

Periodically Conscious: Mathew Carey's Periodicals and their Atlantic Contexts

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1. Introduction

Traditionally periodicals are recognised for playing an important role in the dissemination of literature and the spread of reading in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. They were less geographically sensitive than most newspapers, more accessible and less price sensitive than books to many readers and provided them with articles, extracts, poetry, parliamentary reports, critical essays, reviews, news and much more on a wide variety of topics. Periodicals, particularly monthlies and quarterlies, are also important for understanding the rise of national and civic affiliations and contributed to the development of various forms of identity.

By the middle of the eighteenth century periodicals or monthly magazines had a very definite model that had been established by the success of a number of London-based titles whose influence had spread across the English-speaking Atlantic world and beyond. Originally imported to markets in the inner and outer peripheries of the British Atlantic empire, they were then imitated by indigenously produced titles with some success. However the monthly format proved most successful in markets outside London when local publishers and editors adapted the general characteristics of the London models and added content which distinguished their titles from the London originals.

The processes and ‘working out’ of these new periodicals, I will suggest, saw the format demonstrate its full potential, beyond that traditionally recognised in the scholarly literature, in retaining the original purpose of the London models “to instruct and amuse” while also providing a forum for national debate and the conceptualisation (both textually and visually of broad national identities). Additionally periodicals in non-London markets provided their publishers with a very valuable commercial tool for establishing previously under-developed distribution networks for print and advertising their other publishing and business ventures. Evident for this argument can be found in the Irish and Scottish monthly

periodicals market but, it will be suggested, is most evident through the publications of Irish and Scottish émigré publishers and printers like Mathew Carey in Philadelphia in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

By the time Mathew Carey left Ireland in 1784 under threat of arrest for his newspaper publishing activities, the Irish periodical market had developed from the period of imitation to adaptation with *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* (1771-1812) well into its second decade of publication. Though publishing without much serious competition, the magazine, particularly through its energetic publisher Walker, had demonstrated the potential of a monthly magazine with a national audience, national distribution network, content of specifically Irish interest and visual elements distinguishing its Irishness. From his own newspaper experience in Ireland Carey was also familiar with having a national audience from his associations with the *Freeman's Journal*, as editor and as proprietor of his own paper the *Volunteer's Journal* which grew to attain the second largest circulation figures in Ireland, with its strong stance on parliamentary reform and persistent anti-British sentiment.¹ After the lacklustre response to his first newspaper efforts in Philadelphia, Carey likely understood that a newspaper was less likely to garner a national audience in his adopted home, perhaps mainly due to the vastness of territory, the lack of established distribution networks for printed materials and the regional demand for different news content.

Along with a number of other Irish émigré publishers Carey began his first monthly magazine, *The Columbian Magazine* (1786-92). Carey removed himself from this partnership within a short space of time, mostly due to his concerns about the lack of effort in wide advertising by his partners. Recognising the potential national market in America for such a publishing enterprise Carey embarked on a new monthly periodical the *American Museum* (1787-92). This paper will trace the development of the monthly periodical format that

¹ Edward C. Carter II, 'Mathew Carey in Ireland, 1760-1784', *Catholic Historical Review*, 51:4 (Jan., 1966).

developed in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world from the London ‘templates’ which became the model for the general magazines of the period and broadly compare the developments of the Irish and American periodical trades (with some Scottish references) up to 1800. Finally it will assess Carey’s involvement in the American periodical market and draw some general conclusions about his impact on the development of the format in his adopted homeland.

2. Finding A New Format

The book trade and its products have tended to be examined with national boundaries, or in a simple diffusionist model with London as the unchallenged centre of all development in the English-speaking world. While very useful and informative, these approaches take a limited account of the transatlantic interactions, connections and networks operating across the early modern Atlantic world. Cole’s *Irish booksellers and English writers, 1740-1800* (1986) highlighted the importance of external connections within the Irish book trade, both in terms of the sources of its primary texts and the networks established by the movement of Irish printers and publishers to other print centres across the Atlantic and the considerable role that Irish reprints played in the dissemination of literature throughout the Atlantic world. Broadening his analysis Cole also identified and sketch the careers of Irish expatriates who entered the emergent American book trade, demonstrating that their continued correspondence and business links with Ireland which further strengthened the distribution networks for Irish reprints in the Atlantic market. Although his analysis was ‘connective’ rather than comparative, and was limited by a concentration on the reprinting of specific English writers of the century, it pointed towards a wealth of material evidence in the texts themselves of collaborative publishing that existed beyond the control and involvement of London.²

² R.C. Cole, *Irish booksellers and English writers, 1740-1800* (London, 1987).

In her preface to *Dublin's Trade in Books, 1550-1800* (1989) Mary Pollard, one of Ireland's most distinguished bibliographers, suggested that comparison between Dublin, Philadelphia and Edinburgh as satellite cities of the British empire would prove most fruitful as each, when compared to London, generally fails to impress, but when compared to one another, are far more interesting.³ More recent studies such as Richard B. Sher's significant *The Enlightenment & the Book: Scottish Authors & Their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland & America* (2006) further demonstrates the scholarly value of such transatlantic comparisons through his examination of the creation and dissemination of Enlightenment texts and highlighting the role of Dublin and Philadelphia reprints in the Atlantic culture of Enlightenment and the important personal connections of booksellers and publishers between these centres.⁴

Following on from these scholarly influences, I have approached my study of Irish periodicals from an Atlantic perspective with comparison to Philadelphia and Edinburgh as major peripheral print centres in the British Atlantic world, and Carey's efforts stand out as an influential example of periodical development in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The findings of my larger study focused on Irish periodicals within this broad context highlighted the numerous and varied roles of the periodical format in Irish society, significantly beyond the traditional assumption of their role in spreading literature. This evidence was largely at odds with the traditional assessment of Irish periodicals before 1830 which sees the trade largely dismissed as 'ephemeral, featureless and dull'.⁵

³ Mary Pollard, *Dublin's Trade in Books, 1550-1800* (Oxford, 1989).

⁴ Richard B. Sher, *The Enlightenment & the Book: Scottish Authors & Their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland and America* (Chicago, 2006).

⁵ B. Inglis, *The Freedom of the Press in Ireland, 1784-1841* (London, 1954), p. 40. Many later historians and literary scholars followed this assessment as their main concern was usually political history rather than a history of the development or influence of the press. McDowell, Inglis and Hayley have all commented with varying degrees of negativity on the achievements of the Irish periodical press, particularly those pre-1820. R.B. McDowell, *Irish Public Opinion, 1750-1850* (London, 1943); Inglis, *Freedom*, p. 244-246; Barbara Hayley, 'Irish Periodicals' in *Anglo-Irish Studies*, II (1976), pp. 83-86.

What is certain about the monthly periodical format is that it quickly became an Atlantic phenomenon. The tradition of periodical publishing was French in origin, usually dated from the first appearance of the *Le Journal des Sçavans*, a monthly review of new books, published in Paris from 1665,⁶ which was the inspiration for the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* which began publication in the same year. Although *Philosophical Transactions* was broader in content than the title suggests, it could not claim anything but an elite readership, mostly confined to society members.⁷ By the 1680s a number of periodicals began to appear in England which were more popular in approach, though still essentially reviewing journals. The first British magazine which truly aimed to capture a wider market was weekly *Athenian Gazette*, published by John Dunton (1691-1697) which included discussion of a wide variety of topics supposedly submitted by readers and answered by a ‘society of gentlemen’.⁸ Another important British periodical of the seventeenth century was Peter Anthony Motteux’s *Gentleman’s Journal* (1692-1694). During its two-year life this publication showed the influence of the French periodical predecessors and in both its style and variety, this periodical set the precedent for the eighteenth-century general-interest magazine.⁹

It took about forty years for the monthly periodical format to develop its distinctive, familiar and effective template, which would be imitated as the standard model for the English-speaking world and beyond. Daniel Defoe’s *Review* (1704-1713), published twice-weekly was one of the first ground-breaking periodicals that moved English journalism in new directions. Defoe’s success was based on content easily differentiated from newspapers

⁶ Raymond Birn, ‘Le Journal des Savants sous l’Ancien Régime’, *Journal des Savants*, pp. 15-35 cited by John Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 2nd ed. (London, 2005), p. 56.

⁷ A.A. Mantel, ‘Development of European Scientific Journal Publishing before 1850’ in A.J. Meadows, ed., *Development of Science Publishing in Europe* (Amsterdam, 1980), pp. 1-22.

⁸ John Dunton, *The Dublin Scuffle* (1699) [notes and introduction by Andrew Carpenter] (Dublin, 2000). See also Urmi Bhowmik, ‘Facts and Norms in the Marketplace of Print: John Dunton’s *Athenian Mercury*’ in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 3 (Spring, 2003), pp. 345-65.

⁹ Margaret J.M. Ezell, ‘The *Gentleman’s Journal* and the Commercialization of Restoration Coterie Literary Practices’ in *Modern Philology*, 3 (Feb, 1992), pp. 323-340.

(many of which were also printed twice or tri weekly, the first daily newspaper was published in London in 1702) including news commentary, satire, dramatic irony, regular character voices etc. Previous printed material, other than straight reviews had rarely moved into areas of interpretation, elaboration or context. Defoe's *Review* demonstrated the possibilities and advantages of the format for using history and news for political and propaganda purposes and the value of targeting specific audiences. He even tested other publishing schedules such as a spin-out monthly in October 1704 and a tri-weekly publishing date in March 1705.¹⁰

By 1709 another influential periodical format was launched by Irishman Richard Steele. The *Tatler*, published thrice weekly, included a great variety of pieces, such as vignettes of London life, discussions of manners, and essays of criticism which was an immediate success. Soon including contributions by Steele's school friend Joseph Addison, the *Tatler* adopted and refined Defoe's model with Steele's knowledge of London's information networks. Each publishing date coincided with the posts leaving London for the provinces, which at the time also carried competing manuscript newsletters directed to subscribers there. The first four issues were given to customers gratis, and then were priced at a penny per issue, a very competitive price for the time, possible because of the paper's format – a folio half-sheet printed on both sides. Surviving single issues (unbound) of the *Tatler*, and its even more influential successor the *Spectator* (1711-12; 1713-14), also show that a small amount of advertising was included in each issue, though this was removed in later bound compilations of the periodicals.¹¹

Under the pen-name of Isaac Bickerstaff, Steele articulated the importance of the 'compilation format' to his success: "the addition of the ordinary occurrences of common journals of news brought in a multitude of other readers". Within six months of publication,

¹⁰ Paula R. Backscheider, 'Defoe, Daniel (1660?-1731)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004); M. E. Novak, 'Defoe as an Innovator of Fictional Form', *Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel* in J. J. Richetti, ed., (Cambridge, 1996).

¹¹ The Royal Irish Academy has several single copies of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* from their original series.

Steele had excluded all news material in favour of literary and miscellaneous articles, finally settling upon a format dominated by a periodical essay followed by some brief literary criticism.¹² This was the opening essay on literary or social matters, which gave the general name to this publication and its innumerable successors, the ‘essay periodical’, and this format of an opening essay is one which later monthly periodicals also largely adopted.

Both the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* tended to shy away from politics in favour of “courting general approbation”, and of considering subjects of literature, morality, and familiar life. In the first number of the latter, the main editorial voice of “Mr. Spectator” declared that he will “observe an exact Neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare myself by the Hostilities of either Side”. This promise of political impartiality was also to become the generic rhetoric of monthly periodicals across the Atlantic world, though often widely ignored by their publishers and editors in times of heated political debate. However Steele and Addison, like later periodical producers, cultivated ways in which to facilitate political discussion and debate; for example, by the second issue a new feature, “A Gentleman’s Club” was introduced to readers which allowed Addison and Steele to write from different political perspectives under the guise of fictional members. By retaining this “polite” approach to political discussion and debate the format that developed in the following decades under these general understandings was able to provide a critical space for political debate across wide geographic and ideological spectrums, particularly in environments where the newspaper press was at times quite strictly controlled either by force or through taxes.

This “public space” provided by the periodical format was also ensured by these early periodical entrepreneurs and almost written into their physical make-up by the actions they took in response to the Stamp Act of 1712 which was part of various sets of legislation

¹² See Richmond P. Bond, *The Tatler: The Making of a Literary Journal* (Cambridge, 1971).

introduced in the eighteenth century by administrations anxious to control the output of the printing presses. This Act marked a pivotal point in the development of physical and practical distinctions between newspapers and periodicals, as a tax was then introduced in England which was weighted negatively against the newspaper format. The Stamp Act of 1712 put ½ *d.* duty on a half-sheet periodical, 1*d.* on a full-sheet and 2*d.* on publications from one to six sheets. The flexibility and versatility of the periodical format allowed their producers to work around these new taxes in a manner which the newspaper format did not allow. For example, the *Spectator* raised its price upon the introduction of the Stamp Act and retained its readership; Defoe's *Review* changed its physical format in order to avoid the tax; and Steele also altered the format of his other weekly publications into twelve-page quarto pamphlets.¹³ Each of these measures qualified these periodicals for a significantly lower rate of tax compared to newspapers. The 1712 Act did not create the periodical/magazine as a print form, but certainly accelerated its evolution.

The successful innovations of these publishers with regard to format, content, target audience and physical shape exposed a niche in the print market for publications that could instruct, entertain, review, amuse and debate rather than simply inform. Therefore it can be said that content and format were the main differentiating points between early newspapers and periodicals – particularly as both could be published daily, thrice weekly or weekly.

The Gentleman's Magazine (1731-1922), established in January 1731 as a digest of London newspapers and periodicals for country customers, was the second seminal periodical evolution of the era.¹⁴ The original complete title was *The Gentleman's Magazine: or, Trader's monthly intelligencer*. The *Gentleman's* was not the first notable monthly, but its success with this format was unprecedented. The *Monthly Miscellany* had been established by

¹³ Alvin Sullivan, ed., *British literary magazines*, 3 vols. (London, 1983-1984), vol. 1, p. xvi.

¹⁴ An online archive of *The Gentleman's Magazine* from 1731 to 1750 can be found at the Internet Library of Early Journals <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej/>

James Petiver in 1701 and was the most ambitious and notable of the early eighteenth-century scientific and literary periodicals, though it was not a commercial success. This periodical included more mathematical and scientific material than its more successful and influential successor and established the convention of including contemporary fiction in periodicals, in its case, material from Defoe and other recognised literary talents of the time. Edward Cave's innovation with the *Gentleman's* was to create a monthly digest of news and commentary on any topic he felt his readers might be interested in. Therefore its contents had a broader appeal than the *Monthly Miscellany* or any of John Dunton's periodical publications up to that time. The content of its earliest issues suggest that Cave was attempting to make his publication all things to all people. The presentation of the material in short segments, ranging from one paragraph to several pages, meant that no subject was treated in detail or presented in a polarised way.

In his introduction, Cave alluded to his intention to extract heavily from other publications through abridgement:

It has been unexceptionally advanced, that a good Abridgement of the Law is more intelligible than the Statues at large; so a nice Model is as entertaining as the Original, and a true Specimen as satisfactory as the whole Parcel...¹⁵

In these opening remarks, Cave also suggested that his magazine was a storehouse or repository for literature that otherwise would be lost. By Cave's own calculations it was not surprising that such a policy would prove profitable:

Upon calculating the Numbers of News-Papers, 'tis found that (besides divers written Accounts) no less than 200 Half-sheets per Month are thrown from the Press only in London, and about as many printed elsewhere in the three Kingdoms...¹⁶

¹⁵ 'Introduction', *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1731).

¹⁶ Ibid.

In his first year Cave regularly extracted from newspapers such as *Fogs Journal*, *The London Journal*, *The Weekly Register*, *The Grubstreet Journal*, and *The Craftsman* to mention but a few.

Despite the clear appeal that this format had for contemporaries, Cave's biographer, among others, has suggested the *Gentleman's Magazine's* prodigious success may well have rested as much upon distribution advantages that Cave enjoyed with the provincial book trade through the Post Office as upon editorial policy.¹⁷ However his business skill and acumen should not be disregarded, as his publication, at 6d. for seven and a half octavo sheets, was so popular that it enraged the proprietors and publishers of the papers from which he extracted much of his material. *The London Magazine* (1732-1785) was established within a year as a direct competitor to Cave's publication by a conglomeration of the powerful metropolitan bookselling and newspaper interests.

The regular accusations of literary piracy from this rival against Cave may actually have contributed to the success of his magazine, as he began to seek more and more substantial and original contributions and to cultivate a wide circle of writers and correspondents. He began poetry competitions, which raised the quality of pieces appearing in the magazine and its public profile. However like almost all of its imitators for the rest of the century, the content of the *Gentleman's Magazine* was to vary greatly in standard in all departments. As the magazine reached a circulation of about 8-10,000 by the late 1730s, politics and hard news began to gain greater prominence in the magazine as reports about events on the Continent were in constant demand. The ability to alter content to cater for current public interests demonstrated the flexibility of the magazine format, and Cave and his successors continued to be innovative in the presentation of political and military news within the polite miscellany format. Cave pioneered the use of maps and charts to make sense of the

¹⁷ Anthony David Barker, 'Cave, Edward (1691–1754)' in Matthew and Harrison, eds. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

various theatres of war, as well as to illustrate the patents and designs for new machines and to argue the case for improving finances and commerce.¹⁸

I am suggesting that the most common recognisable characteristics of monthly periodicals were largely created from a composite of these successful London models. Features such as the opening periodical essay, the practice of abstraction, the dominance of polite literature and moral tales, the inclusion and popularity of theatrical reviews, subtle and satirical references to political events and controversies rather than direct commentary (with some notable exceptions), and content significantly and increasingly addressed to a feminine reader were to be the features most imitated in the periodical format throughout the English-speaking world.

3. The Periodical Model: An Atlantic Phenomenon

By the last quarter of the eighteenth century the model or template for monthly periodicals was well established across the Atlantic world. I am suggesting that this template was a composite of the essay-periodical type as spearheaded by Defoe, Steele and Addison and the monthly-magazine type in the style of Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine* established in 1731 and its successful rival *The London Magazine*. Though not the absolute first to invent these periodical formats, the success which these titles and their publishers had, as well as their innovations with regard to format, content, target audience and physical shape demonstrated a proven template and set of characteristics which defined the basic functions of monthly and quarterly publications within contemporary print culture to "instruct and amuse".

By the end date of the *Spectator* in 1714, the longevity of Steele and Addison's influence was already ensured by the success and widespread popularity of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* that spawned hundreds of imitators. The particular durability of the format as an

¹⁸ Ibid.

valuable model for Irish periodicals was articulated by Walker's *Hibernian Magazine* in 1798:

The secret charm of the Spectator consisted in interesting the reader in the characters and action of several members of the club, and consequently in the dramatic cast given to those essays.¹⁹

The essays and issues, appearing frequently and circulating very widely, were long reprinted in collected editions, translated into several languages, and imitated in other European and American countries. Their influence was not simply literary but also social as these titles, and their offspring have been credited with helping to inaugurate a new age of manners and sociability which contributed to increasing patterns of literacy and associational culture.²⁰

The significant international success of these British models have led some commentators to suggest that nationally, regionally or locally produced periodical in the decades following did not succeed because local booksellers were not willing to act as agents for them as they were already agents for imported London monthly titles. However evidence of Irish periodical publishers also acting as agents for these British "rivals" is common questioning the validity of such assertions. The early example of Edward Exshaw in Dublin offers a third slant on this narrative: he began his career in monthly periodicals by acting as agent for the *London Magazine* in 1733, then moved to re-issuing direct reprints of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.²¹ Gradually he adapted and individualized this reprint so that it became an Irish periodical known as *Exshaw's Magazine*. John Ferrar, the Limerick newspaper proprietor was one of several Irish agents for another later successful London general magazine the *Monthly Review* from the late 1760s and also became an agent for

¹⁹ *Hibernian Magazine* (Dublin, Feb, 1798).

²⁰ John Bergin, 'Sir Richard Steele' in James McGuire and James Quinn (ed), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009).

²¹ Exshaw advertised his role as agent for the *London Magazine* in Dublin newspapers, for example *Dublin Journal*, 25 Sept 1733.

numerous Irish monthly periodicals in the last decades of the century, seeing a market for both types of periodicals among his Irish provincial customers.²²

In the 1780s Thomas Walker was also advertising the *Monthly Review* for sale on the wrappers of his own Irish periodical, *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, and his son was still advertising it in the magazine in 1791 which could be had from both of his shops in Anglesea Street and Dame Street in Dublin.²³ In 1793 R.E. Mercier, publisher of the most elegant and arguably the most successful Irish monthly periodical of the 1790s, *Anthologia Hibernica* (1793-95), was advertising full sets of yet another successful London-produced general monthly magazine the *Critical Review* (1756-1817) for sale at his bookshop in Anglesea Street. Mercier's "unrivalled reputation for impartiality, learning and judicious criticism" was, his advertisement claimed, "particularly interesting to the Irish Nation, from a Department being now allotted to Irish Literature".²⁴ That Walker and Mercier would act as agents for several different British periodicals that could have been construed as rivals for their own Irish produced monthly periodicals suggests that they felt that there was a large enough Irish market for all of these publications and that Irish periodicals were never going to fully replace the demand for British monthlies.

A similar number of the successful British monthly and quarterly periodicals made it across the Atlantic to the North American colonies and the new republic in the same period. Early issues of early periodicals like the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* were sent in personal correspondence, and larger numbers of later successful titles were sent in unbound sheets.²⁵ But it was also likely that bound volumes of periodicals made the transatlantic voyage as they were more durable but were subject to the same difficulties of transatlantic voyage as book

²² Máire Kennedy, 'The Distribution of a Locally-Produced French Periodical in Provincial Ireland: The "Magazin à La Mode", 1777-1778', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, vol. 9 (1994), pp. 89.

²³ Inside Back Wrapper, *Hibernian Magazine* (Dublin, July, 1785), Trinity College Dublin Library.

²⁴ Back Wrapper, *Anthologia Hibernica* (Dublin, February, 1793), Trinity College Dublin Library.

²⁵ Carolyn Nelson, 'Serials in America' in Myers and Harris, eds. Harris, eds. *Serials and their Readers, 1620-1914* (Winchester, 1993).

and other goods shipments. The survival rate of numerous bound editions of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for example in the Library Company of Philadelphia, a subscription library established by Benjamin Franklin in the mid-eighteenth century, adds weight to this mode of transmission. Despite a smaller and possibly more diluted exposure to the British periodical format of the eighteenth century, early American periodical publishers expressed the same admiration for Addison, Steele and Cave as is evident in their Irish counterparts, with possibly even more esteem for the former whose reputation across the Atlantic was exceptional, partly due to the enormous success of his Roman tragic drama *Cato*. There were at least nine American editions before 1800, and another eight in the nineteenth century.²⁶

Perhaps the largest body of evidence highlighting the wide influence of the original periodical “models” I have highlighted above is the words of periodical editors themselves. Their statements in their opening editorials and volume prefaces indicate a common ground among editors and publishers in all three countries expressing open admiration for English models of the monthly magazine format to the degree that such title “name-dropping” was required fodder for new periodical subscription advertisements, opening editorials etc. This praise for these English models, and intentions to imitate these titles were portrayed by contemporary editors and publishers as positive attributes for their titles rather than a negative as has often been cited by reviewers of their craft, “slavish imitation”. The intention to replicate their successful characteristics as a proven, popular and useful model of print format was deemed merely financially prudent and had a proven track record of reader demand.

All cities outside London which established periodical titles were directly exposed to and influenced by these London originals and their successful imitators, and the first generation of general magazines throughout the peripheries of the British Atlantic world

²⁶ See Fredric M. Litto, ‘Addison’s *Cato* in the Colonies’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., vol. 23:3 (July 1966), pp. 431-449.

closely retained the structure and tone of the London models. By mid-century innovations were emerging within the genre both from the centre and the peripheries though the universal aspiration to “instruct and amuse” or to “educate and entertain” remained constant.

The commonality of these sentiments expressed in periodical prospectuses, prefaces, introductions and editorials is quite striking when compared between periodical markets developing an ocean apart. Examples are easily and abundantly found in titles from both sides of the Atlantic. For example in 1793, after running for over twenty years, *Walker’s Hibernian Magazine* (Dublin, 1771-1812) announced its intention to “redouble our efforts to render [the magazine] a fund of entertainment”;²⁷ in 1799 the editor of the *New Magazine* (Dublin, 1799-1800) announced that “I shall make it my study, to admit nothing into my Magazine, but what shall either afford profitable Instruction or rational Amusement”.²⁸ *The Edinburgh Magazine and Review* (1773-1776) aimed to be “generally useful and entertaining”, and the *Scots Magazine* planned to provide “elegant, instructive and entertaining extracts” to its readers. American examples include the subtitle of *The Boston Magazine* (Boston, 1783-1786) which noted its aim to be a collection of “instructive and entertaining essays, in the various branches of useful, and polite literature...” and *Carey’s American Museum’s* (Philadelphia, 1787-1792) announcement to provide “novelty, entertainment, and instruction” for its readers.²⁹ In its opening address in 1790 *The New-York Magazine* (New York, 1790-1797) firmly stated that magazines that unite “utility with entertainment” were undoubtedly preferable to those which have only a view to “idle and frivolous amusement”.³⁰

Such prefatory or editorial texts also provide evidence of contemporary understandings of the benefits of periodicals to society over other printed formats, another

²⁷ *Hibernian Magazine* (Dublin, March, 1793).

²⁸ ‘Introduction’, *New Magazine* (Dublin, 1799).

²⁹ ‘Preface’, *American Museum* (Philadelphia, 1787).

³⁰ ‘Of the rise and progress of magazines’, *New-York Magazine* (New York, May, 1790).

sentiment that is almost universal across the titles examined. An articulation of some of some of these advantages offered by periodicals can be found in the preface to *Anthologia*

Hibernica (Dublin, 1793-1795):

The advantages which arise to the community from periodical publications, properly conducted, are certainly great, and manifest to every capacity. They circulate through almost every class of mankind; diffusing, at the same instant, information and amusement: they are read with equal avidity by all; and seem to be the happiest medium yet discovered, for conveying knowledge to the palace or the cottage.³¹

Expressing almost identical sentiments, the editors of the *New-York Magazine* (New York, 1790-1797) boasted of the format that:

The monthly magazine has opened a way to every kind of inquiry and information. The intelligence and discussion contained in them, are very various and extensive: and they have been the means of diffusing a general habit of reading through the nation, which, in a certain degree, hath enlarged the public understanding...³²

4. The American Periodical Market in an Atlantic Context

The development of the American periodical, and indeed the Scottish periodical has received significantly more attention than that in Ireland; possibly as a result of more detailed bibliographies, general assessments of the publication history of the periodical are less gloomy than that of the Irish trade.³³ A general point of departure for this discussion can be seen in the graph representing the number of monthly or quarterly periodical titles being published in each year 1770-1830 (figure 1). In terms of basic numbers the American trade was producing as many if not more titles than the Scottish after 1785, and particularly the Irish trade up to 1800. After patchy annual publication totals for the first decade of this study

³¹ 'Advertisement', *Anthologia Hibernica*, II (Dublin, 1793).

³² 'Of the rise and progress of magazines', *New-York Magazine* (New York, May, 1790).

³³ On American periodicals see for example Lyon N. Richardson, *A History of Early American Magazines, 1741-1789* (New York, 1931); Frank Luther Mott, *A history of American magazines, 1741-1850* (Cambridge, Mass., 1938); William Charvat, *Literary Publishing in America, 1790-1850* (Philadelphia, 1959); Gaylord P. Albaugh, *American religious periodicals and newspapers established from 1730 through 1830* (Worcester, Mass., 1994). On Scottish periodicals see for example W.J. Couper, *The Edinburgh Periodical Press* (Stirling, 1908); Derek Roper, *Reviewing before the "Edinburgh", 1788-1802* (London, 1978).

in the 1770s (and several years where no monthly or quarterly periodicals were produced during the Revolutionary years), the American periodical trade grew significantly in the 1790s peaking at 10 individual titles being published at some point during the year 1796. After a small dip in the number of titles appearing in the last years of the century, the annual total of American magazines did not again fall below six for the early years of the nineteenth century, and by the early 1820s there were never less than 22 titles appearing in any year. Scottish and Irish annual totals did not differ greatly from this trend in the eighteenth century, though the sustained period of American growth from 1785 to 1796 were quite exceptional years which were relatively stagnant or fitful in Ireland and Scotland. The significance of external factors on these figures is likely quite important – the dip in Irish titles in 1796, the spike in American titles in the same year, and the steady growth of Scottish titles from the mid-1790s, all of which might be explained by the political environments of the three countries – government clampdown on the printed press in Ireland, vibrant party politics in the United States, and the rise of radical movements in Scotland in the same period.

Each of these trends was particularly focused on the capital cities of Dublin, Edinburgh and Philadelphia which were also the dominant centres of periodical production throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth-century and well into the nineteenth century. These statistics also highlight the fact that the often cited depression of the Irish book trade in the early nineteenth century following the extension of the Copyright Act to Ireland in 1801 had only very short-term effects on the Irish periodical trade, with recovery evident by 1808/9 when the trade was producing a similar number of titles to Scotland.

Such a graph belies many other aspects of the comparison exercise. For example, despite the relatively small numerical gap in terms of annual numbers of titles appearing between 1785 and 1795, the gap in terms of quality of publication was much larger, with the American trade in many cases surpassed its more mature counterparts in terms of physical

appearance, a fact which is particularly marked considering the relative youth of the trade there. The first periodical attempts in the United States occurred in the 1740s through local rivalry between two native publishers, Andrew Bradford and Benjamin Franklin. The latter claimed the first plan for an American magazine, but the former apparently produced his publication first, three days before Franklin's *General Magazine, and Historical chronicle, for All the British Plantations in America*. The first attempts in Philadelphia were brief: Bradford folded his magazine after three months; Franklin after six. Boston printers Rogers & Fowle issued a weekly periodical, the *Boston Weekly* two years later which lasted only three numbers, but this failure did not deter them from a second periodical venture within six months. This periodical, the *American Magazine and Historical Chronicle* (1743-45), modelled itself closely on the *London Magazine*, mentioned earlier and became the first American periodical to last more than half a year.³⁴

Although short-lived, these attempts did indicate that by 1741, only ten years after Cave's introduction of the *Gentlemen's* format, the American book trade was prepared to attempt a general magazine. After almost a decade of no monthly titles in the 1760s, the quantity and quality of American periodicals increased dramatically in the 1770s, partly due to the political situation, the arrival of Scottish and Irish book trade personnel in the American trade which will be discussed in further detail below, and a general increase in the perceived potential role of the monthly periodical format.

Secondly, this graph does not account for the extraordinary number of high-quality fortnightly periodicals emerging from Scotland in the period. If such publications had been included over 10 extra titles would be added to the Scottish figures, which would significantly alter the rather stagnant view of the trade as represented in the graph.

³⁴ 'Preface', *American Magazine and Historical Chronicle* (1743).

Interestingly many of these fortnightly publications were also associated with Scottish towns outside Edinburgh, particularly Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee and Perth.³⁵

Another perspective from which to assess such figures is a comparison of the annual number of new monthly and quarterly periodical titles started in each country in order to contextualize the success and energy of the respective periodical trades. From the first decade of the period 1770-1780 the American and Irish trades were producing more new titles than the Scottish trade, with the latter producing the smallest number of new titles in the whole decade, which means that the majority of Scottish periodicals being published in this decade had survived from the previous decade or before. This does not directly suggest a weak performance by the Scottish periodical trade, but it does suggest that new ventures and new producers were not encouraged by the periodical market in Scotland such as it was. In the 1780s it was the Irish periodical trade that appeared to be the least energetic, with only two new titles being established. The American trade appears increasingly vibrant, with four or more new titles being established in two years after the end of the Revolutionary war. Somewhat surprisingly, it is the Scottish monthly periodical trade which again comes off most inert (above exceptions here also) in the 1790s, by comparison to thirteen new titles commenced in Ireland (albeit in an erratic pattern and short-lived) and an impressive twenty-nine in the United States. These figures point to the lively and innovative American market that was developing in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Every new title established, despite the many failures in its wake, is evidence of market confidence and of willing readers and contributors. The Scottish market fares worse than the Irish periodical trade in these figures, a fact which is somewhat unexpected given its publishing reputation.

³⁵ For example Glasgow titles included *Glasgow Magazine*, 1770; *Glasgow Magazine*, 1795; *Torch or Glasgow Museum*, 1796; Aberdeen titles included *Caledonian Magazine or Aberdeen Repository*, 1786-87; *Aberdeen Magazine, Literary Chronicle and Review*, 1788-91; Dundee titles included *North British Miscellany or Dundee Amusement*, 1778-80; *Dundee Repository of Politics and Miscellaneous Literature*, 1794-94; Perth titles included the *Caledonian Magazine and Review*, 1783.

The materiality and physical make-up of the American periodicals of this study closely resembled the London publications they imitated and the Irish and Scottish publications of the period too; mostly octavo, they ranged from thirty-four to ninety-six pages, occasionally exceeding 100: Carey's *American Museum* averaged a hundred pages per issue, the *American Review and Literary Journal* (1801-1802), a quarterly, averaged c. 264 pages per issue. Publications that appeared outside the traditional urban print centres of Philadelphia, Boston and New York were more likely to be smaller in size, more poorly produced and without illustrations – was evident with Irish publications coming from Cork, Belfast and Limerick, and the Scottish publications from Perth, Aberdeen and Paisley, though towards the end of the period such distinctions became much less obvious. In terms of pricing, Scottish periodicals appear to have been the cheapest, American the dearest, and the Irish in between. The average price for American periodicals in the second decade of the nineteenth century was about \$3, which implies that for the majority of American rural and industrial workers periodicals were a luxury item.³⁶

A further insight into the affordability of American periodicals can be gleaned from the numerous advertisements in American periodicals announcing that agricultural produce would be accepted in lieu of the payment of annual subscriptions. Several examples of such notices were located in eighteenth-century American periodicals, though none after 1800. For example the following statement appeared on the wrapper of Carey's *American Museum*:

For the accommodation of the friends of literature and science in the country, he will [Carey], during the present scarcity of specie, receive all kinds of SEASONABLE COUNTRY PRODUCE in payment of subscriptions.³⁷

³⁶ This information is not based on a large survey of prices in the American or Scottish periodical trades as this information is not widely available, rather it is a general impression and subject to slight revision. For some discussion of the price and affordability of American periodicals see Neal L. Edgar, *A History and Bibliography of American Magazines, 1810-1820* (Metuchen, N.J., 1975), pp. 7-15.

³⁷ *American Museum*, III (May, 1788). An astounding number of wrapped copies of American periodicals survive in the Library Company of Philadelphia.

This sentence appeared in square brackets after the terms of subscription for the May 1788 issue, though it was removed by the July 1788 issue. It reappeared several times over the course of the *Museum's* life.

5. *The Columbian Magazine* (1786-1792) and *Carey's American Museum* (1787-1792): American Contexts, Impacts and Influences

The development of the American periodical was greatly influenced by immigrant printers and related craftsmen who brought experience from their native trades and usually retained transatlantic contacts which were valuable for information, stock and capital.³⁸ Sher's work *The Enlightenment & the Book* (2006) also discusses in detail the exploits and antics of Scottish (and some Irish) émigré publishers in America and their aggressive role in spreading the reprinting and marketing of Scottish Enlightenment texts in colonial America.³⁹

Robert Bell was one of the most influential early book trade immigrants to the colonies before the Revolution, as he brought with him, after a successful career in Scotland and Ireland, a strong disregard for the copyright privilege honoured in England, backed up by the firm belief that such legislation did not apply outside that country.⁴⁰ Despite not being directly involved in periodical production, Bell by his assertiveness and entrepreneurial spirit demonstrated the strength of the American book trade and the potential of the market it served.

The work of Cole on the American careers of Irish book trade personnel has been the most comprehensive study, and other more focused work has been done on prominent

³⁸ Work by various scholars in *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* have identified this important aspect of the American book trade and investigations into the broader influences of the Scottish book trade, by Warren McDougall (on the support given to Thomas Dobson, a Scot who established himself in Philadelphia in the 1780s with the secret backing of Charles Elliott) and by Stephen Brown (on various Scottish figures who ended up in the American book trade), paint a vivid picture of the contribution of Scottish booksellers to the American book trade in general. Warren McDougall, 'Scottish books for America in the mid-eighteenth-century' in Myers and Harris, eds. *Spreading the word* (Winchester, 1990; reprint New Castle, De., 1998), pp. 21-46.

³⁹ Sher, *The Enlightenment & the Book*, pp. 503-596. See also the impact of Irish, Scottish and English personnel have also been considered by Wilson and Drury in their analysis of the British and Irish radicals who entered the American book trade after the collapse of local radical movements in England, Ireland and Scotland. Wilson, *United Irishmen* and Michael Durey, *Transatlantic radicals and the early American Republic* (Lawrence, 1997).

⁴⁰ Cole, *Booksellers*, pp. 41-61; Sher, *ibid.*

members of this Irish immigrant community, notably Mathew Carey, Patrick Byrne and John Chambers.⁴¹ Cole identified 101 Irish book-trade personnel who moved into the American trade between 1740 and 1820, with these movements broken into three significant phases, before the Revolution, post-Revolution to 1794, and 1795 to 1820. Although this study provides much quantitative material for further investigation of the experiences of the Irish contribution to the United States, Mathew Carey is the most prominent Irish immigrant involved in the American periodical market.

Robert Aitken (1734-1802), the immigrant Scottish bookseller from Dalkeith, was also significant contributor to the development of the American periodical during the tumultuous years of the Revolution. Aitken who has been described as a ‘bold patriot’, had been involved in the American book trade from 1769 when he established himself as a bookseller in Philadelphia, being one of the first printers of Bibles in America.⁴² In relation to the periodical, his greatest contribution was *The Pennsylvania Magazine* (1775-1776), which was one of only two periodicals that existed for several years during the Revolutionary war. It was produced with considerable skill and quality and included impressive illustrations during a period fraught with manufacturing difficulties, and it set the standard for the high-quality periodicals that followed. Aitken’s periodical was also very well received by its contemporaries:

Several attempts have been made to establish a Magazine in different parts of the Continent, all of which, meteor like, have blazed through with different degrees of lustre, and expired. I begin to have other expectations of the present one; for without paying any other compliment than merit is justly entitled to, I look on several of the original pieces which have already appeared in the Pennsylvania

⁴¹ Cole, *Booksellers*; See also Kinane, “‘Literary food’ for the American market: Patrick Byrne’s exports to Mathew Carey’ in *Proceedings of the AAS*, 104, pt. 2 (1994), pp. 315-332; Green, *Mathew Carey*; M. Pollard ‘John Chambers, printer and United Irishman’ in *Irish Book*, 3 (1964), pp. 1-22.

⁴² Moncure Daniel Conway, *The life of Thomas Paine* (New York, 1893), I, pp. 40-41 cited in Mott, *American magazines*, p. 87. See also Sher, *The Enlightenment & the Book*, pp. 503-596.

Magazine, to be equal in point of elegance, and invention, to the best pieces in the English ones. I observed the poetry in your last number is all original, except the short piece on the Scotch and English beauties: an instance scarcely to be met with in any other magazine...⁴³

Aitken employed Thomas Paine as his editor, only three months after the latter's arrival in Philadelphia, a move which saw the title's subscription increase from 600 to 1,500.⁴⁴ Whatever the reason for this marked increase in subscribers, it signifies a significant new era for the American monthly periodical, as such figures greatly surpassed the circulation of any American magazine or of any American newspaper before that point and demonstrated the public appetite for the format.

Aitken's periodical was also an early example of the use of content and imagery to physically, textually and visually embody a particularly American vision of the colonial cause in the struggle against Britain through a regularly published and widely accessible printed format – the monthly periodical. As well as this distinctive material, Aitken retained other popular features of the general miscellaneous magazine, with articles on education, women, husbandry, love and marriage and scientific matters. This combination was successful, however fleetingly, and Aitken created a periodical which was distinctly American and not to be found in imported British rivals.

Periodical producers in the colonies also had to deal with shortages of basic printing equipment, most of which was still imported from Britain even in the late eighteenth century. Such difficulties were highlighted by Joseph Greenleaf, the second publisher of the *Royal American Magazine*, in an address to his subscribers:

It may be necessary to apologize for the poor appearance of the work these last six months. The Magazine came into my hands when I was unprepared with a type so good as I could wish for the business, this evil would have been remedied but for the non-importation agreement, which it was my duty to comply with:
The Ink also has been poor, but as it was of American Manufacture my customers

⁴³ 'To the printer of the Pennsylvania Magazine' in *The Pennsylvania Magazine* (Philadelphia, April, 1775), signed R.S. Bucks County.

⁴⁴ Paine to Franklin, Conway, *The life of Thomas Paine* (New York, 1893), I, p. 41 cited in Mott, *American Magazines*, p. 87.

were not only willing but desirous that I should use it.⁴⁵

Greenleaf's indication of his use of ink of American manufactures because his customers were "desirous" that he should use it points to another aspect of periodical production in the major print centres of the British Atlantic world – the importance of patriotic purchasing, particularly during periods of heightened patriotic sentiment and debate.

These difficulties continued after the Revolution as Carey experienced his own difficulties in procuring printing equipment as his efforts to purchase the only suitable second-hand printing press available to him to buy was thwarted by a rival newspaper publisher of the *Independent Gazetteer*, the conservative Eleazer Oswald, who hoped to deny Carey entry into the newspaper market in Philadelphia. As he was desperate to launch his American newspaper, Carey was forced, through Oswald's influence, was forced to bid far beyond his budget at the auction for the equipment.⁴⁶

In the aftermath of the Revolution the American periodical trade rapidly increased in terms of readers and in quality of product, with the continuing tide of European emigrants dramatically affecting the literate population. After Bell and Aitken, several Irish printers who arrived in the United States around 1784 were even more influential in the development of the American periodical, Carey being one of them. William Spotswood a (bookseller), Thomas Seddon, John Trenchard (an engraver) and Carey all arrived in Philadelphia c.1784, and within a year they had joined together to establish another distinctly American periodical, *The Columbian Magazine* (1786-1792) which was to become another key example of the American periodical market adopting and adapting the successful London format while transforming its use to an American context and purpose.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ 'To the Public', *The Royal American Magazine*, (1774).

⁴⁶ James N. Green, *Mathew Carey. Publisher and patriot* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 5-6.

⁴⁷ They were also joined in this partnership by Charles Cist who was a Russian who worked as a printer and publisher in the United States.

Previous to this monthly periodical, Spotswood, Talbot and Carey had also been partners in Carey's first newspaper venture in America, the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*.⁴⁸ As each of the partners in this paper had recently come from Ireland, they appreciated the potential of a nationally distributed serial, and Carey had particular experience of this through his proprietorship and editorship of the controversial *Volunteer's Journal* in Dublin, the reason for his quick and final escape to the United States.⁴⁹

Despite the relative success of their first American paper, (particularly after it began to record the debates of the House of Assembly in Philadelphia), Carey knew that the paper was not suited or indeed capable of a national audience in the United States.⁵⁰ As already mentioned, Carey later noted that his publishing experiences in Ireland had been "enthusiastic and violent" as they "fanned the flame of patriotism" and achieved "a greater circulation than any other paper...except the *Evening Post*". From these experiences, Carey and his other expatriate partners knew that a nationally distributed publication, such as Carey's newspaper in Ireland "exercised a decided influence on public opinion".⁵¹ They must have also appreciated that this "decided influence" would not arise from a locally produced newspaper in the United States as the distribution networks and public interest did not yet exist for a national newspaper as these tended to focus on local and regional issues of little relevance to colonists hundreds of miles away. None of the periodical publications that existed in the United States before these Irish pioneers arrived had had any realistic pretensions to national distribution. Aitken's *Pennsylvania Magazine* had certainly extended the scope of the

⁴⁸ Carey and Spotswood also collaborated in three other periodicals, the *Compete Counting-House Companion*, Carey's first newspaper the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald* and his most successful magazine, the *American Museum*. Collaboration in some of these instances might better be presented as bookselling agreements. See Cole, *Irish booksellers*, p. 178.

⁴⁹ For Carey's early career in Ireland see Green, *Mathew Carey*, pp. 4-6.

⁵⁰ For Carey's early career in Philadelphia see E.L. Bradsher, *Mathew Carey, editor, author and publisher* (New York, 1912).

⁵¹ Mathew Carey, 'Autobiography of Mathew Carey, Letter II' in *The New England Magazine* (1833).

monthly periodical, but it was significantly limited by the turbulent period of its existence and, more conceptually perhaps, by its regional title.

The *Columbian Magazine; or Monthly Miscellany* (1786-1792) was the first monthly periodical venture of Carey's partnership. The *Columbian Magazine* was typical in its recognition of the potent success of the *Gentleman's Magazine* format and its imitators in the early eighteenth-century, and of the impact of periodical publications in general as a means of enlightenment and opinion-setting. "Periodical publications of this kind have in Europe proved the means of maturing and perfecting the taste and talents of many who afterwards became the most celebrated literary characters. We hope the *Columbian Magazine* will prove equally useful here".⁵² It is difficult to know the motivations of each of the publishing partners in this enterprise, beyond the obvious intention to earn profit. Carey and Cist were known for their interest in blending printing with patriotic sentiment and were likely hoping to publish a magazine that would reach a broad audience and help bind the nation together through the promotion of 'American' manufacture, literature, arts and indeed publishing. The dual benefits of profit and control of a platform for political ideas had been established by Aitken, and was particularly evident from Carey's publishing experiences in Ireland, both during his apprenticeship and in his own right.

The *Columbian Magazine* followed the precedent established by Aitken and other early American booksellers by distinguishing its content with specifically American, and usually patriotic, articles and visual images. The preface to the periodical concluded with a rousing call to Americans to purchase the magazine for reasons of national pride and the cultivation of national industry: "The labour of the press [for this periodical] is performed, the paper and materials for publication are supplied, and the work is embellished, at a monthly expense of one hundred pounds, by the mechanics and manufactures of the United

⁵² 'Preface' *Columbian Magazine*, I (Philadelphia, 1786).

States".⁵³ Articles followed on the need for the protection of American industry and manufactures, and on important American war heroes. The *Columbian Magazine* is also remembered as being one of the 'handsomest' magazines of the eighteenth century.⁵⁴ The magazine successfully produced memorable visual imagery which had strong political associations for the new republic during its debates on the constitution, which emphasised the importance of harmony in the working out of the ideal republican environment, the genius of Federate America with symbols of peace, liberty above it, and surrounded by emblems representing commerce, science, agriculture and plenty.⁵⁵ The elegant engravings which accompanied the *Columbian Magazine* consisted largely of buildings, plans of public works, technical drawings, and maps, and are all the more impressive considering the relatively cheap subscription level of the magazine, twenty shillings a year.⁵⁶

This partnership was broken when Carey removed himself in late 1786 or early 1787, due to a disagreement as to how the publication should be advertised and run in order to make a profit. Carey's books show that he was almost solely relying on revenue from the *Columbian* for his livelihood, which may explain his frustration with his partners' failure to promote it vigorously enough. Green has suggested that the lack of political content in the magazine may also have been the reason for the "discordant views" among the partners.⁵⁷ An entry from Carey's diary at this time indicates the stress and tension that he experienced at the failure of this venture:

Jan 1 [1787] Began the year with a solemn invocation of the divine being and a supplication to shield me from the manifold misfortunes that have hitherto pursued me - Abstained wholly from work and resolved no further on any account of violate the Sabbath.⁵⁸

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Mott, *American Magazines*, p. 99.

⁵⁵ *Columbian Magazine*, III (1787); see also Mott, *American magazines*, p. 95.

⁵⁶ Receipt for subscription to *Columbian Magazine*, Wallace Papers, HSP, vol. 4.

⁵⁷ Mathew Carey, 'Autobiography of Mathew Carey, Letter IV' in *The New England Magazine*, (1833) and James N. Green, 'Mathew Carey' in *American Magazine Journalists* (Detroit, 1990), p. 57.

⁵⁸ 1 Jan, 1787, Diary of Mathew Carey (HSP, MS material from 1810-19, Carey Papers) The partners officially accepted Carey withdrawal from the partnership between 7-10 January 1787 though when it was announced in the press on 13 January.

The *Columbian Magazine* continued on for six more years, becoming in January 1790 the *Universal Asylum and Columbian Magazine*, an amalgamation of the *Columbian* and a rival title which it subsumed. It was edited by a number of successful literary figures, including the Reverend Jeremy Belknap of Boston, Francis Hopkinson (from April 1787), the poet and judge and Alexander James Dallas (from 1788), an energetic lawyer and man of affairs who had previously been employed by Spotswood as editor of the *Pennsylvania Herald*. The latter two figures had also been signatories of the Declaration of Independence.

When announcing his withdrawal from the *Columbian* partnership, Carey took the opportunity to announce plans to publish “a new periodical work, (on a plan hitherto unessayed in this country) of which the title will be *The American Museum, or, repository of ancient and modern fugitive pieces, prose and poetical*”. Green has suggested that it was typical of Carey’s optimistic and even impetuous approach to publishing that he should rush a second magazine onto the market which only a few months before had not even supported one, without great difficulty to the publisher.⁵⁹ Again coming from the transatlantic market, where magazine specialization, particularly in England was beginning, Carey perhaps believed that America was ready to do the same as his *Museum* was to be quite different from the original plan of the *Columbian Magazine* which was very much aimed at being a polite monthly miscellany with a unique American patriotic element. Carey’s new venture aimed to push the format beyond the polite into the more traditional translation of the French *magazine* as “storehouse” where important literature and historical documents (specifically American) would be published and the resulting volumes retained in bound form for future reference by readers.

Carey’s plans gained the attention of many leading literary figures in the new republic and his correspondence begins to greatly increase in this period. One such correspondent was

⁵⁹ James N. Green, ‘Mathew Carey’ in *American Magazine Journalists* (Detroit, 1990), p. 57.

Ebenezer Hazard, postmaster of the United States and collector of American historical documents in New York. It was Hazard who brought John Almon's *The Remembrancer; or, impartial repository of public events for the year 1782*, a publication which impressed Carey greatly, to his attention. This London publication was pro-American and printed extracts from American newspapers that charted the disputes with the United States.

Defining his new venture in the periodical market in the preface to the first volume of the *Museum*, Carey noted how he had observed that several newspapers throughout the country published "a great number of excellent and invaluable productions... [and that he] frequently regretted that the perishable nature of the vehicles which contained them and entailed oblivion on them, after a very confined period of usefulness and circulation".⁶⁰ Here he referred to Almon's London periodical which originated with a view to the preservation of good newspaper essays, which inspired him to his current plan for the magazine. With this sense of public duty for the preservation of "fugitive" material, Carey defended his magazine from being blatantly "destitute...of originality, which, in the opinion of many, is indispensable in any periodical publication", which is ironically what the original imitations of the London periodical models were accused of.⁶¹ However it was clear from Carey's product, energy and activities in operating and producing the *American Museum* that this was not a cut-and-paste monthly periodical effort.

Carey's correspondence testifies to his attempts to gather pamphlets and documents from the revolutionary years to be reprinted in his magazine. His attention on documenting the history of the Revolution and its political aftermath – the 'working out' of the new republic – Carey did not place utilise the same level of visual images as the *Columbian* or previous patriotically-minded titles like *The Pennsylvanian Magazine*. It is not clear if this was an editorial or financial or other choice but his focus on material of specifically

⁶⁰ *American Magazine*, I (1787). Sample layout of *American Museum*, figure 6.15.

⁶¹ *American Magazine*, I (1787).

American-related issues cemented the title's success and importance in the development of the American monthly magazine format.⁶²

The first issue of the *American Museum* attracted great attention, despite Carey's diary entries which suggest that the process of production was very difficult:

Sat Jan 13 Only four pages of the Museum composed...Most persons in my situation would take to their beds, although I am hard at work. Can not either stand or walk without pain and injury to my knee...⁶³

Mon Jan 15 Mr Talbot and I in our interview got rather mad. Reflect on suicide. Horrible thought.⁶⁴

Tue Jan 16 ... Think that a futility attends every [thing] I undertake. I am extremely apprehensive that he [Mr. Talbot] may have said something to Mr J-m-s to prejudice him against me. This thought gives me so much pain as to unfit me for work for two hours.⁶⁵

Carey made the decision to sell issues separately, as Benjamin Franklin had done, and he was very successful when his first edition of 1,000 copies sold out. But as Carey noted himself, this policy backfired and effected his long-term income from the *Museum* because people who later decided to subscribe to the whole volume declined on account of not being able to get a complete set. The sales lost due to his impromptu tactic could have saved Carey much financial hardship over the life of the *Museum*. Carey's recollections, accounts, diary, and correspondence for the years 1787 to 1792 are littered with references to debts:

Wed Mar 16 Write to Mr Leany to Mr Baldwin and Mr John M TAsIn and Mr Daven to borrow from each 50 dollars. All apologise as unable...have in bank only 80 dollars yet give a check to Mr Cockran for 100, with directions not to send him till tomorrow...Have 170 dollars to raise to-morrow & hardly know any person to whom I have not already applied in vain. But at all events the money must be procured. Mrs Carey much indisposed. Goes to bed in her clothes...Go and lie with her for half an hour...⁶⁶

and borrowings:

Thur Mar 17 At nine go abroad to collect the money for Mr Durkin apply to Mr Toland in vain. 25 dollars from Mr Connel, 40 from Mr Halawn, 62 and from Mr Gallagher 60, all before 10:15. Send the whole to the bank. Pay Mr Durkin at

⁶² The *Museum* did still publish some important engravings including the famous "Plan of an African ship's lower deck, with Negroes, in the proportion of not quite on to a ton", in May 1789.

⁶³ Carey was shot in the knee after a duel. He already suffered a lameness in that leg from his youth. 13 Jan. 1787, Diary of Mathew Carey (HSP, MS material from 1810-19, Carey Papers).

⁶⁴ 15 Jan. 1787, Diary of Mathew Carey (HSP, MS material from 1810-19, Carey Papers).

⁶⁵ 16 Jan 1787, Ibid.

⁶⁶ 16 Mar 1787, Ibid.

twelve o'clock. After him the loan of 150 dollars tomorrow...⁶⁷

Carey's autobiography entries dealing with the *Museum* concentrate on these financial difficulties that plagued his early years in Philadelphia. His critical eye noted three main causes of his misery: the already noted problem of an extravagantly low subscription rate (\$2.40 per annum, or 18 shillings, for which the subscriber got two volumes, each containing over five hundred pages) which was instrumental in Carey's financially crippled state, as was the wide distribution network that he was later famed for. This network, with a heavy dependence on rural and remote subscribers demanded Carey to employ collectors who absorbed about 30% of his revenues. Thirdly, Carey optimistically printed too many copies, which were a drain on his capital.⁶⁸

Despite these difficulties Carey had significant support and encouragement for his first independent magazine venture, along with many offers of help which are evident in his surviving correspondence. He used the names of the most distinguished citizens of the United States who subscribed to his publication in his advertisements; they included General George Washington, John Dickinson, Governor Livingstone, Dr. Rush, Bishop White, Judge Hopkinson, Dr. Wright and several more. The issue of July 1788 opened with two pages of warm endorsements from Washington, Dickinson, Rush and others, a novel innovation in monthly periodical publicity which was later imitated by other publishers. It is likely that these endorsements, while merited, were rewards for perceived "service to the nation" for his efforts in establishing the ambitious venture, which gave the *Museum* huge prestige and even greater circulation.⁶⁹ Other praise came in personal letters:

I consider the Museum [sic.] as a work of public utility, and feel myself interested in its circulation. The great variety of judicious essays contained in it, particularly politics, commerce and manufactures, have afforded me much information on those subjects, which are so very little understood even by many of our intelligent and influential public men.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ 17 Mar 1787, Diary of Mathew Carey (HSP, MS material from 1810-19, Carey Papers).

⁶⁸ Mathew Carey, 'Autobiography of Mathew Carey, Letter IV' in *The New England Magazine* (1833).

⁶⁹ *American Museum* (July 1788). See also Green, *American magazine journalists*, p. 59.

⁷⁰ Nathaniel Hazard (New York) to Mathew Carey, 16 Feb 1788 Carey Papers, Autographed Letter Series, HSP

Hazard's letters also include praise of Mathew Carey's decisions as a publisher for his service of American literature and politics. Another example is provided in the letter of William Hardy of Philadelphia where he and his son offered all possible help and influence to assist Carey and his publication: "it is with pleasure I inform you that I shall be exerted to the utmost of my powers to promote all of your undertakings".⁷¹

Whereas Carey's first magazine, after he had left the partnership, altered its content policy c. 1790 to be a more serious publication, his second and most successful magazine began with this design. However as Carey's *Museum* also altered its content policy around the same time as the *Columbian*, to be more entertaining, including significantly more original American literature. Green has noted that from the period the *American Museum's* status as a literary journal was unequalled in the United States as no other magazine of the period published so much verse.⁷²

Alongside the above discussions of the involvement of émigré publishers liek Carey with the development of the periodical format in America as a political vehicle for patriotic sentiment, political debate, visual imagery of the new nation and the encouragement of American literature, one of Carey's key contributions was the creation of a national distribution network for print. Carey's *American Museum* is credited with achieving the most in this regard, as he appears to have been the first periodical producer in the United States to recognise the need for a national network in order to make periodicals financially viable.⁷³ An examination of the lists of agents and booksellers who are recorded on the front wrappers of all of the above-mentioned American magazines creates a picture of their distribution and potential circulation. By comparison with Carey's first magazine, it is clear why the *American Museum* was such a different publication in terms of the development of the monthly magazine in America.

⁷¹ William Hardy to Mathew Carey, 13 Jan 1787 Carey Papers, Autographed Letter Series, HSP.

⁷² Green, *American magazine journalists*, p. 58.

⁷³ *Ibid.* See also Green, *Mathew Carey*, pp. 5-6.

The surviving subscription lists and correspondence attest to a remarkable distribution network that he built up, and of course, to the difficulties that this created. It is likely that if the original partners in the *Columbian* advertised as widely as Carey had hoped, this honour would have been held by that publication, but again from Carey's own writings it is clear that he had come to attribute great power to the role of the magazine in society. In his correspondence with New York Governor William Livingstone, he wrote of his wish to begin a "purely moral periodical publication", consisting of abridgements of important French and English writers, so that the "inhabitants of Carlisle, Pittsburgh-Kty., would be rendered familiar with the writings of an Addison, a Steel, a Hawkesworth, a Johnson, in a way best calculated to make a lasting impression". He complained that "of moral writing, the harvest in this country has been hitherto very small. Politics-politics engross almost all the time that men of talent can spare for writing". Within a year he hoped to see the *American Museum* and this projected moral magazine "going hand in hand to serve the interests of Society".⁷⁴ These ambitions indicate that Carey would appear to have had wider motivations and ambitions than his original printing partners.

Carey started out with only a score of subscribers, but by July 1788 he was already able to print a list of about 540 subscribers.⁷⁵ Six months later the list had reached 850, with every state well represented, as well as exhibiting agents in Europe and the Caribbean Islands. By 1789 Carey had almost 1,500 names and subscriptions peaked around 1790 at about 1,600. By the time of its demise in 1792, the *Museum* still had a respectable customer base of around 1,000.⁷⁶ The increase in subscriptions is likely explained by the continuing number of agents appearing on the wrappers of his magazine. For example the wrapper of the

⁷⁴ Nothing came of the project, but the *American Museum* certainly featured moral essays throughout its run. In later years Carey was to publish several books of that sort in cheap editions for sale in those same western towns. He even published his own schoolbook of moral essays called *The School of Wisdom: or, American Monitor* (1800). See Vincent Kinane, "'Literary food for the American market': Patrick Byrne's exports to Mathew Carey" in *Proc. of the American Antiquarian Society* 104 (1994-1995), pp. 315-332.

⁷⁵ *American Museum* (Jul, 1788).

⁷⁶ *American Museum* (Jan, 1789) and (Jan, 1790).

issue for May 1788 indicated the breadth of Carey's ambition, with agents in London, Dublin, Bordeaux and Amsterdam mentioned.⁷⁷ Unfortunately very little evidence remains of the organization and terms arranged with these agents. It is clear that Carey was still offering copies of his *Museum* to fellow Dublin publisher Patrick Byrne in 1793, after he had given it up as a means of exchange.⁷⁸ By December 1789 the wrappers indicate that Carey was receiving subscriptions from thirty-nine individual agents located in all of the major coastal towns from Boston to Charleston as well as in more remote outposts to the south and west of Philadelphia, such as Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Hagerstown, Maryland and Winchester, Virginia.⁷⁹ These American subscribers, spread out as they were, provided as many problems as transatlantic customers did.

Despite his astute awareness of the medium's potential and his tireless efforts to arrange such networks, Carey never made a surplus from the magazine itself. But his methods and efforts did begin to instill a system of professionalism and cooperation within the American book trade which would benefit him and many others in the early nineteenth century, when the role of the publisher began to be separated from that of editor and printer and when the American market for print material began to accelerate. Carey recruited not only booksellers, but postmasters, literary men and country-store owners to advertise, collect subscriptions, distribute magazines and forward payment. These agents would get a small cash remuneration, or payment in copies of the magazine when Carey's financial situation was not so fluid.

When Carey's *Museum* ceased publication, it was well into the first decade of the nineteenth century before another national American magazine appeared. The generation of

⁷⁷ *American Museum* (May, 1788).

⁷⁸ Mathew Carey (Philadelphia) to Patrick Byrne (Dublin) selection of letters in 1793 (HSP, Carey Section, Edward Carey Gardiner Papers). See also Vincent Kinane, "Literary food for the American market": Patrick Byrne's exports to Mathew Carey' in *Proc. of the American Antiquarian Society*, 104 (1994-1995), pp. 315-332.

⁷⁹ *American Museum* (Dec, 1789).

publishers that followed with nineteenth-century publications viewed their trade and the market with new eyes. Irish book trade personnel continued to pour into the American business but they too were of a different nature to those involved in and around the American and Irish rebellions. Philadelphia was also being challenged in its role as a publishing and political centre by Boston, New York, Baltimore and Washington D.C., which became the capital in 1800. Therefore the period of Carey's Philadelphia career and his two magazines capture a very particular moment in the development of the American monthly magazine, and one which appears to have been its most innovative.

6. Conclusion

The most common thread connecting monthly and quarterly periodicals in Ireland and America, and to a slightly lesser extent Scotland, was the dominance of the London models as acknowledged templates for the genre as a whole. Although the earliest version of the periodical format originated in France, to be imitated almost immediately in England, it is the London models which had the most lasting impact throughout the English-speaking Atlantic and further afield. The admiration afforded to the English periodical titles of Addison, Steele and Cave was consistent throughout the period and carried from the Irish and Scottish markets to America but the influential members of the book trades who set up businesses in the colonies and the new republic.

In Ireland the first attempts to capitalize on the success of the new format in London by reprinting were by established booksellers and publishers such as George Faulkner, James Hoey and Edward Exshaw, a situation paralleled in Scotland.⁸⁰ In colonial America this was also the case, with Andrew Bradford and Benjamin Franklin experimenting with the new formats for the American market within a decade of Cave's first issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The first generation of general magazines in Ireland, Scotland and the American

⁸⁰ See Mann, *Scottish book trade* and Couper, *Edinburgh periodical press*.

colonies closely retained the structure and tone of the London originals, but by mid-century innovations were emerging.

Alongside the commercial and (relative) literary success of these models, the periodical format in these provincial print centres was maturing in an environment where the role of print in patriotic movements was becoming increasingly critical. The issue of a free press became prominent in all centres, and the case for monthly periodicals to be seen as a necessary feature of a free society, was made. These developments are striking in their simultaneous emergence in Ireland and America in the late eighteenth century. Some articulations' of these sentiments highlight the perceived potential and importance of countries having their own indigenous monthly periodicals. The *Hibernian Magazine* posed the question in 1771:

And we are to suppose the capital of this kingdom, the second city of the British Empire, could not find sale for one magazine? The contrary is obvious, as great number are monthly imported, the matter of many little deserving your favour. These reasons have encouraged us to this undertaking; if we meet with your approbation, we shall, with unremitting care, continue our labours; if not, we shall at least have this consolation, that we meant well.⁸¹

The following century the *Dublin Monthly Magazine* echoed this in its prospectus:

That a City the second in the British Dominions, the Metropolis of a Country containing eight millions of an intelligent, ardent, and inquiring people, should be without a pure and consistent Periodical Publication, is a circumstance which must excite the astonishment of all, as it has long been a subject of regret to every enlightened and patriotic member of the community.⁸²

These sentiments were not a feature of the development of the monthly periodical format in London as by default there was not the same need for a forum to debate English national identity in the way that it manifested itself in other capitals such as Dublin, Philadelphia and up to a point Edinburgh, as English national identity was not in flux in any sense. Such discussions were instrumental in developing a new role for the monthly periodical format in both the inner and outer peripheries of the British empire and its sphere of influence.

⁸¹ 'To the Public', *Hibernian Magazine* (Dublin, January, 1771).

⁸² 'Prospectus', *Dublin Monthly Magazine, or Irish Sentinel* (Aug., 1826).

Further evidence of the contemporary value placed on periodical, and particularly the monthly and quarterly formats comes from George Washington, in his words of encouragement to a periodical producer in the early years of the new republic:

I entertain an high idea of the utility of periodical publications: insomuch that I could heartily desire copies of the Museum and Magazines as common Gazetters, might be spread through every city, town & village in America – I consider such easy vehicles of knowledge more happily calculated than any other, to preserve the liberty, stimulate the industry and meliorate the morals of an enlightened and free people – With sincere wishes for the success of your undertaking in particular, and for the prosperity of the graphical art in general⁸³

Washington and his federalist party quickly appreciated the value of a print medium which could reach the length and breadth of the new nation and offer a platform on which to foster ideals of unity (both textually and visually) and internal improvement. In such critical national moments the monthly periodical, and particularly patriotically-minded publishers like Carey, was well positioned to cater for the federalist's needs, a situation which was further benefited by the character of the publisher who was deeply interested in the political freedoms offered by the United States and the experience of the publisher who appreciated from his Irish publishing ventures, the potential of a print medium with a capacity to reach a national audience.

The use of the periodical format for debate about national issues of identity and citizenship and the relationship of the imperial centre with the peripheries was not unique to the English-speaking Atlantic world. Clark's work on the monthly periodical format in Mexico focuses on the *Gazeta de Literatura de México* (1788-95), one of the first and most valuable literary-scientific periodical publications to appear in the Spanish Americas. Through the perspective of the *Gazeta de Literatura's* editor José Antonio Alzate y Ramírez (1737-99), Clark has tracked the spread of his ideas in the colony and also how their appearance in periodical form assisted his political goals of strengthening the identity of New

⁸³ George Washington to Mathew Carey, 25 Jun. 1788, (H.S.P., Carey Papers, Autographed Letter Series, ALS).

Spain within the Spanish Atlantic empire. The periodical offered a very effective platform to educate and inform the reading population, to boost the pride of the colony, to enlighten Mexicans on their own folklore, and to refine academic and political debates on empire and their place within it.⁸⁴

It could be argued that the existence of an indigenous periodical became a badge of nationhood in Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined' nations.⁸⁵ The inference from these assertions is that the periodical, particularly in the monthly or quarterly format, offered much more to its reading audience than newspapers and weekly periodicals, and more than any book or corpus of edited texts. By its regular appearance and the space provided for multiple authors to discuss and debate points of public interest, this format of the printed press was indeed arguably the most adaptable to provoking and engaging national discourse.

From a wide perspective this evidence suggests a particular developmental course for the periodical format more generally. It evolved from being a very successful format in early eighteenth-century London, to being a format whose intellectual reputation was secured by the high-quality Scottish models by the early nineteenth century. Developing alongside this theme was the adaptation of the format for use beyond literary and intellectual spheres, which was more pronounced in the peripheries of the empire. In Ireland the monthly periodical provided considerable space for political debate and contributed to developing visualisations of national and group identity (not discussed in this paper). These characteristics are also evident in American monthly periodicals that played an important communicative role in the creation of national ideas and visual symbols in the post-Revolution period. In both these

⁸⁴ Fiona Clark, 'The *Gazeta de Literatura de México* (1788-95): the formation of a literary-scientific periodical in late-viceregal Mexico', *Dieciocho: Hispanic Enlightenment*, 28, 1 (2005), pp 7-31; 'Read all about it: science, translation, adaptation and confrontation in the *Gazeta de literatura de México* (1788-95)' in Daniela Bleichmar, Paula de Vos, Kristin Huffine and Kevin Sheehan (eds), *Science and medicine in the Spanish and Portuguese empires* (California, forthcoming 2008) by kind permission of the author.

⁸⁵ Anderson, *Imagined communities*, pp 1-18.

instances, the periodical format offered features of print that would not have been available through other formats of the time such as newspapers, pamphlets or books.

From a broad lens, the working-out of national periodical markets within the imperial environment perhaps suggests a counter-colonial paradox. The format which began in the metropolitan centre of London was imitated by the principal print centres of the empire in an effort to recreate exactly the success of the original template. However after a period of maturation and within patriotic environments, the format adapted from the imperial centre, was adopted as a means of subverting the influence of the cultural and political centre. I am suggesting that in these instances, most notable in America though the titles of Irish and Scottish émigré publishers like Mathew Carey, the monthly periodical format achieved its greatest impact. Due to increasing populations, divergent political aims and the tendency towards more specialised periodical genres in the nineteenth century, this role was less noticeable after the 1820s. By this date the precedent was set for the periodical format to be viewed as a forum for widespread debate which was further evident in the great debates over slavery and other defining issues of the nineteenth century Atlantic world.

Figure

Figure 1: Annual Totals of Irish/Scottish/American Monthly /Quarterly Periodicals, 1770-1800

