, are characterized as noble people in this stage. Furthermore, the similarities of the Mi’kmaq to the British are emphasized here. As the speaker does, “[the Mi’kmaq] feels, yes proudly feels, ‘tis all his own” when he “casts his proud and fearless glance/ O’er each fair feature of wide expanse” (205-12). In the next part, although it is described as “rude,” they build, as the British do, a “sylvan city” (208) and “[c]amp” (227) on the shore in which “inmates” (256) gather around the fire and have “frugal feast” (263); they keep their ancestors’ graves there (337-38). Such civilized description of the Mi’kmaq, which is almost incoherent with the harsh characterization of the same tribe within the same poem, is not often seen in *The Rising Village*.

Europeans’ arrival in the end of this part is highly problematic. In Howe’s narrative, “the adventurous Briton” (313), instead of the French as our empirical history tells, is the first European who build the dwelling in the wilderness. This rewriting of history to change the first European occupants of Acadia is also seen in *The Rising Village*. However, Howe’s recognition of the landing as trespassing of Others’ homeland, which will give way to his British patriotism later in this poem, is largely different from that of Goldsmith: the British “thoughtlessly remove[d]” the gravestones of the Mi’kmaq’s ancestors (337-38).

Howe’s British patriotism surges in the first half of Part Second, which

describes the wars of the British against Others, the Mi'kmaq and the French, in Acadia. Howe begins this part with the praise of British rule and represents his feeling with the magnification of the British flag which brings Science (355), Religion (356), and Art (359) to Acadia:

He lifts his eye, and sees his flag unfurl' d,
The hope — the guide — the glory of a world,
Surveys the fabric, splendid and sublime,
Whose arch, like Heaven' s, extends from clime to
clime —
Whose pillars, like the dreadful angel, stand
On the deep sea, as firm as on the land,
While 'neath the dome the sun of Science gleam.
(349-55)

Thus, the British settlers, who were born in “Albion” (432), started to clear “the forest trees” (385) and planted “fruitful seeds” (387) in Acadia. However, this development does not extend to its creation of modern society with a church, school, and doctor as described in *The Rising Village*.

The British fight with the wilderness of Acadia and its occupants, the Mi'kmaq, is lengthily versified from lines 341 to 602. With the declaration of the War in the end of the last part, the characterization of the Mi'kmaq dramatically changes into those of belligerent villains in *The Rising Village*. This change is a part of what Gingell-Beckmann regards as the poem's flaw, “lack of unified sensibility,” often caused by Howe's British patriotism (18).⁽¹⁰⁾

Notably, however, such British settlers, who are supposed to be much nobler than “rude Barbarians” (343), bear many similarities with the Mi'kmaq in their life in Acadia such as “sylvan dwelling” (314), “Log House by water side” (389) in which the “inmates circling close” around the hearth (395-96) and have “plenteous meals” on the “frugal board” (401). In fact, this scene of a family in their kitchen in a humble house by the water recurs in the end of the poem at the home of the British fisherman. Thus, a family life, home filled with love, and particular location are associated in the poem. The only group that is not given such family scene in the poem is the French.

The different description of the French family implies how French settlers are treated in the poem.

Such similarities in terms of their family life make the transition of the scene understandable. The “Hate, Revenge, and Murder” of the Mi’kmaq” (511) who have lost their happy homes are persistently described in the next 6 paragraphs (497-602). As it is the most often approved and anthologized part of the poem, critics have agreed that this part has “considerable dramatic power” (Gingell-Beckmann 26). In the scene, a band of the Mi’kmaq claims the life of a whole British family: the parents, their young boy and infant. The cruelty of the Mi’kmaq is mostly emphasized by their killing of the infant in front of his mother, the burning of their house altogether with their corpses, and their wild singing of “joy and triumph” (600) at the end of this scene. The “horrid” and “demonic” acts of the Indians described here, in fact, parallel their hunting of a deer which is bled to death at their feet after which they feel their “glow of pride” (203), “kindled spirit” (204), and their possession of the land (212). Thus, the Mi’kmaq in *Acadia* are wild and human simultaneously. Howe’s description of human aspects of the Mi’kmaq is also a structural necessity in the poem; wild animals are unlikely to demonstrate their love for homeland.

The first reference to French settlers appears halfway through the poem. The word “France” is abruptly pronounced on line 626 with its claim of separation from “England’s Sovereign” (631). There is no direct reference to the French earlier in the poem. The sudden appearance of the French may seem to be obtrusive for readers who do not have basic knowledge of the area’s history. The late inclusion of French settlers in this chronological narrative of Acadia’s development, as well as Howe’s representation of the first settler as the British, shows this poem’s similarity with *The Rising Village* in which the early history of Acadia is “revised” for the poet’s political purpose. This revision of history is much more than “Howe’s vagueness as an historian” as Parks claims (xxi). He must have been very familiar with the history of Nova Scotia because it was Howe who printed Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (1828). Therefore, it is quite reasonable to conclude that this is an intentional rewriting of history. Moreover, Haliburton’s sympathetic and rather sentimental depiction of the Expulsion has highly possibly influenced Howe’s representation of the event in this poem.⁽¹¹⁾

The information of French in Acadia is considerably small in this poem (619-

732). While Howe gives a meticulous description of the life of the Mi'kmaq before their battle against the British over Acadia, of which Gingell-Beckmann described as the triangle relationship of two men over a woman (21), he does not explain the French condition before the battle between the British and French at all. The war which lasted almost one and a half centuries is indeed summarized as briefly as "the alternate conquest" (641). Moreover, Howe does not include words such as British or Britain in this scene to obscure who injured the French. It is significantly different from the massacre scene in which Howe repetitiously refers to "the Micmac" as demonic aggressors.

These are Howe's strategies to minimize the depiction of British cruelty toward the French to maintain the British role as the heroes of the poem. No such measure has been taken for the Mi'kmaq because he does not need to heroicize them. Instead of depicting the battle itself, Howe selectively includes the residue of British cruelty such as heroic and melodramatic tragedies of Madam La Tour and the Expulsion of Acadian of 1755 (619-732) which can function as "readable episodes" in his narrative.

Howe's depiction of British violence is limited to their burning of French cots (729-32), which is extensively illustrated in Haliburton's book (178-81). It corresponds to that of the Mi'kmaq in the end of the destruction of the settler's home. Howe's associating these two incidents indicates he is well aware of the cruelty of the British.⁽¹²⁾ Therefore, Howe's omission of the details of the war should be understood as his intentional obscuration of British cruelty. Together with his emphasis on the "Exiles" (707) in his depiction, the recounting of the tragedy of losing their homes is a device to interweave the story of French people in the grand narrative of this poem: the love of homeland.

After the paragraph of the burning of village, there abruptly appears a line of asterisks to indicate a pause in the narrative. Howe inserts the description of Acadian landscape to fill in the gap of the narrative, and then declares British rule. As if to justify the British colonization because of their "superiority" (799), he adorns the British flag with miraculous power under which "races, hostile once, now freely blend/ In happy union" (773-74) and describes the picturesque landscape of Acadia after their ancestors heroically sought to claim "A Briton's feelings, and a Briton's name" in its wilderness (802). Such feeling is also expressed in its mode of British picturesque convention:

But see, extending upon every side,
Her Cottage Homes, Acadia's noblest pride;
There honest Industry, by daily toil,
Covers with fruits and flowers his native soil;
And calm contentment, with an Angel's air,
And humble hopes, and smiling joys, are there.

(803-808)

The British picturesque convention, which orderly describes the landscape of a particular place, becomes the most effective mode to describe the Acadia's development under the rule of Britain after the war.

After the line of asterisks between lines 732 and 733, however, any attempt of structural analysis will be confronted with what his son Sydenham Howe calls "unfinished," or a rather loose condition of the last 17 paragraphs (Howe, *Poems* 3).⁽¹³⁾ Howe's reluctance over publishing his poems expressed in his 1872 letter may be partially caused by the unusual condition of this portion of the poem made of fragmental episodes divided by two, originally three, lines of asterisks.⁽¹⁴⁾ Nevertheless, this part, which eventually rotates the narrative to its original theme of love of homeland, should not be neglected to understand this poem as an integral work.

Central episodes in this part of the poem are the tale of a local fisherman's survival in a shipwreck and his son's letter from exile (853-1019). These pieces are connected to the earlier part of the poem with the insertion of a celebration of natural beauty, that of Lochaber, Nova Scotia. Although most critics regard this part is "not integrated in any way" (xxviii), I argue this part, which is another battle for "home" in smaller scale, is not peculiar when it is located after the two preceding battles in Acadia. As Acadia is being settled, Howe only switches the battleground to the daily life of its resident who fights for his life in the sea. Thus, a series of battles create an internal scheme for the poem. In addition, *Acadia* has a cyclical structure in consecutive wars. In each war their beloved homeland is at stake because of violence from an external power. In this course of reading, S. G. Zenchuk's argument finding Howe's purpose of writing *Acadia* in showing "the errors which had led to the

corruption and bloodshed of the past, thus enabling them to avoid future conflict,” is persuasive (55).

According to Parks’ study of the manuscript which bears a line of xs after the line 940, Howe initially intended to stop the poem after this drowning fisherman’s providential arrival on the shore from the ocean (xxviii).⁽¹⁵⁾ However, he goes on to create another episode to complete his larger project of the poem, the love of homeland, with the letter from his “wandering boy” (976) whose “spirit sighed for home again” (1018). This episode easily evokes exiles in Irish Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Traveller* (1764) and *The Deserted Village*. The place where the parents delightfully wonder about the eldest son after the return of the fisherman from the battle in the sea is their home near the water in which his family gathers around the “fireside” (950) and has a “humble meal” (973). Howe, thus, locates this family in the lineage of other families in Acadia and leads it into the final paragraph which goes back to the depiction of Acadian landscape in the beginning of the poem to bring “Acadia’s sons” (1019), who have left for “more fruitful” and “milder” lands (1020), back. As this part clearly differentiates Acadia from the village of Auburn in *The Deserted Village*, which has lost its population and declined, it should be given more critical attention.

Thus, Joseph Howe’s *Acadia* represents the early development of the Maritimes as a series of battles between and of different groups (the Mi’kmaq, British, and French) and a local fisherman. It is unlike Acadia’s development in *The Rising Village* which straight forwardly moves toward a civilized and modern British colonial society. Howe’s description of changing rules, instead, emphasizes a quality equal to all groups: love for Acadia, the homeland. Recurring use of the feminized representation of Acadian landscape stressing its North American details is used to connect different stories which otherwise cannot be integrated into a poetical work. His cyclical use of an affectionate scene, in which a family eats a frugal meal in the kitchen and flocks around the hearth in a home by the water, also shows his emphasis on the similarity of these groups. However, fewer lines given for the description of the French family only enable Howe to depict the grief of a French family (a father, mother, and their young son like other families in the poem) that is shortly going to be separated (717-22). Considering all of Howe’s depictions of the French in this section discussed earlier in this essay, his very brief treatment of French Acadia may be naturally concluded as his strategy to conceal what the British did in the battle and to avoid a

controversial theme. Howe's Loyalist background and the historical proximity to the Expulsion make this conclusion possible. Such intention on Howe's part must be related to his rewriting of history of the settlement; the British are the first European settler on the shores of Acadia.

Howe's search for similarities among these people who love their Acadian homeland is a manifestation of his desire to unite other groups of people under the flag of Britain, as it is shown in his description of Acadia after the Expulsion: under the flag, sons of England, Scotland, and Ireland who once were enemies to each other, peacefully co-habitate in Acadia. When he attempts to reconstruct Acadia's history from such a British point of view, his employment of literary convention of topographical poems, which often subordinate "historical retrospective and incidental meditation" over the landscape to a "controlling moral vision," is highly effective (Foster 403; Zenchuk 36). Howe, who intermittently indicates his compassion for Others, could have added the Indians and the French in the line of these "sons" to share the land if he had wished. However, the published poem does not include any verse in which former residents of Acadia come back to Acadia and share Acadia with the English, Scottish, and Irish who are mentioned in the poem. Howe's description of Acadia after the final British conquest, thus, leaves his idea about Others ambiguous while it definitely shows his strong dual patriotism for Britain and "Acadia as its colony." What has been written in the poem more obviously tells that Howe's *Acadia* is a product of British Imperialism.

3. *The Rising Village* and *Acadia*: A Comparison of Maritime Representations before *Evangeline*

When representations of the Maritimes in *The Rising Village* and *Acadia* are compared with those in *Evangeline*, characteristics of representations of this area before *Evangeline* are revealed. Comparison here specifically focuses on their representations of landscape, their treatment of Others, and their reconstructions of history.

The development of Acadia is represented as the change of the dominant landscape from a heavily-wooded wilderness and mountains in both poems in *The Rising Village* and *Acadia*. *Evangeline*, however, skips the process of clearing and starts

from the paradise-like pastoral stage of French Acadia. While this deep forest simply functions as a representative feature of the primitive state of Acadia prior to the arrival of the British in the poems written before *Evangeline*, Longfellow employs “the primeval forest” in the prologue and epilogue of the poem to historicize the tragedy of Acadians.

In the poems prior to *Evangeline*, the woods are turned into farming fields by the hands of British settlers bypassing the pastoral cattle-keeping stage, which is an important part of Longfellow’s depiction of Grand Pré. The farming landscape which follows comes to include hills, streams, vales, and lakes, which are all representative elements of picturesque conventions. All three poems share this farming landscape, but Goldsmith’s depiction of the Maritimes goes on to stress the signs of commercialism and industrialism or mature social lives beyond farming and family homes including a store, school, doctor’s clinic, and even a mill. The images of sea and ocean become predominant after the scenes of Acadian Expulsion both in *Acadia* and *Evangeline*, which are commonly influenced by Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s sympathetic depiction of Acadians in *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (1829). However, *The Rising Village*, which perfectly escapes the reconstruction of early Maritime history, has little water in its landscape.

The change of the landscape signals change of ruling groups in these poems. In the earlier poems, the Mi’kmaq, whose existence is ignored in *Evangeline*, reside in the wilderness in the beginning. Then, the British arrive there, expel the tribe, cut down the trees, and make fields for farming and a town-like-village. Both Canadian poems are written from a British perspective and depict the Mi’kmaq as demonic savages against the British. One notable difference between the two poems is that Howe shows a stronger attachment to his native colony than Goldsmith as Howe’s passion of describing local particulars in the poem indicates. As in previous works, the initially dominating landscape of *Evangeline*, the pastoral landscape whose occupants are Acadians, passes its way to the coastal landscape on the arrival of the British.

The treatment of the French is the biggest problem in the reconstruction of the early history of Acadia in the poems written before *Evangeline*: the first Europeans in the settlement are described as the British, instead of the French. While Longfellow reconstructs the images of the Maritimes in the binary competition of the French and the British, the earlier Canadian poets use the Mi’kmaq/British binarism. As they

are the major pioneer Europeans in the region, readers in the twenty-first century expect to see the French, who are never called “Acadians” in these poems. However, the French are either ignored as in *The Rising Village* or not given enough detail as in *Acadia*. It is not unlike Longfellow’s omission of the First Nations in *Evangeline*. Although sympathy for Others appears stronger in *Acadia*, these poets attempt to cover-up and minimize any chance to depict British violence, especially against the French. Such evasion of the depiction of British violence shows significant difference from *Evangeline*, which accusingly depicts their destruction of an Acadian village. The earlier poems put much more emphasis on the battle with the Mi’kmaq than on that with the French.

This article has explored the characteristics of two nineteenth-century Canadian poems written before *Evangeline*. It has revealed that both Goldsmith and Howe, more or less, rewrite the empirical history of Acadia for the British cause. Such attitude is typically reflected in the way of referencing French people in these poems. The terms which are currently used to refer to this population such as Acadian, Acadien, Acadienne, are not used in these poems; instead, they are referred to simply as the French or as “the sons of Minas” in Howe’s (680). This may be reflection of the colonial poets’ recognition that they, the British-descendants, are the “Acadians” who own the land of Acadia, and the French people only resided in their quarter in the Minas Basin. Howe’s referencing of the Acadians as “the sons of Minas” also reminds us that the strong literary association of Grand Pré with the image of Acadians and the Maritimes was only created after Longfellow used the village as a setting of his poem.

Thus, the strong French Acadian images in the current representation of the Canadian Maritimes, particularly the association with the images of Grand Pré and the Acadian Expulsion, has been established by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *Evangeline*, not by Canadian poets.

Notes

- (1) As for the influence of *Evangeline* over the culture of the Maritimes, see McKay. The poems used for the analysis are Canadian Poetry Press editions. Parenthetical references to the poems in Arabic letters are for line numbers of respective poems. Numbers described in Roman letters refer to the introduction to each poem written by

Parks and Lynch.

- (2) The resource of Goldsmith's biographical information is taken from his autobiography discovered and edited by Wilfrid E. Myatt in 1943.
- (3) For the changes made to the 1834 edition, see Bentley's "Oliver Goldsmith and *The Rising Village*" (26-29).
- (4) George Ramsay, 9th Earl of Dalhousie, was Governor-General of British North America between 1820 and 1828. Once he left the North America for India, Oliver Goldsmith erased much of his praise for the Earl from his 1834 first Canadian edition of *The Rising Village*. As for Goldsmith's motivations to write the poem, see Bentley's 1990 article (26-27).
- (5) As for the history of this area from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, see Conrad and Hiller's *Atlantic Canada: Concise History* (London: Oxford UP, 2006).
- (6) Bentley suspects that Albert left Acadia for land speculation as it often happened in that period ("Oliver," 50-51).
- (7) For Howe's biographical information, see Bruce Fergusson, *Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia* (Windsor, NS: Lancelot, 1973).
- (8) See Gingell-Beckmann 21; Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 171-72.
- (9) Nonetheless, *Acadia* is not free from the British rustic tradition. As M. G. Parks puts, Howe repetitiously uses hackneyed cliché in the wrong places (xvi). Gingell-Beckmann also makes a point of his inappropriate applications of such poetic dictions as "vale" and "sylvan" (23).
- (10) However, her understanding is not the sole interpretation of this scene. Parks, who recognizes literary values of this poem more than anyone, argues that Howe certainly gives clues to make the transition possible in the previous part (xix-xx). George Woodcock interprets this transition as the shift from a European fantasy to a North American reality (33). I would argue that it is simply a change of emphasis on one characteristic to another which co-exists in the text.
- (11) See Chapter 4 of Haliburton's *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (135-99).
- (12) As for Howe's abhorrence of war, see Zenchuk 54-55.
- (13) Parks points out that the introduction was written by his son (Howe, *Acadia* xxxii-xxxiii).
- (14) See Howe's letter to Lovell dated December 16, 1872.
- (15) Harvard University's Houghton Library holds two manuscript copies of *Acadia* in the Howe Papers. Parks estimates that Harvard Copy I was written in the late 1820's and early 1830s while Harvard Copy II, which bears recognizable difference in his handwriting, was written in later in the 1830s (Parks, "Composition" 1-2).

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