

**A Materialist Study of Canadian Literary Culture at a Time of
Neoliberal Globalization**

**A Materialist Study of Canadian Literary Culture at a Time
of Neoliberal Globalization**

By

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Abstract

In this dissertation I query a notion that is prevalent among contemporary literary critics, cultural policy-makers, and media representatives in Canada: the notion that Canadian literature is national “soul-stuff” and thus not an ordinary commodity. I argue that this notion obscures the crucial nexuses at which the literary, economic, and political spheres blur inside Canada. My analysis of Canada’s literary conditions under contemporary globalization examines just these nexuses. It pries apart the discourses of national literature and national identity in order to investigate how they function and onto which economic, political, and social values they project themselves.

With this approach, I do not intimate that Canadian literature does not have any non-market value. Rather, I want to draw attention to the fact that the traditional focus on literature as a trope of non-material, national values masks what is really at stake at the present moment - namely questions of “value.” What are the social and political values that structure contemporary Canadian society: its political organization, public sphere, cultural production, public policies? How are literary-cultural decisions made and by whom? These questions open to scrutiny nationalist narratives of globalization, which tend to reduce contemporary processes of globalization (such as global cultural commodification) to the totalizing force of U.S. neo-imperialism. Not only is Canada’s relationship to cultural imperialism, capitalism, and globalizing forces more complicated than assumed in such reasoning, but globalization also is a more complicated phenomenon than the currently widespread notion of U.S. neo-imperialism suggests.

I show that this notion has in substantial ways distracted from the active and voluntary involvement of other parties and countries in the current neoliberal restructuring of global power, which asserts as inevitable the commercialization and privatization of cultural and social goods, policies, and public functions, and the deregulation of markets. In Canada, claims of cultural-national sovereignty and strategies of cultural protection have tended to omit the fact that the increasing conversion of Canada’s “national literature” in economic terms is symptom of this neoliberal restructuring process in which the Canadian government actively participates by depoliticizing its functions and handing control over

markets to multinational corporations, international trade agreements, and international judicial and political instruments.

Subsequently, I propose that we should not, at this point, study (and teach) Canadian literature in order to protect a national tradition and assert the image of an autonomous literature of multicultural “Canadianness,” but in order to approach the question of globalization and the issue of neoliberalism from alternative perspectives. Hence, I also distance myself from postmodernist approaches to the literary study of globalization, which tend to read the latter in purely textual terms that emphasize transnational and transcultural images and narratives. While this postmodernist focus has in many ways countered the totalizing implications of the term globalization, it has run the risk of excluding the material realities of literary globalization from its inventory of study objects. So has the more recent North American discourse of “global literary study,” which has been largely limited to postmodernist idealizations and transnational histories of globalization. As an alternative to these readings, I propose a materialist literary approach that emphasizes that an understanding of the contemporary literary conditions in Canada requires an understanding of neoliberal globalization as the context within which literary studies articulates itself as an academic discipline and within which the production and consumption of literature takes place today.

Materialist literary criticism engages in a process of critical interdisciplinarity - at the junction of the fields of English-Canadian literary studies, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, and globalization studies - that is non-nationalist and unsettling of the neoliberal power structures and values that increasingly pervade universities and cultural policies and markets. The dissertation chapters explore the possibility and emphasize the actual existence of alternative globalization processes and narratives. The first chapter does so by engaging in the more recent North American debate on the literary study of globalization. The second chapter discusses the neoliberal orientation in the present practice of modern-representative democracy in Canada in order to test the grounds for alternative methods of more inclusive cultural decision-making, especially as it relates to literary production. In opposition to the still-prevalent modernist ideal - purported most notably by Northrop Frye and A.J.M. Smith - of a globally vanguardist Canadian literature, the study of Aboriginal and ethnic minority writers undertaken in the third chapter brings forth an “allochronic” (or differently-timed) understanding of Canadian literature, globalization, and their interrelations. The fourth chapter complicates the cultural nationalist binary of Canadian-owned,

government-funded publishing and foreign-owned, market-driven publishing. It explores the idea of alternative publishing by means of interviews with small-scale Aboriginal and EuroCanadian publishers and an analysis of radical Canadian writers that publish with big publishing conglomerates such as Random House and HarperCollins.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Canadian Literature, Globalization, and Their Interrelations

In this dissertation I query a notion that is prevalent among contemporary literary critics, cultural policy-makers, and media representatives in Canada: the notion that Canadian literature is national “soul-stuff” and thus not an ordinary commodity. I argue that this notion obscures the crucial nexuses at which the literary, economic, and political spheres blur inside Canada. My analysis of Canada’s literary conditions at the present moment of neoliberal globalization examines just these nexuses. I propose that we should not, at this point, study Canadian literature in order to protect a national tradition and assert the image of an autonomous literature of multicultural “Canadianness,” but in order to approach the question of globalization and the issue of neoliberalism from alternative perspectives. In the four chapters of this dissertation, I put forth materialist literary approaches that are non-nationalist and unsettling of the neoliberal power structures and values that increasingly pervade universities and cultural policies and markets in Canada. The dissertation chapters explore the possibility and actual existence of alternative globalization processes, which defy contemporary assurances of the historical inevitability of the global spread of neoliberal capitalism. This introductory chapter provides a critical discussion of the currently prevalent notions of “Canadian literature,” “globalization,” and their interrelations. It thus lays the grounds for the materialist literary analyses in the four dissertation chapters, which are summarized at the end of this introduction.

Let me begin with a reference to Scott Griffin, Canadian “businessman and philanthropist” (MacNamara, “Foreign Buyer”) who founded the Griffin Trust Prize for Excellence in Poetry, known as the Griffin Poetry Prize. On June 13, 2002, Griffin bought House of Anansi for \$400,000. The literary media celebrated the event. *Globe and Mail* reporter Sandra Martin proclaimed that “Griffin rescued House of Anansi Press from almost certain death” caused by the collapse of General Publishing, and gave “experimental fiction and poetry...a lifesaving transfusion,” as well as literary journalists and writers a new “culture hero” to talk and write about (“Culture Hero”). Margaret Atwood noted in conversation with Martin that “every once in a while the culture throws up a culture hero. Scott is one of those people who involve themselves in the arts, not because it is their vocation to be an artist, but because they find it interesting, worthwhile and meaningful, and they are willing to put money into it.” With the founding of the Griffin Poetry Prize and the purchase of Anansi, which had been one of the initiators of Canada’s independent publishing movement in the 1960s, Griffin seems to have confirmed many in the belief that there still is something like beneficial Canadian capitalism that is committed to the nation’s arts and letters. The literary media have established him as a cultural

benefactor whose marriage of (aesthetically and morally) “serious” Canadian literature and economic capital can be embraced, because it is for the “common good” of Canadian society, of the Canadian nation and its culture.

In a so-called “exclusive interview” with Martin, Griffin stated that he could have got Anansi for “quite a bit less” than what he paid, but that his view was to “pay the proper price. One isn’t buying bricks and mortar here; one is buying good will” (“Culture Hero”). Griffin’s financial strategy of “good will” intimates a dual investment in the survival of highbrow Canadian literature and in his private cultural capital. Moreover, Griffin is not hesitant to emphasize that “[h]e expects the press to break even soon” (“Culture Hero”). As Anansi’s editor Martha Sharpe points out, “Griffin keeps us focused on goals for growth – and also provides a refreshing conviction that a small literary publishing house can be a successful business venture” (Spendlove 4). Together with business director Adrienne Leahey and sales director Matt Williams, Sharpe shares a 21 per cent stake in Anansi, an ownership strategy with which Griffin guarantees top commitment and interest in the company’s profitability. Griffin is a businessman with literary “taste” and he wants to increase his capital with the Anansi and Griffin Prize investments, though in a very different way than with his non-literary, car parts business (with which he built his fortune). As a patron of “serious” Canadian literature¹ and “serious” poetry in English, he intervenes in the literary market on behalf of texts he aesthetically espouses, consumes, and believes to belong to the “best.” Economic profit and capital accumulation may not be primary to his Anansi and Griffin Prize undertakings. However, they are not absent either. Besides, Griffin’s cultural capital² gained from these market interventions is a “transformed, disguised form of economic capital...(or power, which amounts to the same thing)” (Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital” 252, 243). His much-praised literary benefactions are made possible by the economic capital or power gained from his car parts venture.

Similar to Griffin, Jack Rabinovitch, real estate entrepreneur who founded the Giller Prize for Canadian fiction in 1994, has found a venue to marry economic capital and literature in a highly selective way that presents itself as philanthropic. The Giller website announces that “[t]he Giller Prize is dedicated to celebrating the best in Canadian fiction each year, and to enhancing marketing efforts in bringing these books to the attention of all Canadians” (*The Giller Prize*). “[T]he best in Canadian fiction” (rewarded with \$25,000 for the annual finalist) is channeled through a restrictive financial selection process. If a book gets short listed for the Giller Prize, the publisher has to pay \$1,500 towards advertising and promotion, and if it wins, an “appropriate sum” for media advertising (*Submissions*). This leaves many small- and micro-scale publishers and their authors excluded from the Giller competition. Indeed, the Giller has become a prize for already-established, successful, profitable authors, with winners such as Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro,

Mordecai Richler, M.G. Vassanji, Rohinton Mistry, Richard B. Wright, and Michael Ondaatje. All winning novels, with the exemption of Austin Clarke's *The Polished Hoe*, were published with either McClelland & Stewart or the multinational publishers Knopf, HarperCollins, and Doubleday. Clarke's novel carries the imprint of the Toronto-based Thomas Allen Publishers, which belongs to Thomas Allen & Son Ltd., one of Canada's major domestic agency publishing and distribution companies that recently started to do some original publishing. As André Schiffrin³ points out in *The Business of Books: How International Conglomerates Took Over Publishing and Changed the Way We Read*, "larger firms...have vast advertising budgets at their disposal, enormous sales forces, and an extremely efficient network of press contacts, all of which help ensure that their books get a certain amount of attention" (105). By contrast, smaller publishers "are unable to compete on an equal footing and have a much harder time finding space for their books" (105) in bookstores, review columns, and prize lists such as that of the Giller (this issue is discussed in more detail in chapter five).

In his cultural nationalist polemic *When Words Deny the World: The Reshaping of Canadian Writing*, Stephen Henighan argues in a chapter entitled "Giller's Version" that the choice between the Governor General's Awards, administered and funded by the Canada Council for the Arts since 1959, and the private Giller is the choice between a national culture and "commercial hype" (85). This statement reveals a common binarization in cultural nationalist discourse in Canada – national/"serious" versus commercial literature, restricted literary production and consumption versus commercial literary buzz. As Lorraine York notes in "He Should Do Well on the American Talk Shows: Celebrity, Publishing, and the Future of Canadian Literature," literary academics have been "extremely reticent" (97) to acknowledge the commercial aspects of "serious" Canadian literature.⁴ It is a reticence that, according to Pierre Bourdieu, signifies a long-fought battle among cultural elitists over cultural, intellectual, and social capital or power (see especially Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production*⁵). Henighan himself seems to acknowledge the artificiality of this binary when he attacks the Governor General's Awards for having become increasingly commercialized since the inception of the Giller (87-88). What Henighan does not acknowledge, however, is that so-called "serious" national literatures and literary awards have always lived the "two-faced reality" (Bourdieu, *Field* 113) of symbolic and material, economic and cultural object. Even if not primarily written and produced for commercial reasons, "serious" Canadian literature has always needed private and governmental support; i.e. it has always depended on economic and political capital or power. Nonetheless, the belief that it once was and still could be immaterial, autonomous, and non-commercial persists.

Besides, it is a quite recent belief. As Bourdieu notes in *The Field of Cultural Production*, it was only in the nineteenth century that the romanticist vision of *Volks-*

culture gave rise to a buoyant nationalist phase, which created the myth of “serious” literature as independent of power relations and materiality, as stemming from “a naturally occurring national culture [or character] or some form of ‘collective unconscious’” (Corse 4). Theoretically and empirically grounded studies that reassert the interconnectedness of culture/literature, politics, economy, and technology – and thus reject the belief that literature operates in an immaterial realm – have abounded at least since the 1940s. They reach from the Frankfurt School of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Georg Lukács, and Walter Benjamin, to the emerging fields of cultural studies (e.g. Raymond Williams, James Clifford, Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart), postcolonial studies (e.g. Edward Said, Paul Gilroy, Aijaz Ahmad, C.L.R. James), and cultural sociology (e.g. Clifford Geertz, Edward Shils, Pierre Bourdieu, Sarah Corse). What these multidisciplinary, diverse, and in some instances highly divergent approaches share is the premise that all cultural activity needs to be understood in terms of its actual interplay with institutions, civil society, technology, production, distribution, and consumption.⁶ The myth of non-material, autonomous Canadian literature, which follows from the process of politicizing literature and then forgetting to remember its injection of political ideology, might seem odd in the present century; yet it endures in Canadian literary criticism⁷ and cultural policy-making.

As chapters two and three specify in more detail, proclamations of the “imagined community” of the Canadian nation have adapted the Herderian myth of an organically grown national culture to the conditions of a colonial invader-settler society borne in modernity and built on a concept of multiculturalism (of national unity in cultural diversity) presided over by French-English hegemonic rivalry. In the absence of an unique national language – for Johann Gottfried von Herder, language constituted the key indicator of nationality – “literature” has served as the matrix of the “healthy” Canadian nation, a matrix of which English Canada has constantly and variously attempted to assure itself. Imre Szeman notes in *Zones of Instability: Literature, Postcolonialism, and the Nation* that “it is the aesthetic and moral ‘seriousness’ of the novel that has been seen as...the spiritual reservoir of national culture” (45).⁸ Similarly, Jonathan Kertzer remarks that literature has served “the modest but persistent nationalism” (3) of politicians and literary critics and historians as diverse as Charles Mair, Edward Dewar, Wilfred Eggleston, Margaret Atwood, John Moss, and Gaile McGregor, to name a few of the scholars Kertzer discusses in the second chapter of *Worrying the Nation: Imagining a National Literature in English Canada*. A staunch advocate of literary autonomy, John Metcalf has variously condemned the political instrumentality to which Canadian literature has been submitted. In *What Is a Canadian Literature?* he denounces the political-romanticist drive to use literature as a vehicle of national identification as “a concern of far too many critics” (28). Clarence Karr makes a similar argument in his historical analysis *Authors and*

Audiences: Popular Canadian Fiction in the Early Twentieth Century. He notes that the nationalist sentiment of the popular Canadian novelists Nellie McClung, Robert Stead, L.M. Montgomery, Arthur Stringer, and Ralph Connor has been exaggerated (if not outright conjured) by Canadian literary critics, either to condemn the mediocrity these authors' popular successes assigned to the image of Canadian national literature, or to embrace them in the nationalist search for "self-definition and greatness" (193). Karr maintains that the five novelists did not write as nationalists but "as Canadians about the Canada they knew" (195). They used Canadian settings and characters without thinking it necessary "either to validate this approach or to boast about it" (195).⁹

The political-romanticist ideal of autonomous national literature has encountered many challenges as a consequence of the more recent boom of globalization discourse, which buzzes with catchphrases of "global cultural homogenization," "McWorld," "mass media revolution," and "postnational identity." Basing her analysis of the relationship between Canadian literature and "the nation" on this background, Lynette Hunter argues in *Outsider Notes: Feminist Approaches to Nation State Ideology, Writers/Readers and Publishing* that contemporary literary critics need to move beyond the assumption, argued most prominently by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, that ideas of the nation are largely disseminated via print and literature. In a society that operates on the basis of mass media communication, electronically-transmitted cultural expressions with a potentially global reach (e.g. the music of the Tragically Hip or the Molson slogan "I *am* Canadian") increasingly shape what we, and especially young Canadians, understand national culture to be. Szeman argues in "The Persistence of the Nation: Interdisciplinarity and Canadian Literary Criticism" that this shift requires us, as literary critics, to place literature alongside other cultural forms of national expression and, thus, "to usefully complicate the character of our analyses of literary texts; it may also lead critics away from the text to a broader analysis of cultural consumption and production" (24-25). Agreeing with Szeman, I engage, in this project, in a materially-informed study of Canadian literature. I term this approach "materialist literary criticism."

By materialist I do not mean so much a concern with countable "matter" (figures, statistics, numbers) but with the larger cultural, social, economic, and political relations that presently influence the symbolic and material production of literature in Canada. This is not to say that citing literary "facts" cannot contribute to materialist literary analysis; yet it is only one among many practices. As Szeman notes in "A Manifesto for Materialism," the aim of materialist criticism

is not to discover the meaning, significance, or logic of a literary or cultural text elsewhere...The aim of materialist criticism, rather, is to effect a fundamental reorientation of our approach to texts...[which]

attends to the ways in which institutions, concepts, and historical formations that are nonliterary (or, in a certain sense, noncultural) nevertheless structure literary and cultural criticism just as much as they structure the production of the typical objects of critical analysis (novels, poems, etc.). . . . If materialist criticism is thus often concerned with matter, the materiality of social and cultural forces, and with political economy, it is not just because it is 'materialist' but also because these are the elements most commonly 'left out' of typical examinations of cultural objects, especially in the case of literary texts. (2, 6)

Materialist literary criticism is an intellectual practice concerned with exploring the relations between literature and what is not obviously literary – including processes of production and marketing, national issues, cultural policies, contexts of consumption, and so on¹⁰ – which does not mean that the interiority of literary texts and thus traditional textual analysis do not matter anymore. However, it means that we need to do more than open our study and the literary canon(s) to more texts.¹¹ Materialist literary criticism does not aim at reducing “literature” to its material aspects, at denying its symbolic and experiential dimensions and ideological representations. Rather, its objective is to effect a radically different view of (critical and literary) texts in relation to their social, cultural, and economic functions. Working at the junction of the fields of literary studies and cultural studies,¹² it engages in a process Len Findlay terms “interdisciplining.” In this process, which is discussed in more detail in chapter two, the strengths of Canadian literary studies are “reassessed and built upon rather than impulsively discarded” (“Interdisciplining” 9).

Materialist literary criticism rejects the defining function of Canadian literature as mythmaker that encompasses the experience of being Canadian for the sake of securing Canada’s symbolic and material unity and sovereignty in a world of increasing connectivity. Di Brandt’s essay “Going Global” proclaims that “[o]ne thing is clear: in agreeing to play the global market aggressively...we can no longer disclaim economic profit as a motive in our literary and critical productions” (111). Consequently, to demystify the notion of autonomous Canadian literature means to admit and investigate its material, economic dimensions. It is a consequence Brandt gives voice to but does not pursue. She follows up on her call to remember the economic *within* the Canadian literary world by arguing that “the greatest threat to literary publishing is...the World Trade Organization...the huge pressures of the WTO to give up...all national cultural sanctions to the interest of big business” (111). As chapters two and three show, Brandt’s tendency to relegate the commercializing determinants of contemporary Canadian literature to the “outside” – to the non-national sphere of global market pressures – is misleading and nonetheless common in policy statements and literary criticism. Attempting to

challenge Canada's "lofty cultural ideals" (111), Brandt ends up rearticulating the separation of national-symbolic and global-commercial literary value.

Binarizations between Canadian literary circuits and global literary markets (such as Brandt's) have given rise to powerful nightmares of a globally commodified, homogenized literature of globalization¹³ that swallows "our" uniquely Canadian literature. Manifestations of such concerns reach back as far as the nineteenth century, when literary advocates and investors such as Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Goldwin Smith, and G. Mercer Adam campaigned for Canadian copyright controls.¹⁴ They insisted that a "native" (as opposed to the imperial-British) copyright legislation would create favorable conditions for a national literature that could stem the threat of Canadian culture "becom[ing] merged in some more numerous or more powerful neighbor" (McGee, "Protection" 22). A major twentieth-century statement on this issue is the 1951 report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (commonly known as the Massey report¹⁵), which implored the Canadian government to take action to protect Canadians from being immersed in mass culture, which at that time, as now, was largely equated with American culture. The Massey Commission echoed Matthew Arnold's belief that European "high culture" constitutes a form of intellectual enlightenment, which alone can counter commercialized American mass market culture. Literary criticism was influenced by and influenced this dichotomous Canadian-American reasoning in cultural policy discourse. Like thematic criticism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the "CanLit"¹⁶ project of the late 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s (e.g. the Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel held in 1978 or "Taking Stock: The Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel" held in 1984) endeavored to make possible the Canadian nation and its literature. The canon debates around Robert Lecker's *Making It Real: The Canonization of English-Canadian Literature* and Frank Davey's *Postnational Arguments: The Politics of the Anglophone-Canadian Novel Since 1967*, as well as the argument between the two in *Critical Inquiry*, have attributed critical value to Canadian literature in fending off "the spread of Americanized popular culture into every crevice of Canadian culture" (Szeman, *Zones of Instability* 197). What Davey and Lecker's conflicting nationalist standpoints share is a belief that resistance to Canadian cultural commodification inevitably comes from the nation and its writers – in Davey's argument, from the nation written as a contested, multiple space, and in Lecker's argument, from the nation written as a unified space, imagined "through a collective force of will" of the Canadian people (Szeman, *Zones of Instability* 40).

The cultural nationalist discourse within which Davey and Lecker's debate is situated ignores the fact that contemporary Canadian literature and its circuits of production, study, and public funding cannot be exempted from Canada's participation in international trade and policy agreements aimed at the facilitation and deregulation of the international flows of market commodities. Cultural nationalist

discourse has led to assertions such as Michael Redhill and Esta Spalding's that "to demand that books and art slavishly follow an economic model that is more suited to selling cars and breakfast cereal, is to risk destroying the storehouse of culture we owe to our future" ("Selling Culture in the Free Market"; more detail in chapter five). This notion, that Canadian literature is national "soul-stuff" and thus not an ordinary commodity, obscures the crucial nexuses at which the literary, economic, and political spheres interact and blur *inside* Canada. My analysis of Canada's literary conditions under contemporary globalization – and I mean contemporary globalization here in terms of a historical process, a new formation, and a discourse "which is increasingly visible as a taken for granted appeal in everyday economic and political thinking" (Grossberg, "Speculations" 14) – in the following chapters examines just these nexuses. It pries apart the discourses of national identity and national literature in order to investigate how they function and onto which non-literary, economic, political, and social values they project themselves. With this approach, I do not intimate that Canadian literature does not have any non-market value. Rather, I want to draw attention to the fact that the focus on literature as a trope of non-material, non-market values "impedes our understanding of Canada's place in globalization and its position within the broader structures of global power" (Szeman, "The Rhetoric of Culture" 214).¹⁷ As chapter three shows, the fact that Canada exempts its cultural goods in international trade agreements on the premise that they are different from other goods, masks what is really at stake – questions of "value." What are the social and political values that structure contemporary Canadian society: its political organization, public sphere, cultural production, public policies, and so on?

These questions inevitably open to scrutiny nationalist narratives of globalization, which tend to reduce contemporary processes of globalization to U.S. neo-imperialism, that is, to the totalizing force of American cultural and economic "superpower."¹⁸ In *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada*, Eva Mackey notes that "a constant theme in debates about Canadian identity...is the notion that Canada is marginal to and victimized by various forms of colonization, most recently American cultural imperialism. In this context, the reasoning goes, Canadian identity needs to be protected" (9). Canada's relationship to colonialism, capitalism, and contemporary globalizing forces clearly is more complicated than assumed in such reasoning. Furthermore, globalization is a more complicated phenomenon than the notion of a homogenizing movement of U.S. neo-imperialism suggests; albeit this is the meaning frequently attributed to the term by critics as well as in the popular discourse of many countries. Initiated by economists and social scientists in the 1980s, the study of globalization developed as a response to the emergence or, rather, intensification and acceleration¹⁹ of a global economy (anticipated by Immanuel Wallerstein's "world-systems theory") and global

communication technologies (anticipated by Marshall McLuhan's vision of a "global village"), which "have made it possible to conceive of the globe as a single space shared by all of humanity" (Szeman, "Globalization" 213). Discussing the economic, political, technological, and cultural dimensions of globalization, Szeman notes that the latter "has been seen as primarily an economic phenomenon [associated with the transnationalization and deterritorialization of capital and industry] that has, in turn, had a determinate influence on social, political and cultural life" (212).²⁰

There has been considerable disagreement among critics regarding the cultural dynamics of globalization. While some have argued that greater economic integration is leading to a standardized, commercialized "world culture" – a process commonly associated with the global spread of Western or, more specifically, U.S. cultural symbols and practices, and thus frequently referred to as cultural Americanization or neo-imperialism – others have countered that globalization is generating an intensified localization and heterogenization of cultural experience and expression. According to a third hypothesis, globalization is causing a binary split in the world's cultural allegiances between the West and an Islamic/Confucian axis, a binary, in Benjamin Barber's words, of "Jihad vs. McWorld." One could say that the present moment consists of a complex simultaneity of all of the above and many more cultural processes. As Stuart Hall points out in "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," one-sided assertions of cultural homogenization, heterogenization, and binarization "have lost sight of one of the most profound insights in Marx's *Capital*, which is that capitalism only advances, as it were, on contradictory terrain" (180). Capital "works in and through specificity" (180) in its drive to commodify everything; it is decentered and decentralizing. The challenge is, and cultural critics such as Hall, Fredric Jameson, Lawrence Grossberg, Arif Dirlik, and Roland Robertson have variously emphasized this, to cross analyze difference and sameness, continuity and disruption, the local and the global when studying the current logics and circuits of global power. Robertson's concept of "glocalization,"²¹ for instance, stresses that for scholars the empirical and theoretical problem "becomes that of spelling out the ways in which homogenizing and heterogenizing tendencies are mutually implicative" ("Glocalization" 27). Robertson calls for an analytical standpoint that takes into account that the concept of globalization involves "the simultaneity and the interpenetration" (30) of supposed opposites like the global and the local, however, without denying that today's local/global relationships are highly uneven, conflictual, and changeable processes.²²

Rethinking globalization as a predominantly political phenomenon in *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri introduce the term "Empire" to emphasize that the present moment of global capitalism is more than, as Harvey, Giddens, Robertson, Jameson, and others have claimed, the most recent stage of a very long development in which "things are getting faster and the world is getting smaller"

(Szeman, "Plundering the Empire" 175).²³ Hardt and Negri insist that, albeit rooted in the European projects of imperialism and colonialism, the present moment is fundamentally different from prior capitalist developments. It is constituted by a new political order, a new form of sovereignty that, unlike modern sovereignty which is founded on the nation, is a "*decentered and deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers" (Hardt and Negri xii). Hence, the fact that the sovereignty of nation-states has declined in the last decades "*does not mean that sovereignty as such has declined*" (xi) but that it has taken a new form they call "Empire," which is "composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule" (xii). Moreover, it does not mean that the nation-state has disappeared but that it has been subsumed into Empire's "mixed constitution" of monarchic (e.g. the organisms of the World Trade Organization/ WTO, International Monetary Fund/IMF, Pentagon), aristocratic (e.g. the organisms of multinational corporations; nation-states, especially those of the G8), and democratic (e.g. the organisms of non-governmental organizations/NGOs, the multitude) political powers.²⁴ Empire is not to be confused with modern forms of imperialism, including U.S. neo-imperialism, which are possible only "within the paradigm of national sovereignty, as nation-states compete amongst each other for resources and territory" (Brown and Szeman 178). Empire spans the globe in networks of power that are flexible and decentered; unlike European imperialisms and American neo-imperialism, it does not have a vertical structure of rule that is centered in specific nation-state territories (e.g. Britain, France, Spain, the U.S.). Whereas modern sovereignty cannot exist without an "outside" or "other" in order to legitimate its rule, the sovereignty of Empire knows no "outside."

Leaving aside the debatable and highly debated aspects of Hardt and Negri's concept of "Empire,"²⁵ what I want to emphasize at this point is that their position refutes long held claims – which in specific underlie Canadian political and cultural discourse – that contemporary globalization is the same as U.S. neo-imperialism. These claims have in substantial ways obscured the active and voluntary involvement of other parties and countries in the current "neoliberal restructuring of the forces of domination" (Grossberg, "Speculations" 20), and thus also from potential sites of resistance and alternative. Yasmeen Abu-Laban notes in "The Future and the Legacy: Globalization and the Canadian Settler-State" that a "unique feature of the contemporary era is the way in which 'globalization' has itself become a discourse...now invoked by...state actors and business élites in Canada and abroad...to justify neo-liberal policy practices as being the only choice" (264). The increased conversion of the product "Canadian literature" into an economic commodity is a symptom of this trend in political economy, called neoliberalism or neoliberal globalization, which can be described as a political philosophy and a political-

economic movement that de-emphasizes the traditional (i.e. New Deal, statist, modern) liberal doctrines to achieve progress and social justice by more classical liberal methods, with a special emphasis on the market and economic growth (*Wikipedia*). Decreeing that greater and less restricted economic interdependence will ultimately lead to truly global progress, wealth, and stability, neoliberalism asserts as inevitable the commercialization and privatization of cultural and social values, goods, policies, and public functions, and the deregulation of markets.²⁶

In his interpretation of neoliberalism in “A Reasoned Utopia and Economic Fatalism,” Bourdieu argues that “we are currently living in a period of neo-conservative reconstruction of capitalism” (125). Undisguised and unrestrained, it “erects into defining standards for all practices, and thus into ideal rules, the regularities of the economic world abandoned to its own logic: the law of the market, the law of the strongest” (125). Bourdieu further maintains in *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* that the current discourse of neoliberalism is “a very smart and very modern repackaging of the oldest ideas of the oldest capitalists....[It] essentially dress[es] up the most classic presuppositions of conservative thought of all times and all countries in economic rationalizations” (34, 30). States are minimized to enablers of the unconstrained workings of the market in society. Though moving beyond a U.S.-centered understanding of neoliberalism, Bourdieu runs the risk of adopting a Darwinian “free market” rhetoric, which omits that the “free” in “free trade” is an economic euphemism. The fact is that multinational corporations, governments,²⁷ and the major international trade and monetary organizations continually intervene in the supposedly free, unrestrained market in order to secure their (often mutual) interests. Neoliberal practice as it finds expression today is frequently and paradoxically protectionist, nationalist, and what some would call neo-mercantilist (see, for instance, Grossberg).

The defining political economic paradigm of our time, neoliberalism has become, “in various ways, the ‘state’ policy of many different nations, and certainly the dominant policy of the international economic community (e.g. GATT, the IMF)” (Grossberg, “Speculations” 39). Hence, it refers to the policies and processes whereby states such as Canada depoliticize their public, social functions and hand control over the market to non-democratic parties: to multinational corporations; international economic and political instruments such as the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF, and the OECD; and NAFTA and other international trade agreements. This does not imply, however, that neoliberalism or neoliberal globalization is a uniform or even monolithic, thoroughly organized and managed, and predictable project that “defines the entirety of the political conjuncture, either at the global or at the national...level” (16). As Grossberg emphasizes, neoliberal ideology and practice takes different shapes in different contexts. Moreover, while it may be a leading trajectory of the present political conjuncture, it nonetheless is “only one of the

forces or vectors of power vying to determine the future” (17). It competes, overlaps, and interacts with other projects and apparatuses of domination, such as Keynesianism, neo-conservatism, and neo-mercantilism. Exacerbating the effects and crises of capitalism, it has led to a more unstable, volatile world economy and thus to a wide range of social movements fighting for alternative models of people-centered and self-reliant progress.

Still, as the following chapters demonstrate, many Canadian policy-makers and literary critics are looking for the source of cultural mass commodification and other effects of neoliberal globalization (e.g. the deregulation of markets, downsizing and lean production) in the wrong place – the United States. Canada’s leading political and cultural elites tend to, wittingly and unwittingly, obscure their own subscription to a world driven by decentered neoliberal forces with a politics of national-cultural sovereignty that insists on Canada’s right and ability “to make laws and policies that can effectively protect and promote its culture and cultural industries in the interest of Canadians” and that cannot be disputed by external powers (Media Awareness Network, *Canadian Cultural Sovereignty*). What has commonly been taken to be a check on or even antagonistic to neoliberal market ideology – cultural nationalism – indeed is not, a fact that has produced confusing misconceptions about Canadian literature and culture. This confusion has constructed a binary picture of American culture as commercial mass culture that is privatized and imperialist and Canadian culture as “serious” national culture that is public and in need of protection.²⁸ In light of this discussion, then, the assertion that we are different from the U.S. in our public preservation of a genuinely democratic national multiculturalism reads like little more than an idealization. It is an assertion that exhibits long-standing anxieties about the notion of Canadian national identity and evades the crucial question of whether Canada really defines its social, cultural, and political values in a profoundly different way than the United States. This question has vexed some of Canada’s most influential thinkers of the twentieth century, including George Grant, Northrop Frye, Marshall McLuhan, and Harold Innis. The cultural theories of these thinkers, and especially their manifestations of the fundamentally global, modern character of Canada and its literature and culture, constitute an important background and pointer for the materialist literary study of globalization undertaken in this dissertation.

Canada’s literary conditions under globalization: Grant, Frye, Innis, and McLuhan

Significantly, in Grant’s *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, the concern over national sovereignty finds expression in the form of a lament for the impossibility of the Canadian nation, a radical conclusion “there seems to be an enormous amnesia about” in Canadian literary criticism (Szeman,

Zones of Instability 176).²⁹ Like R.G. Haliburton and other Red Tory nationalists before him, Grant wanted Canada to be a different, more just version of the North American experiment, “one that is less individualistic and so, in a certain sense, less modern...a space that is not limited to the individualistic notion of homo economicus” (168). Arthur Kroker notes in *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant* that “Grant’s refusal of the ‘modern project’ is, in its essentials, a rejection...of the politics and deep philosophical assumptions of liberalism... of the ‘liberal experiment’ that was the United States in the age of progress” (32). However, even while musing about Canada’s connection to British social and political traditions as the key source for the creation of a distinctive, independent society in North America, Grant makes unmistakably clear with his lament that Canada’s position within the “American empire” (*Lament* 8) does not allow for the different, that is, the non-American, non-modern Canadian nation. As he accentuates at the very beginning of *Lament for a Nation*, “[t]his meditation is limited to lamenting...as a celebration of memory...It makes no practical proposal for [Canada’s] survival as a nation” (5). According to Grant, “Canada’s disappearance was a matter of necessity” (5), a necessity that stems from “the very character of the modern era” (53). When nineteenth-century English Canada began to articulate itself as a nation based in conservative British political traditions of the common good, these traditions were “already largely a spent force” (73). They were a practical impossibility in a time driven by liberal individualism and modernization. Grant therefore describes Canada as an inevitable U.S. colony, “a northern extension of the continental economy...a branch-plant of American capitalism” (8-9). His lament expresses a form of “philosophical nationalism, a love of the Canadian possibility as...a precious recovery of a lost image of the ‘human good’” (Kroker 34).

In the conclusion to the *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*, Frye reasons analogously to, though more optimistically, than Grant. Like the latter, he believed that Canada’s historical belatedness as a nation – its coming into being “so late in the cultural history of the West” (Conclusion 835)³⁰ – makes a national literature and identity impossible. According to Frye, “there must be a period...in which a social imagination can take root and establish a tradition...Canada has never had it. English Canada was first a part of the wilderness, then a part of North America and the British Empire, then a part of the world. But it has gone through these revolutions too quickly for a tradition of writing to be founded on any one of them” (826). Citizens of a country of uncertain identity, past, and future, Canadians necessarily define their nationhood from a negative, international perspective.³¹ Indeed, Frye’s conclusion lauds the “creative energy” of the diverse contributions to the *Literary History* in envisioning a Canadian identity that defines itself against “something else,” especially if that “something

else” is the imperialist American neighbor (Conclusion 2nd ed. 75). Moreover, he argues that the primary question over which the “Canadian sensibility has been profoundly disturbed” (Conclusion 826) is not “Who am I?” but “Where is here?” (826). Frye agrees with Grant that the impossibility of both an “outside” of American modernity and an alternative Canadian modernity from “within” makes it impossible to locate the “here” in the Canadian nation. Yet, unlike Grant, he does not find the “here” in the recovery of a lost possibility but in a mythological, imaginary Canada of the present. “Here” is not the concrete, material Canadian landscape³² but cosmopolitan, universal images expressed in literature. What affiliates Frye with the foremost Canadian modernist poet A.J.M. Smith³³ is a notion of cosmopolitan nationalism that substantiates the Canadian literary tradition in a vanguardist, Eurocentric³⁴ context.

Szeman points out in *Zones of Instability* that Frye’s insight on Canada’s belatedness has been frequently overlooked by critics “because it negates the nationalist literary projects that other elements of Frye’s conclusion point to” (178). In other words, literary critics have tended to narrow down his theories on Canadian literature to their thematic substance, which means to his statements on local experience in a vast and alien physical New World environment named Canada (177-78).³⁵ They have obscured that, for Frye, “the real problem [lay] less in the literary outlook or characteristics that a ‘garrison mentality’ produces” (177), than in Canada’s belatedness as a nation, and that Frye considered Canadian literature “true” literature only to the extent that it transcended its materiality based on content and geography and became a cosmopolitan (universal and autonomous) set of literary forms. In many of his references to McLuhan, Frye suggests that in spite of writerly and critical hesitance Canada has in fact caught up with the literary world-stage. Writing in a world that is “post-Canadian, as it is post-American, post-British, and post everything except the world itself,” a world of which “Marshall McLuhan speaks...as a single gigantic village, where everything has the same kind of immediacy” (Frye, Conclusion 848), the Canadian writer has become part of an autonomous world of literature. In “Across the River and Out of the Trees,” Frye announces that “an ‘instant world’ of communication...like ours produces a single international style of which all existing literatures are regional developments” (31).³⁶ As Szeman notes in “Belated or Isochronic? Canadian Writing, Time, and Globalization,” Frye believed that McLuhan’s notion of “an ‘instant’ world of communication,” of a world that knows only one single global time, could resolve the problem of Canada’s belatedness once and for all. McLuhan made possible the idea of a world “in which it is no longer possible to position oneself as out of sync with the main currents of modernity” (Szeman, “Belated or Isochronic?” 149). In this world, Canadian literature is a regional development of a larger cosmopolitan-metaphysical order of autonomous literature. So while insisting on the non-

American character of Canadian literature, Frye's metaphysical literary model did not insinuate an alternative Canadian vision of modern literature but subscribed to the ideal of an autonomous and instantaneous world of cosmopolitan, Eurocentric literary forms.³⁷

Like Grant and Frye, McLuhan took for granted the pervasiveness of American technology, capital, and power. His metaphor of the "global village" symbolizes the rapid explosion in the world's interconnectedness after the Second World War, an explosion caused by a U.S.-led technological boom in instantaneous communication or mass media. In McLuhan's global village, the U.S. functions as "world environment" and Canada as "anti- or counter-environment." In other words, the currency of the global village is American and all Canada can do is forge its own specific, anti-environmental space in the Americanized global village or world environment. According to McLuhan, Canada is unique in comparison to the U.S. in that it offers a different image of an essentially similar cultural experiment, one that renders the U.S. "more acceptable and intelligible to many small countries of the world" (McLuhan, "Epilogue" 149). He thus rewrites Grant's lament for the lost Canadian nation and tradition as a positive experience, as an opportunity latent within Canada's "otherness," which he terms anti- or counter-environment. Canada's primary advantage is that it does not have a strongly defined national identity but a "soft-focus" borderline identity, which is particularly suited to a world of instantaneous communication that renders national markers obsolete (166). As a model of identification that insists on the hybridity, heterogeneity, and fluidity of Canadian culture, McLuhan's "soft-focus" borderline concept has rendered itself useful to poststructuralist discourses seeking to come to grips with a twentieth century in which global technologies and economies have disturbed the habitual boundaries of the nation-state and local cultures. Moreover, it has created an international image of Canada as a softer, gentler form of Americanism.³⁸ McLuhan's Canadian anti-environment hence does not constitute an alternative vision of North American modernity. Rather, it attempts to make Canada's belatedness as a nation-state consistent with liberal ideas of civil humanism and technological progress. The Canada McLuhan invents befits the postmodern, global capitalist paradigm in several ways – in its insistence on cultural hybridity and plurality, permeable and receding borderlines, the pervasive Americanized global village, and the global deregulation of communication systems.³⁹

With his assertion of Canada's positive anti-environmental position in the American world environment, McLuhan reworked not only Grant's dystopian lament for the Canadian nation but also the technological skepticism of his Canadian predecessor in communication studies, Harold Innis. What McLuhan and Innis's approaches to mass media and communication share is a thoroughgoing critique of the modern obsession with present-mindedness, which, they argued,

destroys the balance between time (direct speech, oral culture) and space (visual print, written culture) essential to the survival of Western civilization. As Kroker points out, they saw the “radical separation of ‘oral’ from ‘written’ culture as the basic break-point in western civilization...[and] wished to reassert the primacy of oral culture (technologies of the ‘ear’) as the locus of civilization” (113-14). It is in the roles they attributed to media technologies in the dialectic recovery of time that their positions vastly diverge. Whereas McLuhan promoted an optimistic vision of a technological Canadian counter-environment, Innis took a position of technological pessimism. He radically disagreed with McLuhan’s claim that electronic media communication is time-binding and thus represents a return to the oral tradition. For Innis, Canada’s origin in European colonization and belated development in the space-biased British and American cultural traditions annulled any alternative vision. The North American experiment called Canada “had no alternative but to serve as an instrument of British imperialism and then American imperialism” (Innis, “Great Britain” 405).

Like Frye, Grant, and McLuhan, Innis saw Canada as “a society of the in-between: trapped between the cultural legacy of its European past and the expanding ‘space’ of American empire” (Kroker 95). Like them, he was suspicious of the dominant nationalist politics in Canada and the romanticist myth of an organic Canadian nation. In his seminal work *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, Innis asserts that Canada’s modern (national) boundaries by and large are the boundaries determined by the fur trade and thus by British imperialism (his staple thesis⁴⁰). In *The Strategy of Culture*, he repeatedly warns of the malleability of the nationalist politics of his day, of its complicities with American capital and ideology. He denounces the tariff-free Canadian export of cheap pulp and paper (resources, staples) to the U.S. and the reciprocal import of books and advertisement (commodities, finished products). These exchanges take place “with a lack of restraint from the federal government which reflects America’s influence” (15). Canadian politics plays an alibi function in the production of American print, paper, and publishing monopolies that create a homogenized, Americanized literary culture in Canada. Innis’s essay “Great Britain, the United States and Canada” comes to the bleak conclusion that Canadian politics and society have been interpellated by American propaganda to an extent that they, unlike their European counterpart, are hardly aware anymore of the American threat to Canadian culture and Western civilization. Subsequently, the future of Canada and the West “depends on the cultural tenacity of Europe...Canada must call in the Old World to redress the balance of the New” (412). Without the European connection, Canada cannot resist the dominant paradigms of technological-commercial American modernity.

As this discussion shows, Frye, Grant, McLuhan, and Innis were critically aware of Canada's belatedness, its arriving at the national and global stage at a late (modern-colonial) point in history. Attempting to forge an independent path for Canadian literature and culture at a time of American "superpower," booming instantaneous communication, and increasing connectivity on a global scale, the writings of Frye, Grant, Innis, and McLuhan reveal Canada's fundamentally ambivalent position in the Western world and Canadians' concomitant desire to be acknowledged as "really" Western, like the U.S. or Britain. Discussing Canada's relationship with the U.S. in his *Lament*, Grant notes that "Canadians want it both ways. We want through formal nationalism to escape the disadvantages of the American dream; yet we also want the benefits of junior membership in the empire" (ix).⁴¹ Chapters two and three explore the continuance of this ambivalence in contemporary cultural policy-making, literary scholarship, and the literary media in Canada. They describe the desire, on the one side, for an internationally competitive book industry and Canadian literature, and fear, on the other side, of a fully market-controlled approach that might destroy the uniqueness of Canadian literature and culture.

Grant also maintains in his *Lament* that in the period since the Second World War, "protecting romantic hopes of Canadian nationalism is a secondary responsibility" (xii). The primary responsibility is transnational and non-nationalist in scope – the fight against the "planetary destruction and planetary tyranny" (xii) of economic liberalism with its belief in open-ended, unrestrained progress and individualism. I would argue that this statement by Grant anticipates and highlights what is presently at stake for Canada (and other countries). The stake is to find ways of effectively resisting and transforming the neoliberal restructuring of political power, and not, as commonly assumed, to find ways of protecting cultural and national sovereignty.⁴² What this means for Canadian literary critics is that they need to pay close attention, as Grant, Frye, Innis, and McLuhan did, to the political and social values that underlie and shape contemporary literary and, more generally, cultural practices. How do we define and understand "Canadian" literature and culture to work in this time and for what reasons? How and why do we study and teach "Canadian" literature at this moment? As Szeman says in "The Rhetoric of Culture: Some Notes on Magazines, Canadian Culture and Globalization," we need to ask ourselves how what we sometimes take as national literature and culture – "those political and social values we might want to fight for" (224) – relates "to the general regime of commodification and the erosion of social programme" (224). According to Szeman, "[i]nstead of worrying about what might happen to Canadian culture/literature in the current context of globalization, we should focus on the recovery of our sense of the public, which decades of neoliberalism has dissolved" (226). In other words, we need to scrutinize and rethink our taken-for-granted

notions of what it means to have access to and participate in publics of social, cultural, and economic decision-making.

As the discussion here shows, Grant, Frye, Innis, and McLuhan's ideas of Canada's "otherness" – Grant's nationalist dystopia, McLuhan's technological-humanist anti-environment, Frye's metaphysical approach, and Innis's dialectical, pessimistic vision – fall short when it comes to articulating a Canadian alternative that is not fully comprised in the U.S.-centric paradigm of modernity. And still, the way in which these thinkers engaged with Canada's ambivalently modern and belated, colonial and Western character offers viable perspectives through which to rethink Canadian cultural nationalism's traditions, values, power structures, and narratives of globalization. The following four chapters engage in exploring forms of "otherness" – of "other" modernity, "other" social and political values, "other" democracy, "other" globalization, "other" Canadian literature and its production – that move beyond the dominant cultural nationalist narratives of globalization, Canadian literature (and culture more generally), and their interrelations. The project of probing alternative perspectives of Canadian literature under globalization, here, asserts a possibility Frye, Grant, Innis, and McLuhan deemed impossible – the possibility and actual existence of alternative globalization scripts that challenge and compete with the (neo)liberal paradigm of global modernity. The aim of this thesis project, then, is to explore such alternatives and to emphasize that they indeed exist, notwithstanding contemporary assurances of the historical inevitability of the global spread of neoliberal capitalism. I agree with Hardt and Negri that "the unique danger of the present moment of capitalism is that it threatens to forestall or eliminate discussions about social, political, and economic alternatives" (Brown and Szeman 5). Like many of the protest activities in Vancouver (at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum meeting), Seattle (at the WTO meeting), Prague (at the IMF/World Bank summit), Quebec City (at the Summit of the Americas), and elsewhere, this project is based on the belief that neoliberal globalization is neither inevitable nor desirable and that there are alternatives. This said, this project does not make future predictions or claims to (be capable to) come up with "ready-to-use" alternatives. The following chapters are written in the awareness that, as McChesney says in *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, "[i]t is difficult at any time for a scholar to write with certainty about current events" and that this might bear pitfalls and even the risk of looking "a little foolish" and "unprofessional" at times (9).

Summary of chapters

Taking up Rohinton Mistry's appearance on The Oprah Winfrey Show, the PMLA's⁴³ call for papers "Globalizing Literary Studies," and Pico Iyer's appraisal of

multicultural Canadian literature as global paragon, chapter two explores the conceptual and methodological constituents of a materialist approach to the Canadian literary study of globalization. It is an approach that has been largely omitted in the (often overlapping) discourses that constitute the more recent trend toward literary analyses of globalization both in Canada and North America more generally: multiculturalism, world literature, postcolonialism, and global literary study. Situated within the discourse of postmodern liberalism, such analyses have been inclined to read globalization in purely textual terms that emphasize transnational and transcultural images and narratives. While they have in many ways countered the homogenizing and totalizing implications of the term globalization (e.g. the dystopias of one Americanized McWorld or of one globally commodified and standardized literature), their apotheosis of difference, plurality, and fluidity has, in many instances, consolidated the decentered logic of neoliberal globalization. Within the Canadian context, they have come to function as handmaidens of Canadian neoliberalism and English-Canadian cultural hegemony.

In chapter three, I employ the practice of materialist literary analysis to scrutinize agents of Canadian cultural policy-making that have been key to the production of literature in Canada: publishing policies and programs, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Massey Commission. I show the contradictions and neoliberal undercurrents in these agents' cultural nationalist proclamations of the "national value" of Canadian literature and Canadian-owned literary production. Translated into practices of cultural protectionism and exemptionism, such proclamations have masked the active role the Canadian state has recently played in restructuring its political power in depoliticized, neoliberal terms. They have obstructed the fact that the nationalist-neoliberal workings of contemporary cultural policy do not counter but promote the commodification of literary goods and services. Accordingly, I will argue that the support of a cultural environment which is not completely reduced to the logic of the market requires an approach to cultural policy- and decision-making that is non-nationalist, localized (as opposed to centralized in the political power of a federal governmental agency), and pluralized (as opposed to elitist-representative). The final part of chapter three engages in the larger critical debate on the modern notions of democracy and the public sphere as they currently find expression in order to test the grounds for and viability of alternative (i.e. non-nationalist, localized, pluralized) methods of cultural decision-making and agency in Canada.

Chapter four sets out to rethink the interrelations of Canadian literature and globalization by exploring the potential of "allochronic" globalization narratives that defy the rhetoric of an "isochronic" world dominated by the vanguardist time scheme of Western modernity. In other words, it analyzes narratives that reconfigure the institutionalized Western rhetoric of an isochronic (Greek, the

property of keeping the same time or equal intervals) world, which constructs the non-West as the belated Other of vanguardist Western modernity, by means of allochronic (Greek *allos*, other) counter-time. More precisely, the chapter analyzes the challenges the allochronic positions of Ethiopian-Canadian writer Nega Mezlekia and the Aboriginal-Canadian writers Thomas King and Taiaiake Alfred pose to the isochronic claim of a single world-system and to Canada's concurrent claim that its literature be recognized as "really" Western. King and Alfred's expositions of Aboriginal⁴⁴ life in contemporary Canada and Mezlekia's account of Ethiopia's more recent history⁴⁵ depict globalization as a network of competing, differently-timed, and historically-conditioned modernities and capitalisms, which intersect in highly conflictual and asymmetrical ways. Following Findlay's call for the discipline of Canadian literary study to become "connected to 'broader politics and strategic goals'" ("Always Indigenize!" 309) by consciously demystifying and "Indigenizing" its critical approaches, I explore the allochronic and Indigenizing potential in materialist literary criticism.

In chapter five, I analyze the interrelation of globalization and Canadian literature in specific instances of contemporary publishing in Canada. The chapter demonstrates that the "national" and "neoliberal" are neither (perceived as) opposites in the everyday workings of publishers in Canada, nor can they be equated, as is frequently done in cultural nationalist discourse, with Canadian-owned, government-funded publishing and foreign-owned, market-driven publishing respectively. The first part of the chapter challenges the assumption, underlying more recent regionalist arguments, that the literary region constitutes an opposite and alternative to the Toronto-centered, commercialist and Americanized production of Canadian literature. Debinarizing this division as well as putting it in the historical context of publishing in Canada, I demonstrate that the current neoliberal restructuring of cultural policies and values is not limited to publishing in metropolitan Toronto but affects literary production throughout Canada. By the same token, it is reductive to assume that literature written and published in Toronto is a mere site of homogeneous, commercial book and show business. Here, I will not only discuss the presence of independent, small-scale publishers in Toronto but also the business tactics of large-scale multinational houses in the city, which have created the potential for highly ambivalent alternatives and resistances to the neoliberal paradigm. The last part of the chapter complicates the notions of "national publishing" and "commercialist publishing" from the perspectives of the micro-scale Aboriginal publisher Kegedonce Press and the small-scale EuroCanadian publishers Turnstone Press, Insomniac Press, and Arsenal Pulp Press, which I interviewed in 2003.⁴⁶ These publishers' operations and business strategies make obvious that independent publishing frequently functions in strategically contradictory terms, i.e. inside the dominant neoliberal and cultural

nationalist policy and industry framework in a way that makes use of the latter's resources but does not (necessarily) recognize or comply with its ideologies and values. The responses by the four interviewees underscore the fact that literary production in Canada is about a complex multitude of literary and non-literary issues, such as literary-cultural diversity, the state in its public functions, the situation of Aboriginal publishing and literature, the workings of Heritage Canada and its provincial counterparts, the spending of Canadian tax dollars, and the confrontation of matters of "value."

¹ Or, rather, "serious" literature more generally. As Sharpe notes in conversation with Paul Spendlove, under the new Griffin management Anansi is seeking "'to become the premium literary house based in Canada – but not strictly Canadian'" (Spendlove 4). It aims at becoming a top Canadian publisher of "serious" world literature.

² In "The Forms of Capital," Pierre Bourdieu differentiates between cultural, social, and economic capital. Cultural capital exists in the "embodied state" of *Bildung* or cultivation, the "objectified state" of cultural goods, and the "institutionalized state" of educational qualifications (243). Social capital is "collectivity-owned capital" (249), "made up of social obligations ('connections') such as credentials, a title, reputation, friendship, or work relations (243). Cultural capital, social capital, and economic capital are all three forms of both material and symbolic capital. Bourdieu argues that in order to "account for the structure and functioning of the social world," it is necessary to consider capital in all its forms and not, as common in economic theory, in its economic form only (242). His goal is "the constitution of a general science of the economy of practices, which...must endeavor to grasp capital and profit in all their forms and to establish the law whereby the different types of capital...change into one another" (242-43).

³ Schiffrin was an editor at Pantheon Books from the late 1950s until 1990. He now co-manages the alternative, New York-based New Press. Pantheon was taken over by Random House in 1960.

⁴ *When Words Deny the World* was nominated for the 2002 Governor General's Award in the category of English non-fiction. It obviously struck a chord with the literary establishment. See also Susan Crean's *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?* and "Looking Back to the Future," Paul Litt's *The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission*, and Clarence Karr's *Authors and Audiences* on this reticence among Canada's cultural elites.

⁵ Bourdieu uses the term "field" to describe a "competitive system of social relations which functions according to its own internal logic, composed of institutions or individuals who are competing for the same stake. What is generally at stake in such fields is the attainment of maximum dominance within them...To achieve such dominance involves amassing the maximum amount of the particular kind of 'symbolic capital' appropriate to the field" (Eagleton, "Ideology" 224).

⁶ For a comparison of these approaches see the introduction to Philip Smith's *The New American Cultural Sociology* and the first chapter of Wendy Griswold's *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*.

⁷ Many of the arguments I make in the following chapters might apply to both French-Canadian and English-Canadian literary criticism and studies. However, in the particular context of this thesis project, I am specifically dealing with Canadian literary criticism/studies in English.

⁸ Szeman continues that "radio and television are by contrast [to the novel or literature] too obviously extensions of the state's political and economic apparatuses" (45). Still, "in Canada, necessities of geography have meant that the discourse of nationalism has been mediated in the twentieth century by more highly developed technologies than by literature, for example, radio, television, and telecommunications" (45).

⁹ As Leon Surette points out, in *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* Herder “argued that any people who shared a language and a historical tradition constituted a *Volk* or nation...On Herderian grounds English Canadians and Americans form a single *Volk*, and we [English Canadians] are sensitive to that apparent fact” (22). Canadian literary critics and historians have tried to counter this perception with “the insistence on our continuity with British culture” (22) and with a “focus on topography and climate...the belief that human cultures are in some not clearly specific sense the product of the physical environment” (23).

¹⁰ The wording here is taken from Grossberg’s “The Sins of Cultural Studies” in which he defines cultural studies as an intellectual practice concerned about “exploring and explaining the relationships between culture (or cultural practices) and everything that is not obviously cultural – including economic practices, social relations and differences, national issues, social institutions, etc.” (25).

¹¹ This does not mean that it is not important to open curricula and scholarship to more (or different) texts. It is, indeed, important in the sense of rethinking our traditional notions of what constitutes a literary text. For example, why not teach Naomi Klein’s *No Logo* in a course on Contemporary Canadian Literature?

¹² More recently, a number of critical approaches have relocated the literary within cultural studies. See, for instance, Karr’s *Authors and Audiences*, T. V. Reed’s *Fifteen Jugglers, Five Believers*, Cathy Davidson’s *Revolution and the Word*, Michael Denning’s *Mechanic Accents*, and the work of Caren Irr.

¹³ Literary commodification means the transformation of non-commercial literary relationships and activities into commercial ones. Williams characterizes commercialism as “a system which puts financial profit before any other consideration” (Williams, *Keywords* 70).

¹⁴ Corse notes that “[i]n the cultural arena, the pattern of events from the late 1800s to the 1960s remained essentially the same: ‘American culture, entering the country, generated concern, anxiety, and a search for ways to ensure that it did not overwhelm Canadian culture,’ although the intensity of response increased dramatically over time” (56-57).

¹⁵ Vincent Massey served as chairman of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences from 1949 to 1951.

¹⁶ The “CanLit” project denotes the formation of a Canadian literary canon. In *Hip and Trivial*, Robert Wright describes “CanLit” as “a term signifying the achievement of a critical mass of institutional strength, commercial viability and critical respectability [that] dates only from the Centennial (1967) era and, indeed, is now widely considered to have been one of the essential elements in the nationalist resurgence of that time” (17).

¹⁷ This is by no means a uniquely Canadian issue. See for instance the papers given at the 2nd International Conference on Cultural Policy Research in 2002 (the web link to this conference’s site can be found in the bibliography) by participants from Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, India, and several European countries (including France, Norway, Italy, Denmark, and Finland).

¹⁸ “U.S.” signifies not so much (parts of) the U.S. population but “everything from the U.S. state apparatus (including its military power) to Hollywood and American cultural industries more generally to that unholy triumvirate of consumerism, capitalism and modernity” (O’Brien and Szeman 607).

¹⁹ As the debate among critics such as Roland Robertson, Anthony Giddens, David Harvey, Marshall Hodgson, and Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson shows, the question of the “newness” or “oldness” of globalization is a disputed one. Nevertheless, there seems to be agreement that what makes the contemporary moment unique is the intensification and acceleration of economic, political, technological, and cultural developments that are part of an ongoing historical process.

²⁰ This interpretation of globalization has been brought forth in particular by Anthony Giddens, David Harvey, Lawrence Grossberg, Arjun Appadurai, Fredric Jameson, Giovanni Arrighi, and Manuel Castells (Szeman, “Globalization” 212). Critics such as Malcolm Waters and James

Clifford have linked the emergence of globalization to cultural-symbolic rather than economic-material phenomena and Roland Robertson has emphasized the “intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole” (*Globalization* 8). Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s concept of “Empire” rethinks globalization in political terms.

²¹ “Glocalization” describes a local/global dialectic in which the “local is in large degree constructed on a trans- or super-local basis” (Robertson, “Glocalization” 26), in which “the contemporary assertion of ethnicity and/or nationality is made within the global terms of identity and particularity” (30). Local/national particularity becomes a sign of global consciousness. “Glocalization” maintains globalization as a twofold process that brings together nations and cultures at the same time that it instigates their desire to differentiate themselves from each other.

²² Research on the local/global dialectic of the current world order has abounded in the last decade, bringing to the fore scholars such as Ahmad (who theorizes this dialectic as “contradictory unity”), Harvey (who describes it in terms of a historically unprecedented compression of space and time), Giddens (who conceptualizes it within the framework of time-space distancing), and Hall (who analyzes it in the context of diasporas); essay collections such as *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Wilson and Dissanayake) and *The Cultures of Globalization* (Jameson and Miyoshi); and international organizations such as the International Networks on Cultural Policy and Diversity (discussed in more detail in chapter three).

²³ Grossberg makes a similar argument, though from a cultural-economic perspective, when he argues that globalization is not “an issue of extension/communication across space rather than an emergent formation of power” (“Speculations” 13).

²⁴ Hardt and Negri take their notion of “mixed constitution” from the Roman political theorist Polybius, “who argued that the Roman empire had managed to escape natural cycles of political decline and corruption because...it entertained a perfect mix between three constituent powers: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy” (Bamyeh 203).

²⁵ In the last years, there has been an increasing stream of critical responses. See, for instance, the collection *Debating Empire* (ed. Gopal Balakrishnan) and the special issues on *Empire* in the journals *Interventions* (vol. 5, no. 2, 2003) and *Rethinking Marxism* (vol. 13, no. 3/4, 2001); apart from many single articles, reviews, and statements. Ellen Meiksins Wood’s *Empire of Capital*, though not directly a response to *Empire*, is radically opposed to Hardt and Negri’s claim of global sovereignty. Wood maintains that “[t]he very essence of globalization is a global economy administered by a global system of multiple states and local sovereignties, structured in a complex relation of domination and subordination” (141); “the more universal capitalism has become, the more it has needed an equally universal system of reliable local states” (152).

²⁶ As described by neoliberal advocate Bradford DeLong, neoliberalism has two main tenets: “The first is that close economic contact between the economic core and the developing periphery is the best way to accelerate the transfer of technology which is the *sine qua non* for making poor economies rich (hence all barriers to international trade should be eliminated as fast as possible). The second is that governments in general lack the capacity to run large industrial and commercial enterprises (hence save for core missions of income distribution, public-good infrastructure, administration of justice, and a few others, governments should shrink and privatize).” Many critics locate the beginnings of neoliberalism in the economic crisis of the early 1970s and the concomitant discontent with existing development strategies for poor countries. Its rise culminated with the Thatcher and Reagan governments in the 1980s, and today it is often identified with the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF, and the “Washington Consensus.”

²⁷ In the first chapter of *Profit over People*, Noam Chomsky gives a historical outline of economic growth in Europe, the U.S., and East Asia that reveals the central role state intervention and protectionism – i.e. the violation of the conservative-liberal doctrine of free market flows – has played in alleged “free market” processes. He also highlights that the Reagan administration recorded “the greatest swing toward protectionism since the 1930s” (37).

²⁸ There are numerous American counter-examples to this binary: (a) The New York-based New Press was established by Schiffrin in 1990 as a non-profit alternative publishing venue. It has, for instance, published Bourdieu's *Acts of Resistance*, a collection of speeches, interviews, and public statements denouncing the evils of neoliberal globalization. (b) After his novel *The Corrections* was chosen by Oprah Winfrey for her Book Club, the U.S. author Jonathan Franzen refused to carry the commercial Oprah label on his "serious" text. (c) It is often ignored that the U.S. also provides public support for the arts. Most of it is in the indirect form of tax exemptions (Corse 60). One could add many more examples here.

²⁹ Grant's biographer William Christian notes that *Lament for a Nation* "argued with enormous cogency that Canada was finished as an independent nation in North America, yet it was one of the most significant factors in creating the Canadian nationalist movement of the 1970s" (271). Left nationalist James Laxer puts it this way: "'He [Grant] was saying Canada is dead, and by saying it he was creating the country'" (qtd. in Edwardson 134).

³⁰ As Szeman notes, in *The Modern Century* "Frye identifies the 'second phase' of the modern with 1867, the year of...the passage of the British North America Act which established Canada as an independent nation" (*Zones of Instability* 232).

³¹ According to Linda Hutcheon, this makes Canada an exemplary postmodern nation. In *The Canadian Postmodern*, she states that "the postmodern ex-centric is very much a part of the identity of the [Canadian] nation" (3), which shows "a firm suspicion of centralizing tendencies, be they national, political, or cultural" (3).

³² Though, this "topocentric" meaning has been associated with Frye's "here" by many critics. Dermot McCarthy, for instance, argues that "if our origins do not make us different, and if we lack an historical action/event which the collectivity can accept as having made us different, then all we are left with to 'ground' our sense of difference is the uniqueness of place itself. Geography must serve in the place of history; space must overdetermine time. Or, in Frye's most famous formulation of this determinism, the question of Canadian identity is not phrased in terms of 'Who am I?' but rather as 'Where is here?'" (32-33). Compare this reading to Frye's statement that "[s]eeds of culture can only come from the centers of civilization which are already established" (*The Modern Century* 56). For Canadian culture "complete immersion in the international style is a primary cultural requirement...Anything distinctive that develops within the Canadian environment can only grow out of participation in this style" (56-57). He makes a similar statement in the conclusion to the *Literary History*: "What the Canadian writer finds in his experience and environment may be new, but it will be new only in content: the form of his expression can take shape only from what he has read, not from what he has experienced...the forms of literature are autonomous: they exist within literature itself, and cannot be derived from any experience outside literature" (835).

³³ As Anne Compton notes in *A J.M. Smith*, "Smith cared deeply about the intellectual and literary heritage of his country, but...he would not tolerate the notion that the sources and influences of literature are confined by national boundaries" (28).

³⁴ The term "Eurocentrism" or "Eurocentric" designates the belief that Europe is "culturally and politically superior to all other peoples in the world" (Howard Adams, *A Tortured People* 26) and an universalist ambition of a globally diffused European culture and economy. In *Eurocentrism*, Samir Amin gives a detailed historical outline of the beginning of Eurocentric thought in the Renaissance and its flourishing in nineteenth century modern philosophies.

³⁵ For example, Lecker notes in "'A Quest for the Peaceable Kingdom'" that "[m]ost Canadian criticism published in the two decades following the appearance of Frye's conclusion bears his imprint. 'Thematic' in orientation, such criticism promotes the notion that literary texts can be approached as expressions of national identity. The best-known of these critical works include those by D. G. Jones, Margaret Atwood, Laurence Ricou, and John Moss" (292).

³⁶ Frye believed that regional specificity played an important part in the international literary style because it escaped the homogenizing tendencies of modern communication technology. He

moreover argued in the preface to *The Bush Garden* that in Canada the issue of identity is regional and the issue of unity “is national in reference, international in perspective, and rooted in a political feeling” (ii). Szeman notes that “[i]t is in the perpetual tension between unity and identity – the tension that constitutes federalism in Canada – that Frye finds the essence of the word ‘Canadian’” (*Zones of Instability* 181).

³⁷ It is here that Frye’s idea of Canada’s presence in the global village radically departs from that of McLuhan. Whereas Frye invokes a model of literature of globalization that is in line with Eurocentric-universalist literary metaphysics, McLuhan contends the end of literature and print in their traditional forms; and with it the end of the traditional functions of political institutions and art forms. According to McLuhan, the electronic media become the new cultural experience and the key material of cultural critique. See his *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and *The Medium is the Message* (which he co-wrote with Quentin Fiore).

³⁸ It is this idealized theorization of Canadian particularity in the counter-environment that has allowed Canada to avoid dealing with many of its issues of ethnic, class, “race”-related, gender, and sexual inequality. In addition, it has masked the fact that even in the technological twentieth century Canada had remained a resource-based more so than a high-tech-based economy.

³⁹ Kroker notes that McLuhan’s “utopian vision of technological society provided the corporate leadership of the American empire with a sense of historical destiny” (83-84). It in many instances made him “a ‘missionary’ to the power centers of the technological experience” (81).

⁴⁰ According to Innis’s staple thesis, the creation of Canadian political union served Britain as an administrative instrument for its economic expansion focused on the extraction of staple commodities such as fur, codfish, lumber, and wheat. With the shift of imperial influence from Britain to America at the turn of the twentieth century, minerals, pulp, and paper became the new Canadian staples. Being the story of the staple, Canada also is the story of technological dependency, since it is technology on which the production and transportation of staples depends.

⁴¹ McLuhan claimed that Canada “can have the best of two worlds – on the one hand, the human scale of the small country, and on the other hand, the immediate advantages of proximity to massive power” (Epilogue 151). Frye similarly remarked that technologically and economically speaking, Canada participates to the full in “the ‘American ways of life’...Canadians seem well adjusted to the new world of technology and very efficient at handling it” (Conclusion 847). On the contrary, Canada’s literary and political spheres show “deep reservations to this [American-modern] world as an end of life in itself” (847).

⁴² Hardt and Negri go so far as to argue in *Empire* that sovereignty needs to be resisted in all its forms, since it is incompatible with absolute democracy as an alternative to the dominant form of (neo)liberal, representative democracy (I come back to this issue in chapter three).

⁴³ PMLA is the acronym for *The Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*.

⁴⁴ As Olive Dickason notes, there are several European labels designating Aboriginal peoples that have been accepted and used by Aboriginal peoples themselves: “Indian,” “Amerindian,” “Aboriginal,” “Native,” and “Indigenous” (16). I use the term “Aboriginal” because, unlike the term “First Nations,” it includes Métis and Inuit peoples. Today, many Aboriginal people insist on the use of their tribal designation when directly addressed by officials, academics, or the media.

⁴⁵ I concentrate on King’s “Borders” story and novel *Truth & Bright Water*, Alfred’s critical essay *Peace Power, Righteousness*, and Mezlekia’s autobiography *Notes from the Hyena’s Belly*.

⁴⁶ Transcripts of the four interviews can be found in appendices A to D.

Chapter 2

Toward a Materialist Literary Study of Globalization: Contexts and Conflicts

In "How Global Is It: Walter Abish and the Fiction of Globalization," Thomas Peyser argues that, situated within the discourse of postmodern liberalism, North American approaches toward a literary study that engages in current contexts of globalization have been inclined to read the latter in purely textual terms that emphasize transnational and transcultural images and narratives. Literary studies of globalization have tended to confine globalization to a certain set of people (immigrants, exiles, cosmopolitans), locales (metropolitan and postcolonial places), authors (postcolonial and ethnic minority authors), and textual contents (transnationality, diaspora, cultural hybridity, as represented in writing), which offer themselves as "spectacular embodiments of globalization" (242). While this critical focus has in many ways countered the homogenizing and totalizing implications of the term globalization, it has also run the risk of excluding the material realities of literary globalization from its inventory of study objects and materialist analyses of the intersections of the literary and the neoliberal from its critical methodology. This chapter scrutinizes the ways in which this exclusion or lack of attention has figured in the (often overlapping) discourses that constitute the recent trend toward literary analyses of globalization both in Canada and North America more generally: multiculturalism, world literature, postcolonialism, and global literary study. It puts forward a reading of globalization as a highly contradictory, contingent, and asymmetrical process of local-global, symbolic-material, and past-present relations. These relations cannot be reduced, as is frequently done by Canadian literary critics, policy-makers, and media representatives, to nightmares of global Americanization or to postmodern fantasies of transnational and transcultural pluralism. As an alternative to these readings, I propose a materialist approach that emphasizes an understanding of globalization as the context within which literary studies articulates itself as an academic discipline and within which all literary production and consumption (including literary study) takes place today.

This materialist literary approach highlights the necessity of literary studies of globalization to engage in postcolonial critical discourse, which, as David Moore points out in "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique," has been "remarkably autocritical" (113) in its approach to globalization. Essays such as Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks' "At the Margin of Postcolonial Studies," Simon Gikandi's "Globalization and the Claims of Postcoloniality," A. K. Appiah's "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?," and Simon During's "Postcolonialism and Globalization: Towards a Historicization of Their Inter-relation" attest to this autocritical referentiality. These essays variously observe that although the critical discourse of postcolonialism has

become key in transcending Eurocentric narratives of a world made of binary divisions and essential identities, the field of postcolonial studies in the West has oddly lacked recognition of the influence of the global circulation of capital power and modernist ideology on its critical and institutional practice. They contend that while globalization and postcoloniality have become two major paradigms for expounding the global spread of capitalist culture, the relationship between the two has remained unclear and ineffectual, mostly because of first world postcolonial study's postmodernist penchants. Constituted by "a cosmopolitan set that moves among the metropolises and major universities of Europe and the United States" (Hardt and Negri 154) and that displays an almost exclusive and narcissistic focus on exilic, diasporic, and hybrid perspectives, this postmodernist stream of postcolonial study has distanced itself from the material realities of everyday oppression and obfuscated its own containment within global capitalism. Moreover, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri point out, it has failed to recognize that the logics and structures of contemporary global power have changed and cannot be grasped and challenged by solely studying and challenging the legacies of European colonialism and the workings of American neo-imperialism.

The first part of this chapter inquires into why this disputation of the "global" in postcolonial critical discourse has remained largely unnoticed in the debate on "global literary study" initiated by one of North America's most influential literary journals, the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (PMLA), in its January 2001 special issue "Globalizing Literary Studies." The latter's call for papers encouraged the examination of the connections between globalization and postcoloniality, but by situating it in the context of postmodern images and strategies: the "connections it [globalization] has to such notions as hybridity, the carnivalesque, diaspora, hegemony, itinerancy, postcoloniality, and the postmodern" (call for papers). I will scrutinize what this lack of attention in the PMLA debate says about the relationship between English literary studies in North America and postcolonial literary studies, between the (neo)liberal Western narrative of global modernity and the recent project of global literary study. This involves questions such as the following, posed by Edward Said in his contribution to the MLA forum on global literary study, which led to the special PMLA issue under scrutiny here: Why have the humanities, and English literary studies more specifically, been "incapable, unwilling, to offer...domestic resistance" to the often "exterminatory, life-wasting" oppressions and injustices of global capitalism ("Globalizing Literary Study" 67)? I will also investigate, with the help of Ian Baucom's contribution to the PMLA issue, why Said's vital question remained untackled in the PMLA call for papers and what it implies to tackle this question by means of global literary study – an issue that has been recently addressed by critics such as Wail Hassan (in the context of comparative literature) and Susie O'Brien and Imre Szeman (in the

context of Anglophone literature). As these critics intimate, postcolonial critical discourse – and here I mean postcolonial critical discourse not limited to English, English departments, and the AngloAmerican University – offers crucial perspectives that are lacking in the more recent North American debate on “global literary analysis.”

While the first part of the chapter can be described as a manifesto for materialist literary criticism, aimed at intervening in the AngloAmerican theoretical debate on globalizing literary studies in which it participates, the second part takes up Rohinton Mistry’s appearance on The Oprah Winfrey Book Club with *A Fine Balance* as a case study in which a materialist approach to global literary study is tested. It departs from content- and author-focused readings of Mistry’s fiction as an instance of “literature of globalization” revolving around themes of cultural hybridity, diaspora, and migration by analyzing *A Fine Balance* in the context of the Oprah show. A conspicuous signifier of the workings of contemporary capitalism, the latter conveys a very different reality of globalization as the material conditions within which literature is shaped at the present time. It is a reality about which Mistry, unlike many critics and jurors of his writing, was unambiguous when he accepted becoming an “Oprah commodity,” i.e. having his critically-acclaimed “serious” work, *A Fine Balance*, join the commercial Oprah Winfrey Book Club machinery.

Proceeding from the ambivalent, both celebratory and apprehensive Canadian reactions to Mistry’s Oprah appearance, the last part of the chapter examines the ways in which the rhetoric of unified multicultural Canadianness has joined nationalist and postmodernist paradigms in a positive account of Canadian literature as a “literature of globalization.” Like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Weltliteratur* paradigm, that of multicultural Canadian literature defends national boundaries in the very act of celebrating literature’s global character. Like its precedent, it frames ideas of globalization through and not against the nation and nationalist sentiment. This part of the chapter scrutinizes the tendency in Canadian literary scholarship, cultural policy, and the literary media to participate in an idealized discourse of world literature that befits the vision of the multicultural nation and that binarizes the symbolic and material dimensions of multiculturalism and literary production. It is a tendency that becomes especially obvious in responses (prominent among them those of Pico Iyer) to the outstanding international literary success of “Canadian cultural and ethnic hybrids” like Mistry or, even more prominently, Michael Ondaatje. Their literary achievements have been shaped by and in return shaped a discourse of Canadian multiculturalism that functions as a positive cultural guise for the workings of neoliberalism and English- and French-Canadian cultural hegemony. Drawing on Slavoj Žižek’s claim that multiculturalism has become the cultural logic of multinational capitalism, I will argue that Canadian multiculturalism has become the cultural logic of Canadian neoliberal capitalism.

Globalization and contemporary literary studies in North America

As mentioned above, in January 2001, the *PMLA* published the special issue “Globalizing Literary Studies.” The call for papers for the issue announced that

[a]mong the many factors that have changed the practice of literary study over the last several decades, one of the more consequential is the realization, now gaining ever-wider recognition throughout the discipline, that the object of knowledge in literary studies is situated within a vastly broadened network of intertextual relations that is potentially transnational and cross-cultural and that requires for its interpretation and assessment methods that are often mixed, if not interdisciplinary. Contributions are invited for a special issue of *PMLA* that will examine and evaluate the globalization of literary studies as it affects our understanding of literary cultures in the past and in the present. Contributors may want to consider when historically the globalization of literary studies began; how global perspectives have influenced the remapping of particular periods in literary studies from the Middle Ages to the present;...¹what connections it has to such notions as hybridity, the carnivalesque, diaspora, hegemony, itinerancy, postcoloniality, and the postmodern; and what effect it has had on reading, writing, and teaching.

This passage from the call for papers encourages a rethinking of the traditional nation-centered (British and American) focus of English literary studies by means of an emphasis on literary texts’ “transnational and cross-cultural” relations. It suggests that this process requires literary approaches that engage with postmodern and postcolonial critical concepts and recognize the long history of globalization.

Indeed, Giles Gunn’s introduction to the special issue, Paul Jay’s “Beyond Discipline? Globalization and the Future of English,” and Stephen Greenblatt’s “Racial Memories and Literary History” (which are the first three essays of the special issue) focus on this kind of approach in their critiques of English literary study’s nation-centered, canonical model. All three essays make a point of showing that the notion of unified and unifying “national literature” has always – and not just recently – been complicated by processes of transnational and transcultural fluidity and hybridization. Tracing back the history of English literature, Greenblatt, for instance, notes that “English literature was always an unsteady amalgam of Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Cornish, and other voices of the vanquished, along with voices of the dominant English regions” (52). His analysis concurs with Jay that what is needed to “effectively reorganize our approach to the study of what we have heretofore treated as national literatures (in our curricula and programs)” (Jay 33), is a globalizing reexamination of literary studies that emphasizes “literature’s relation to the historical processes of globalization” (33). Gunn notes that “without fully understanding all the

implications of the changing subject matter [i.e. English literature's trans- or post-national character] or being in a position to implement all its requirements, departments of English...have...redefined their responsibilities as all the literatures written in English" (18). With the call for papers, the editorial board of the *PMLA* instigated an investigation whose object it was "to determine as carefully as possible how far such developments have gone and what to make of them" (18).

Baucom's "Globalit, Inc.; or, the Cultural Logic of Global Literary Studies" is the only essay in the *PMLA* issue that challenges this claim (which has been gaining currency in North American literary studies³) that "something called global literary study has altered [or is altering] contemporary literary study" (167). Baucom asks the crucial question of why such a claim is being made *now*. What are the specific contexts in which this claim is situated? What goal does it pursue, especially when considering that the post- or trans-national argument made by Gunn, Jay, Greenblatt, and the *PMLA* call for papers has been widespread in English-department-based postcolonial studies for some time? Edward Said, Simon Gikandi, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Sara Suleri, and many other "postcolonial" literary critics have produced extensive and cross-disciplinary theories of the postcolonial experiences of diaspora, transnationality, cultural hybridity, and so on. Their contributions give evidence that it is not the case, as intimated in the *PMLA* call for papers, that the project of global literary study is altering existing forms of literary study because it provides the necessary critical tools to address the issues of "national literature" and "globalization." Rather, the project of global literary study signals that English departments in North America are starting to finally pay attention to the global dimensions of English-language literature and its study. So why, then, is this claim made *now* that a new or different historical approach is needed in order to effectively reformulate the traditional, nation-focused approach to literary study, a reformulation the critical movement of postcolonialism allegedly has been unable to achieve?

According to Baucom, giving an answer to this question means admitting and confronting the neo-imperialist undercurrents in contemporary English literary scholarship. The discourse of global literary study – driven by the anxious question "Can English survive the globalization of literary studies, and if so, what will it look like?" (Jay 32) – attempts to reaffirm the intellectual power and privilege of English scholars in America. It does so in curricular and critical terms by incorporating challenges from the subdisciplines of postcolonial and cultural studies, and in institutional terms by struggling against and adapting to increasing market pressures on university systems (i.e. the neoliberal trend to only fund research that pays in the marketplace of symbolic and material commodities). Baucom notes with reference to the first sentence of the *PMLA* call for papers that the global character of English literature and its study, "construed as a broadened network of intertextual, transnational, and cross-cultural relations" (168), is not a realized fact but a means to

the successful establishment of the MLA as the central place of world intellectual encounter (169). He sees happening what Jay warns against in his essay: a process in which the globalizing scope of English literary analysis is accompanied by the export of Western critical practices and the subordination of non-Western texts and ideas to dominant Eurocentric formulas. This perpetuation of “the disequilibria of the world trade in ideas” (169) parallels the continued concentration of military, economic, and political power in the West. Seen from the historical perspective purported by Baucom, the *PMLA* version of global literary study is an attempt to sustain the current hegemony of English literary studies, whose colonial origins and developments have been analyzed by critics such as Simon Gikandi (*Maps of Englishness*), Gauri Viswanathan (*Masks of Conquest*), Margery Fee (“Canadian Literature and English Studies in the Canadian University”), and Robert Crawford (*Devolving English Literature*).³

As Hassan shows in “World Literature in the Age of Globalization: Reflections on an Anthology,” attempts to incorporate postcolonial and postnational claims into existing AngloAmerican hegemony are not limited to the discipline of English. There is a similar trend of “global comparative literature.” Hassan gives the example of *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, which he characterizes as a Eurocentric, masterpieces-centered textbook for Comparative Literature that does not take into account Goethe’s inclusive, politically and socially informed understanding of *Weltliteratur* (which will be discussed below). The anthology ignores that “our contemporary notion of the globalization of literary studies is affiliated with the globalization of capital, or late capitalism in the post-Cold War era” (Hassan 39). It is “a library of Western literature” (41) to which non-Western “masterpieces” like those of R. K. Narayan, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Naguib Mahfouz, and so on are added (40-41). This selective inclusion of non-Western texts in dominant Western critical and canonical categories dresses the habitual configurations of power in slightly new guises.⁴ Hassan concludes that “[h]ere, finally, is globalization at work: no fundamental structural changes reflecting a new vision of global reality, but simply ‘expansion’ (the term unambiguously implying territorial ‘colonization’ or ‘annexation’) by adding more and more foreign ‘masterpieces’ to a consolidated Western canon” (42).

While Hassan and Baucom expose the dangers of employing globalization as a neo-imperialist category for literary study, they do not dismiss the notion of global literary study altogether. Hassan insists that such a conception can, indeed, be useful, if it proceeds from a non-Eurocentric, non-expansionist understanding of globalization that opens the current structural and conceptual hegemonies of literary studies to change. According to Baucom, the challenge of “the global” in global literary study “is that of rethinking the form of the globe...as something closer to a route work” – of what Stuart Hall refers to as “the world’s infinite ‘routes to

modernity” (170) – than a “Wallersteinian world system” (170). His evocation of the notion of a world of “multiple modernities,” which will be picked up in more detail in the fourth chapter of this project, is an important one, variously made by postcolonial critics such as Paul Gilroy (e.g. his metaphor of the “black Atlantic”), E. K. Brathwaite (e.g. his concept of creolization), C.L.R. James (e.g. his idea of Caribbean federation), Néstor García Canclini (e.g. his model of Latin American modernity), and Simon During (in his discussion of the recent Maori renaissance in New Zealand). It intimates that an engagement in postcolonial critical theory is crucial to the project of “global literary analysis.” In the introduction to the special issue “Anglophone Literatures and Global Culture” of the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, O’Brien and Szeman concur that postcolonial critical discourse provides important tools through which to address the relationship between globalization, literature, and literary study. They argue that a global literary or cultural study – which exposes the conceptual (nation-based and Western-centered) limits of literary analysis and opens new perspectives on the challenges literary scholars currently face – needs to explore “its points of affiliation and disagreement with postcolonial studies before it can do its work” (606). Postcolonial critical discourse has, in crucial ways, “foregrounded the links between cultural forms and geopolitics...[and] considered the modalities of race, nation, gender, and ethnicity, in relationship to the global activity of hegemonic cultural, political and economic forces” (606). It has generated one of the most complex and sophisticated critiques of the concept of national literature(s) and “the continuing economic, political, and linguistic power of Europe and North America over the Third World” (606).

As previously noted, the *PMLA* call for papers encourages the translation of certain “global” themes of postcolonial criticism – the diasporic, transnational, cosmopolitan, hybrid – into concepts of global literary study. These “global” themes are recontextualized in Gunn and Jay’s *PMLA* contributions in a way that does not respond to the problems and limitations they have met in postcolonial studies, especially as they have developed in the West. Gunn and Jay, in particular, fail to grapple with a key critique that has been directed at contemporary postcolonial theory from within and outside the field: its overstated focus on postmodernist paradigms and strategies of fragmentation and hybridity. This focus has underplayed capitalism’s structuring of the modern world in which postcolonial study (and for that matter global literary study) takes place. Critics as diverse as Seshadri-Crooks, Gikandi, Appiah, Hardt and Negri, E. San Juan Jr., and Arif Dirlik have censured first world postcolonial studies for obfuscating its containment within and complicities with the global circulation of capital power and modernist ideology. They have argued that postcolonial theory’s tendency to revise the Eurocentric comprehension of the world by means of a radical postfoundationalism has mystified the fact that, as Fredric Jameson puts it, postmodernism is the logic of late

capitalism.⁵ Jameson notes in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* that “the apparent celebration of Difference [by postmodernist theory] in reality conceals and presupposes a new and more fundamental identity” (357). In other words, postmodernism’s emancipation from modernity’s metanarratives and consequent valorization of differences feeds into the decentered logic of late capitalism with the paradoxical result of consolidating the latter on a global scale. According to Dirlik, first world postcolonialism has subsequently become the logic of late capitalism moved to a third world scale (see his “The Postcolonial Aura”).

Lawrence Grossberg agrees with Jameson in “Speculations and Articulations of Globalization” that the postmodernist faith in difference and hybridity as forms of agency and emancipation may appear ironic precisely because it plays into the power field of neoliberal globalization, whose decentered structures and logics of power deconstruct the very notions of the modern subject and the modern nation-state challenged in postmodern (-postcolonial) critiques (28). So do Hardt and Negri who argue that the now “dominating powers...have mutated in such a way as to depotentialize any...postmodernist challenge... [They] rule through differential hierarchies of the hybrid and fragmentary subjectivities that [postmodern and postcolonial] theorists celebrate” (138). However, unlike Jameson, both Grossberg and Hardt and Negri do not equate the current power dynamics of global capital with U.S. neo-imperialism. Where the former asserts that “this whole global, yet American, postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world” (5), Grossberg propounds a notion of neoliberal globalization as a deterritorialized and decentered formation of power, and Hardt and Negri constitute “Empire” as the new global political order (see introductory chapter). These critics intimate that, while having its roots in the European projects of imperialism and colonialism, globalization at present is “different in kind from earlier forms of imperialist power, especially insofar as it has become at one and the same time centered in the United States [as the only “superpower”] and supra- or trans-national, dispersed into fully deterritorialized logics and circuits of power” (Szeman “Globalization” 214).

Taking this perspective on globalization, O’Brien and Szeman note that a key problem with first world postcolonial studies is “its commitment to a worldview that understands globalization as...little more than a form of intensified neo-imperialism headquartered in the United States...; something new, but not different in kind from earlier moments of global capitalist expansion and exploitation” (607). This perspective distracts from the vital differences between present and prior capitalist developments and imperialisms, and reinscribes the present moment “as a centre/periphery dynamic that produces resistant margins and hegemonic cores” (607). In “The Postcolonial Condition: A Few Notes on the Quality of Historical

Time in the Global Present,” Sandro Mezzadra and Federico Rahola suggest that “a far more *politically* productive image of contemporary conflicts is one that, while throwing into proper relief the absolute persistence of ‘vertical’ threads of domination and of exploitation, underlines the ambivalent role played by the failure of a set of real, historically enacted projects of liberation from those very forms of domination and exploitation.” They posit their image against “a logic of absolute continuity,” which both “dispenses with anti-colonial struggles as a mere inconvenience...along the linear and uninterrupted threat of the history of domination and exploitation...[and] eliminates from history all ‘direct responsibility’ that is not identified with the colonial West and, so too, any revolutionary act that does not belong to the West.” As Mezzadra and Rahola emphasize, claims that contemporary globalization amounts to little more than U.S. neo-imperialism have in substantial ways distracted from non-Western conditions and parties involved (however ambivalently) in the current neoliberal restructuring of the forces of domination, and thus also from potential sites of resistance and alternative. They have run the risk of restricting power (the power to decide, to make history) and thus agency to the leading economic, political, and cultural vectors of power.

In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri come to the conclusion that while postcolonial theory is “a very productive tool for rereading history...it is entirely insufficient for theorizing contemporary global power” (146) and thus “may end up in a dead end” (137). They see postmodernism and postcolonialism’s importance in their function as symptoms or effects of a passage from one form of sovereignty to another. Dirlik takes a similar position in “Globalization as the End and the Beginning of History: The Contradictory Implications of a New Paradigm.” He argues that “[p]ostmodernism and postcolonialism, both residual concepts that derive their meaning from their relationship to the past, do not present themselves as viable candidates for a new paradigm that might enable us to grasp the present in its novelty...they make quite good sense as concepts of a transitional period” (35).

Other critics (among them Mezzadra and Rahola) have intimated a more optimistic future for the field, a future that builds on postcolonial studies tackling the political, social, and economic realities and conditions of the “cultural.” O’Brien and Szeman, Crystal Bartolovich, Timothy Brennan, Neil Lazarus, and Nagesh Rao, amongst others, have argued that the field of postcolonial studies in the West needs to overcome its radical rejection of the “general,” that is, of (interpretative) totalities. It needs to recognize that at the given historical moment, the interrogation of global continuities and similarities is a crucial step in the process of spelling out the “particulars” of the contemporary condition of postcoloniality and activating alternative (non-Western-centric and non-totalizing) narratives of globalization. As Szeman emphasizes in the first chapter of *Zones of Instability: Literature, Postcolonialism, and the Nation*, it is in considering the similarities and differences between theories of

totality and those that focus on the (post)colonial subject “that a much needed rapprochement [between the two] can begin to be developed” (64).⁶ The challenge is that of thinking together difference and sameness, totality and subjectivity/identity, the global and the local, continuity and disjuncture without eradicating the uneven, conflictual, and changeable nature of these conjunctures. I would argue that any approach toward a global literary study needs to confront these conjunctures, as well as its own situatedness in the logic of global capitalism.

While the *PMLA* call for papers emphasizes the “realization...that the object of knowledge in literary studies is situated within a vastly broadened network of [global] relations,” there is no mention of a “realization” that globalization is not only an object of knowledge for literary studies but also an important context within which the latter articulates itself as an intellectual formation. In other words, the *PMLA* approach to “global literary study” omits the crucial question of how contemporary literary study as intellectual, academic activity in the U.S./North America is influenced by and influencing neoliberal practice and thinking. It passes over Said’s important question of whether the profiling of U.S. power in the world “has any bearing, directly or indirectly, on the nature and results of what we have been asked to discuss here [at the MLA forum], the globalization of literary study” (“Globalizing Literary Study” 67). And why is it that English literary studies in the U.S. and beyond have so far failed to offer resistance to the oppressions and injustices of global capitalism (67)? Evidently, to answer these questions, intertextual and interdisciplinary analyses of those past and present literatures that have as their subject phenomena grouped under the term globalization (or postcoloniality, for that matter) do not suffice. The study of literature needs to explicitly address questions of economics and politics, of knowledge, power, and ethics – an approach I term “materialist literary criticism.”

I agree with Szeman that the aim of materialist literary criticism is “not to discover the meaning, significance, or logic of a literary...text elsewhere” but, rather, “to effect a fundamental reorientation of our approach to texts” (“A Manifesto for Materialism” 2). The latter excludes neither the study of the interiority of literary texts (traditional textual analysis) nor the study of “literature’s relation to the processes of globalization as they manifest themselves in a variety of historical periods” (Jay 35). However, as the critique of traditional literary scholarship carried out in the earlier sections of this chapter shows, it implies that an understanding of the relations between literature and globalization must involve “the context of *contemporary* social, political and cultural conditions and preoccupations” (O’Brien and Szeman 604, emphasis added). It must include raising questions “about processes and practices of literary theory and criticism that frame discussions of the literary” (604). Indeed, this is the form of materialist literary study of globalization at work not only in this chapter (or dissertation) but in the scholarship of many of the critics

discussed here, such as Baucom, Hassan, Szeman and O'Brien, Gikandi, Shohat, Jameson, and Said. Said's concepts of "secular criticism" and "worldliness" have become notable for drawing attention to scholarship's political dimensions and partisan ends, to its situatedness in specific cultural, economic, political, and historical contexts. They connote a process of "restoration to such works and interpretations of their place in the global setting...to read a text in its fullest and most integrative context" (Said, "Politics of Knowledge" 185-86). According to Said, all texts, no matter if literary or critical, are worldly, "a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located" (*Representations* 4).

This points to an issue that is key to the study of the literary conditions under neoliberal globalization: namely that, as O'Brien and Szeman proclaim, "*all literature is now global, all literature is a literature of globalization*" (611). In other words, the current contexts of globalization have a pervasive influence on literature and culture at large, not just on an exclusive subset thereof. Hence, we need to do more than open our study and the literary canon(s) to more texts. As argued above, we need to take a radically different view of (critical and literary) texts in relation to their social and cultural functions. It does not make sense to merely search for texts that "explicitly thematize processes of globalization – anymore than it does to search for particularly explicit examples of postcolonial literature" (610), which are then added to the canons and curricula of traditional literary study. If, as Jay claims, the key challenge of global literary study is "how to shift the center of English away from its traditional British and American focus without colonizing the variety of literatures and cultures now contributing to the transnational explosion of English" (40), then its primary concern cannot be what it seems to be for Jay and the *PMLA* call for papers – the survival of an "enriched-globalized" English literary study that keeps existing power structures, canons, and curricula intact. Rather, the critical practice of global literary study needs to tackle these very imperialist undercurrents and anxieties about English literary study's survival. It needs to address the relationship between literature and globalization within the larger context of contemporary power relations between nation-states, institutions, corporations, global markets, international trade and policy instruments (e.g. the World Bank, WTO, IMF, TRIPS, GATS), and so on. It is in this sense that materialist literary criticism points toward an effectual and dynamic encounter between the literary study of globalization and postcolonial studies.

Mistry's appearance on the Oprah show from a materialist literary perspective

In the following part of the chapter, I test the materialist, self-reflective approach to the literary study of globalization conceptualized here by means of an examination of Rohinton Mistry's fiction in the context of his selection for The Oprah Book Club. Mistry's novels *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* and his

collection of short stories *Tales from Firozsha Baag* have been commonly read as “postcolonial fiction” dealing with the globalization phenomena of cultural hybridity, transnational encounter, migration, and diaspora. For instance, Nilufer Bharucha has characterized Mistry’s writing as “diasporic discourse,” Ajay Heble as wrought with a “poetics of cultural hybridity,” and M. L. Pandit as “fiction across worlds,” thus purveying an understanding of globalization that is embodied exclusively in the fictional text’s postcolonial-postmodern subject matter.⁷ The reading I propose situates Mistry’s postcolonial literary persona in the contemporary context of Canadian and U.S. neoliberalism, claiming that this is the context Mistry faces as a postcolonial author in Canada who writes for a predominantly Canadian, American, and Indian readership – and this not only since or during the spectacular Oprah incident. A materialist literary study of Mistry’s appearance on The Oprah Book Club with *A Fine Balance* and Canadian media reactions to this connection of Mistry/Canada and Oprah/American capital and celebrity complicates depoliticized-postmodernist and solely text-focused interpretations of globalization. Moreover, it exhibits an instance where the paradigms of postcoloniality and neoliberalism are closely intertwined, an interconnection that is also present in the storyline of *A Fine Balance*.

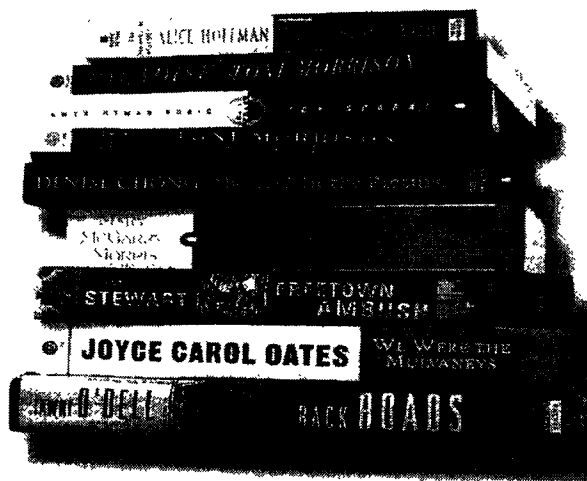
While the specifics of this textual interconnection will not be a focus of this chapter, I would like to mention that Mistry, indeed, deals with the issue of global capitalism in *A Fine Balance*, which is set in Bombay during the Emergency in 1975. The storyline’s main characters, the Hindu tailors Omprakash and Ishvar, sew in piecework pay for the Parsi widow Dina who is the middlewoman between the tailors and Au Revoir Exports, an export company which provides Western markets with cheap designer clothes. Omprakash and Ishvar left their village, “imagining the new future in the city by the sea [Bombay], the city that was filled with big buildings, wonderful roads, beautiful gardens, and millions and millions of people working hard and accumulating wealth” (*A Fine Balance* 182-83). What they encounter is the human misery of urbanization; sweat labor and unemployment; political and economic comprador elites being corrupt and complicit with the World Bank and IMF; the power of foreign corporations; Brahmins selling hair to export companies, which again sell it to Western consumer markets which “can afford to fear...baldness” (207-08); Mahatma Gandhi and Jay Prakash Narayan reduced to myths of a great past; and Indian students caught up in the Western-centric metanarratives of “democratization ...collectivization, nationalism, capitalism, materialism, feudalism, imperialism ...socialism, fascism, relationism, determinism, proletarianism – ism, ism ism, ism” (296). Largely neglected by literary critics, this picture of globalization, which Mistry conveys throughout his postcolonial novel *A Fine Balance*, speaks to the capitalist ideology behind Oprah’s mass-marketing media empire more so than to postmodern images of cultural fluidity and difference.

One of the top media tycoons and highest-paid entertainers in the world, Oprah Winfrey embodies a widely-admired modern version of the Cinderella story, of the magical transformation of a life in poverty and distress to a life of (American) beauty, wealth, and celebrity. In this function as “modern Cinderella,” Winfrey stages an equally admired example of the successful global marketing of the commodities “culture” and “literature.” In 1986, Winfrey became both the chairwoman of the film and television conglomerate Harpo Inc. (which consists of Harpo Productions, Harpo Films, Harpo Video, and Harpo Studios; read backwards Harpo means Oprah) and the producer and host of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, the highest-rated talk show in television history which is currently broadcast in more than one hundred countries (including India).⁸ Winfrey uses her economic and media power to promote a social and cultural vision that is steeped in neoliberal ideology, redolent of Adam Smith’s liberal humanist creed that every individual is led in her or his actions by the workings of the free market, as if by an invisible hand, to achieve the common good of society and the improvement of the human condition. She has created a public image of herself that complies with the neoliberal assumption that the social is best determined by market forces: an assumption intimated in *The Wealth of Nations* in the late eighteenth century and forcefully restated in the twentieth century by Milton Friedman in *Capitalism and Freedom*.⁹ Her ethics of private welfare and generosity, built upon self-interest and economic success, marries capital and literature/culture in a profitably philanthropic way. Winfrey repeatedly announced that the aim of her Book Club, which from September 1996 until June 2002 was a monthly part of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, was to invigorate reading as a simultaneously entertaining and edifying popular activity and to convince both struggling authors and viewers that the American dream is not dead or alive only in herself and a handful of other American stars. Apart from ensuring that her book picks were affordable for her audiences by requesting publishers to donate 10,000 free copies to public libraries and to down-price the Oprah-labeled product (American Library Association), she also entered into an “Oprah-Starbucks alliance” that sold Oprah-brand books at Starbucks-brand coffee shops and used the proceeds from these book sales to support literary talent and literacy programs. In an interview with *LA Weekly*’s Erin Aubry, Starbucks’ marketing director John Williams remarked that “[w]ith Oprah, there’s a purity of intention...It was important for her to hear what our commitment would be.”¹⁰

It is charitable actions and assessments like these that convince consumers and authors of the common good of Oprah products and the larger corporate structure of Oprah-labeled media communication, as well as of the humanizing attributes of contemporary capitalism. Author Chris Bohjalian who appeared on *The Oprah Book Club* with his novel *Midwives* in October 1998 recalls that before Oprah he was “a running slime dog of capitalism” (Chin and Cheakalos 114). He

leaves it to the reader to speculate on what he has become after he hit the “literary jackpot” (112) by becoming part of Winfrey’s benignly capitalist “book-club machinery” (115). Indeed, each of the books Winfrey selected for The Oprah Book Club became an instant bestseller in the U.S. and Canada. For example, her first pick, Jacqueline Mitchard’s novel *The Deep End of the Ocean*, which had sold 100,000 copies prior to being selected by Oprah (1,200 copies in Canada), reached the three million sales mark due to its Oprah popularity (20,000 copies in Canada). What is more, as a result of Oprah, the novel received the attention of Hollywood film-makers and “Mitchard sold the movie rights to Michelle Pfeiffer, for an undisclosed but surely considerable amount of money” (York, “Touched by an Oprah”). The Los Angeles writer Janet Fitch, unknown until Winfrey picked her novel *White Oleander* (also adapted by Hollywood film makers, also starring Pfeiffer), calls the latter “the patron saint of American writers” in a *People Weekly* issue from 20 December 1999 that features stories of Oprah’s “magic touch” for “chosen” authors. The magazine’s cover page announces that “Her touch is magic. When Winfrey names her favorite books, struggling authors become overnight successes.”¹¹ What follows in the feature report by Paul Chin and Christina Cheakalos are storybook tales of authors like Fitch and Bohjalian who “made it” thanks to Oprah.

Apart from exerting her “magic touch” of economic and social capital on selected authors, Winfrey has also had a profound business-enhancing impact on North America’s book industry. As Lorraine York notes in “Touched by an Oprah’: Television and the Marketing of Canadian Writing,” Winfrey is “without a doubt the individual wielding the greatest influence over North American publishing today.” Even before she picked two Canadian books, Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* and Ann-Marie MacDonald’s *Fall on Your Knees*,¹² for her book club, her impact on publishing and book sales in Canada was significant. Strained by seemingly ceaseless crises, a theme that is discussed in more detail in chapter three, many publishers and booksellers welcomed the “Oprah touch.” The major newspapers carried celebratory advertisements (such as the one below by Penguin Canada), headings such as “Canadian Booksellers Pray to Oprah” (Renzetti, *The Globe and Mail*) and “Hurray for Oprah Books” (Snyder, *The National Post*), as well as salvation-narrative-like news stories of those “touched by an Oprah” (Canadian publishers, book retailers, librarians, and book clubs).¹³ The first Canadian novel chosen by Oprah, Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* evidently got caught up in this commotion. The novel, which had sold about 100,000 copies since its publication in 1995, ran a reprint of an estimated 750,000 copies to meet the anticipated demand after the Oprah pick. Moreover, Mistry’s agent Bruce Westwood mentioned to *Toronto Star* reporter Judith Stoffman that he received several offers of film and audio rights for *A Fine Balance*.



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disseminated through profoundly material, capitalist processes. The “story” of *A Fine Balance* gives evidence that a literary work can be a both critical and financial/commercial success, that artistic merit and commodification are not mutually exclusive. Like Toni Morrison and Bernhard Schlink before him, Mistry entered the Oprah mass-marketing machine of daytime talk-show television with the reputation of a “serious” writer. Like theirs, his appearance on Oprah contravened the social and cultural parameters within which the binaries of “high” (“serious,” canonical) and commercial literature or restricted and mass production are grounded. As York points out in her discussion of the “Oprah effect,” this merger between canonicity and commercialism has been read among Canada’s literary elites as a threat to “true” literary value and the privileges and power that come with it. Russell Smith’s condescending dismissal, in the *Globe and Mail*, of Oprah’s book discussions as self-help and show biz is not uncommon among “serious” literary critics and writers anxious to recuperate the myth of “serious” literary production as a restricted, exclusive practice and “serious” literature as truly accessible only to the literary expert and cultured reading public. Reassurances such as Smith’s exhibit the enormous success Winfrey’s Book Club has had at exposing and challenging the arbitrariness and self-interest that underpin elitist distinctions of “serious” and commercial literature, book and television audiences, the non-manipulative written word and manipulative popular culture. Moreover, Mistry’s reaction to the “Oprah touch” confronts “serious” literary critics and writers with the fact that “serious” literary expert jury awards (such as the Giller Prize, Booker Prize, and Governor General’s Awards) resemble the private Oprah award in that they exclude ordinary readers (i.e. the public) from their decision-making about “good,” prize-worthy literature. Neither of the two kinds of awards is decided by popular ballot or some other form of public input but by privileged people with vested interests.

I would argue that the manner in which Mistry accepted the Oprah label, i.e. becoming an “Oprah commodity,” signifies a deep awareness of the inevitable commodity aspect of literature. By this I do not mean to say, however, that Mistry fully subscribes to neoliberal ideology and its interpellations.¹⁴ *A Fine Balance* indeed warns of the destructive consequences of losing “the fine balance” between business interests and human emotions, modern and traditional lifeways, self-centered indifference and “ordinary kindness” (9), individualism and communalism. Through the stories of Dina, Maneck, Omprakash, Ishvar, and Shankar, Mistry calls for “finely balanced” ways of living in the world that do not convert all aspects of life into profitable commodities. *A Fine Balance* writes against neoliberal globalization while being contained within it, both on the textual level of the characters’ lives and on the supratextual level of the Oprah Book Club machinery. In “Notes on Deconstructing ‘the Popular,’” Hall uses the term “double-stake” in order to expound the workings of this dialectic or ambivalence in popular culture. He argues that in the struggle for

alternatives to dominant culture, critics of popular culture “should always start here: with the double-stake...the double movement of containment and resistance, which is always inevitably inside it [popular culture]” (228). In other words, resistance and alternatives are inevitably shaped by and in turn shape the power they seek to subvert. No matter if classified as popular culture or not, *A Fine Balance* constitutes such a “double-stake” or “arena of consent and resistance” (239) by being both a “serious” novel and a popular commodity, a narrative against neoliberal capitalism and a book carrying the Oprah label. I would argue that awareness of this “double-stake” can inform our understanding of contemporary Canadian literature on a more general level. It reveals that the field of Canadian literature is (in spite of cultural nationalist reassurances, see introductory chapter) not a site of resistance and alternative to (global) cultural commodification *per se*, but a site of intense ambivalence, of resistance against and containment within neoliberal globalization processes. Subsequently, alternative, non-neoliberal approaches to globalization, Canadian literature, and their interrelations constitute equally ambivalent sites of resistance and consent.

Multicultural Canadian literature as global commodity

On the one hand, the connection of Mistry and, for that matter, MacDonald with Oprah makes the aspiration of Canadian literature’s international maturity and contribution to “global literature” very real. On the other hand, however, the Oprah connection evokes apprehension of American cultural imperialism in the sense that the “Oprah phenomenon” calls forth certain notions of American identity (as steeped in economic individualism, (neo)liberal capitalist thinking, and aggressive superpower tactics) and culture (as entertainment and commodity) that Canada has found threatening to its cultural-national sovereignty. While the major Canadian newspapers celebrated the “Oprah touch,” they nonetheless reasserted the Canadianness of Mistry, MacDonald, and their works, especially by stressing that the “Canadian Novels Feted on Oprah” (Martin, *The Globe and Mail*) compare positively to their American counterparts, both aesthetically and in sales.¹⁵ They championed the Oprah connection as a sign that contemporary Canada and its literature are strong, mature, and internationally recognized. Note here that the Oprah Book Club was not interested in the subject of “Canadianness”; neither Mistry and MacDonald nor their books were in any way discussed as “Canadian.” During Mistry’s appearance, the show revolved around Bombay (today and during the Emergency) and during MacDonald’s, Cape Breton Island, the setting of *Fall on Your Knees*, figured as an exotic, mysterious, and untamed place in North America as it existed a long time ago.

As the Canadian media reactions to Mistry and MacDonald’s Oprah appearances indicate, the notions of national Canadian literature and literature as

global market commodity are not necessarily antagonistic to one another. Indeed, the following discussion shows that Canadian literary criticism and the Canadian media have variously combined these two notions toward a positively nationalist account of Canadian literature of globalization, and chapter three will analyze the workings of this process in Canadian cultural policy-making. This account finds expression, at least in English Canada, in the fantasy of Canada's belonging in the world literary community writing in the global language of Euro-American trade relationships, English. "We" are proud of "our" great, globally-renowned thinkers Marshall McLuhan and Northrop Frye, of "our" Canadian star authors Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, and Carol Shields who belong to the canon of world literary prominence. "We" embrace the cosmopolitan character they impart to Canada and signal this connection by dating "our" annual Book Day on April 23, "a symbolic day for world literature when prominent authors including Shakespeare, Cervantes and Nabokov were either born or died" (www.canadabookday.com). Brian Mulroney's or *The National Post's* overt ogling of the idea of a globalized and privatized Canadian literature/culture that aggressively competes on the world market of cultural commodities might upset "us." However, the liberal and rather outdated vision of a truly democratized world in which autonomous nation-states co-exist and interact in a dynamically mediated vicinity presided over by Western economic, political, and cultural forces and belief systems seems to have motivated the work of many Canadian literary scholars, cultural policy-makers, and media representatives.¹⁶

Zoë Druick points out in "A Bridge between Nations': Cultural Relations, Liberal Internationalism and the Massey Commission" that this liberal vision was particularly pronounced in the cultural nationalism of the inter- and post-war cultural elite, which she depicts as a thoroughly "internationalist nationalism." Through its membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the British Commonwealth, Canada – or rather its representative delegates from the Massey Commission, the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, the Canada Council, and other governmental and non-governmental institutions – participated in the universalist-Eurocentric, liberal-humanitarian discourse of a peaceable and freely trading world civilization made up of diverse national cultures. One recent text in which this discourse of cosmopolitan nationalism figures prominently is literary critic Di Brandt's "Going Global," published in *Essays on Canadian Writing* in the fall of 2000. In this essay, Brandt emphasizes that the 1990s "inaugurated its [Canadian literature's] greatest flowering, the coming of age, the very golden age of Canadian literature, both at home and abroad" (106). She rejoices that "this newfound pride in taking our place on the world stage, recognizing ourselves as a culture established enough to generate and celebrate our own literature(s), has changed the way we think of ourselves. We have become landed enough, and cosmopolitan enough, to write confidently and

unapologetically about our own places” (107). Conjuring up the image of a mature Canadian literature that is both national and cosmopolitan and part of a strong, unified and unifying cultural sentiment, Brandt moves the liberal nationalist rhetoric of unified “Canadianness” to global dimensions.¹⁷

Like Goethe’s *Weltliteratur* paradigm, this nationalist fantasy of global literature overflows national boundaries with the intention of reconfirming them. When Goethe introduced the term *Weltliteratur* (world literature) in 1827 in the journal *Über Kunst und Altertum*, he did not perceive of world literature and national literature as mutually exclusive but as inclusive. While Goethe maintained in his essay “On World Literature” that “[n]ational literature is no longer of importance; it is the time for world literature” (224), he also emphasized that in the development of world literature “an honorable role is reserved for us Germans. All nations are paying attention to us” (225). It is important to examine his theory of world literature within its historical-political context: a phase of fragile German nationalism after the Napoleonic wars in the newly formed German Confederation; i.e. a time that was susceptible to ideas of internationalism rather than nationalism. Responding to the war-weariness of European people, Goethe’s paradigm emphasized humanistic values and open communication between the different European “nations” as cultural and lingual communities with a distinctive *Volksgeist* (spiritual essence):

For some time there has been talk of world literature, and properly so. For it is evident that all nations, thrown together at random by terrible wars, then reverting to their status as individual nations, could not help realizing that they had been subject to foreign influences, had absorbed them and occasionally become aware of intellectual needs previously unknown. The result was a sense of goodwill. Instead of isolating themselves as before, their state of mind has gradually developed a desire to be included in the free exchange of ideas. (Goethe 228)

As this quotation indicates, Goethe believed that a nation’s stability crucially depended on its intellectual engagement with “the opinions and judgments of others” (228). The formation of *Weltliteratur* aimed at the revitalization of German national literature, i.e. the counteracting of cultural fragmentation and regionalism, through international dialogue. John Pizer states in his essay “Goethe’s ‘World Literature’ Paradigm and Contemporary Cultural Globalization” that “[g]iven Germany’s lack of a strong, immanent, infrangible national identity in his time, it is not surprising that Goethe was particularly aware of and open to the possibility of a transnational literary modality...[as] alternative to cultural fragmentation” (216). It is in this respect that the geopolitics of Goethe’s *Weltliteratur* paradigm parallel Canada’s politics of cosmopolitan nationalism, of a nationally specific (multicultural)

and yet cosmopolitan Canadian literature. The latter resembles Goethe's paradigm of world literature in that it fulfils the twofold function of preserving some sense of national particularity in a time susceptible to transnational thinking and of securing a domestic image of national literature in a country marked by highly fragmentary cultural and political forces.

For Goethe, the nineteenth century with its increased international traffic in cultural ideas and products provided a fertile and yet dangerous material environment for the formation of world literature. While rejecting the mass-market aspects of this environment, Goethe built on its potential for enhancing the cosmopolitan spirit of world literature as the best of Europe's national literary traditions, talents, and sentiments brought together and exchanged.¹⁸ Brandt's argument is not unlike Goethe's in her examination of contemporary Canadian literature's international "flowering." On the one hand, she celebrates Canadian literature's symbolic maturation signaled by its strong showing in global literary circuits, while, on the other hand, she deplores the commercializing downside of this global orientation. In order to resolve this dilemma, Brandt moves the whole issue to the apolitical and acontextual sphere of universal human ethics. It is in this dematerialized cosmopolitan sphere that she sees Canadian literary academics playing a crucial role as critics of literary commercialization and conveyors of literary and cultural values "that place human community at the center of our attention and concern" (112). Numerous critics have pointed out that Goethe's paradigm of *Weltliteratur* was Eurocentric, i.e. reduced almost exclusively to European literatures and reflective of a movement of ethical and aesthetic acculturation among modern European countries that was driven by the universalist-humanistic ambition of "working toward the true progress of mankind" (Goethe 227). Brandt's notion of cosmopolitan Canadian literature and literary criticism is Eurocentric in that it participates in a humanistic ethical framework that shies away from political issues and from confronting its own situatedness in Eurocentric moral principles and practices.¹⁹ Her idea of the contemporary Canadian intellectual's universal ethical commitment functions spontaneously, as obvious, ubiquitous fact and common sense, thus exhibiting how normalized and "benign" Eurocentric attitudes can be in academic discourse.

Himani Bannerji's "On the Dark Side of the Nation: Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of 'Canada'" and Eva Mackey's *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* scrutinize the ideological functions such universalist, Eurocentric ethical assumptions have played in the academic and policy discourse of Canadian multiculturalism. Mackey's analysis unmasks multiculturalism as English Canada's political attempt to dis-invent Quebec's ethnic nationalism and to invent instead a universal model of civic nationhood, of a non-partisan, transcendent Canada, which is built on the values of progress, liberty, equality,

justice, and rationality (15). The paradigm of a strong monocultural nation being impossible under Canada's given historical circumstances, English Canada has reverted to securing its hegemonic status by means of a multicultural politics (15). Concurring with Mackey, Bannerji's essay reveals that while multicultural policy funds ethnic minority authors whose writings evade any easy national(ist) labels, it also uses them as vehicles to reconcile the "two solitudes," French and English Canada, in a discourse of universalist liberal democratic statehood (101). Bannerji, in particular, denounces Charles Taylor's "multicultural take on liberal democracy, called the 'politics of recognition'" (100) for looking upon First Nations and visible minorities as "'other others'...peripheral to the essence of Canada" (100), which is constructed as white indigeneity. Bannerji points out that in Taylor's thinking, Canada's "other others" cannot be given equal status with the English and French, the constituents or "founding nations" of the Canadian nation, but a subordinate status determined and governed by a "politics of recognition" and a system of "differentiated citizenship" (98).²⁰ She argues that this leaves Taylor with a discourse of multiculturalism that resembles Trudeau's in that it uses "non-European 'others'...to lend support to the enterprise [of retaining the status quo of the Anglo-French colonial version of Canada] by their existence as a tolerated managed difference" (100). Thus inserted "in the middle of a dialogue on hegemonic rivalry" (96), these "other others" provide the ideological basis for English Canada's model of a unified, non-partisan, democratic nation-state built on universal values and English-Canadian leadership. As Bannerji notes, the official discourse of multiculturalism, "then, can save the day for English Canada, conferring upon it a transcendence....necessary for the creation of a universalist liberal democratic statehood" (94-95) and, hence, for "beat[ing] Quebec's separatist aspirations" (94). This liberal discourse of multiculturalism has created the conditions for a literature of uniquely multicultural "Canadianness" that sells well on the global market, keeps French-English cultural hegemony intact, and consolidates English Canada in a position of political and economic power.

Prying apart the economic values behind the political dimension of multiculturalism in "Canadian Multiculturalism as Ideology," Kogila Moodley emphasizes that, since the second Trudeau era (1980-84), global capitalism has increasingly legitimized multicultural politics as a means to create economic progress and identity. "With economic crisis management in the forefront of governmental concern...in the early 1980s," cultural policy-makers started to explore ways in which multiculturalism could "better serv[e] external markets and improv[e] the country's sales image" (328).²¹ At the Fourth Canadian Conference of Multiculturalism in 1981, then-Minister of State for Multiculturalism James Fleming announced in his keynote address: "We have economic problems; we have to enlist everyone in solving them....[H]ow much business we get abroad will depend in part on our country's

image. A strong multicultural image...will raise the country's stature and create receptive attitudes" (44, 38). Fleming's speech officially approved of Canada's multiculturalism as the handmaiden of "the new global economy...today's global village" (37), an approval that was reaffirmed at the 1986 conference "Multiculturalism and Business," held by the Mulroney government. In economized readings of Canadian cultural diversity such as these, material-economic objectives concur with claims of the relative autonomy of Canadian multiculturalism and its domestic production. They have considerably contributed to constructing Canadian literature (and culture more generally) as a domestically-produced, trade-enhancing commodity that contributes to Canada's global and south-of-the-border competitiveness. Canadian multiculturalism has become a positive guise for Canadian neoliberal capitalism and English- and French-Canadian cultural hegemony. It is expressive of the "inherent contradiction of the liberal-democratic ideological project" (Žižek, "Multiculturalism" 37), whose claim of cultural difference and respect for cultural specificity confirms the superiority of Western culture and its global and profitable dispersal.

An author who has served critics, journalists, grant juries, and policy-makers as a prime example of multiculturalism's symbolic and material, national and international achievements is the cultural and ethnic "hybrid" Michael Ondaatje. The first Canadian to be awarded the Booker Prize (for *The English Patient* in 1992), Ondaatje has been celebrated as a key representative of the sanitized, liberal image of a uniquely multicultural, cosmopolitan Canadianness. Pico Iyer, a self-acclaimed citizen of the world and honorary citizen of Canada, lauds *The English Patient* as "the defining work of modern Canadian fiction...because it presents us with a stirring vision of what Canada...might offer to a world in which more and more people are on the move and motion itself has become a kind of nation" ("Last Refuge" 77). Of all cosmopolitan metropolises, Iyer champions Toronto as "the" multicultural and multilingual meeting-place of non-violent coexistence in a framework of liberal democracy. As deliverer of the 2001 Hart House Lecture, which is annually held at the University of Toronto, he praised the imaginative power of Canadian multiculturalism around the world. While Iyer agrees with Neil Bissoondath's slashing attack on official multiculturalism brought forth in *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, he moves his multicultural vision to the individual and imaginary plane of the Canadian writer of multicultural narratives, which to him is first and foremost Ondaatje. He asserts in his essay "The Last Refuge: On the Promise of the New Canadian Fiction" that "multiculturalism is far better handled by writers of fiction than by writers of laws, and that our global future is being most usefully investigated in [multicultural] books" (80).

Iyer offers a vision of Canadian literature which Martin Levin, book editor at *The Globe and Mail*, hesitantly but jovially appreciates in a response to the "The Last

Refuge” in which he states that “one might think of this as the benignly revolutionary side of globalization...our new identity as the most rootless of cosmopolites, the nationality-bending avant garde of the emerging global soul.” What remains hidden in Levin’s response is the fact that Iyer’s depoliticized vision of a borderless global literature and society – modeled after the Canadian prime example – promotes the exploitation of certain ethnic and postcolonial²² (e.g. exilic, diasporic, migrant) cultural markets and the maintenance of existing power structures. The ideal of a “truly” multicultural, postnational Canadian identity and literature conjured up by Iyer and toyed with by Levin is both profitable and contained within the bounds of Anglo-French cultural hegemony.²³ Moreover, Iyer’s apotheosis sounds an alert about the ease with which the concepts of the postcolonial writer, world literature, globalization, cosmopolitanism, and multiculturalism are sometimes abstracted, lumped together, and converged in postmodern discourse. Iyer proceeds from the idea that we are living in a century of “instant communication” and “instant migration” in which “unsettled,” “homeless,” “displaced,” “dislocated” “citizens of nowhere” create a “world fiction” written in the lingua franca English (“The Empire Writes Back” 71). His idealization and abstraction of cultural difference, hybridity, and fluidity fails to recognize the connections between the increased international success of contemporary Canadian literature and the current neoliberal political rearticulation of Canada’s national cultural mission in terms that are congruent with the needs of the global marketplace. In other words, it does not recognize that Canadian literature has become economically and politically important in its function to make “big news and big money” (Adachi) as an international commodity that conveys a liberal, sanitized image of cosmopolitan and multicultural Canadianness.

Conclusion

Clearly, the concept of materialist literary criticism put forward in this chapter rejects postmodern and postcolonial apotheoses of cultural difference, hybridity, and placeless spatiality (such as Iyer’s obviously privileged and unrealistic proclamations of world citizenship and un-homeliness). I agree with Dirlik, Gikandi, Seshadri-Crooks, Jameson, Grossberg, and others that these depoliticized images mystify the totalizations of capital, the persistence of modernist ideology and existing power structures, and the very real nexuses of culture and place. Both the Western project of globalization and the English-Canadian project of multicultural nation-building have profited from this postmodern discourse of cultural difference, which often boils down to the assertion of many cultures, but only one project – the Western project. In this scenario, difference is normalized, idealized, and reified and community is imagined as “a common-project of valuing difference” (Bannerji 97), as an idealized form of cultural pluralism that ignores the very real asymmetries in access to and participation in places of power. Iyer’s postmodernist notion of global

literature feeds into the English-Canadian nationalist concept of a uniquely multicultural Canadian literature and vice versa. Moreover, they both feed into the logic of the neoliberal market. The fetishization of Canada as a dynamically diverse, multicultural, and cosmopolitan national community conceals myriad exclusions on the basis of culture, language, geography, class, ethnicity, and history. It ignores that the literary study of globalization involves a rethinking of globalization beyond dematerialized, depoliticized postmodernist concepts as well as beyond often-concurrent nationalist fears of the global pervasiveness of American culture.

This, then, leads to one answer (albeit not the only one) to Said's earlier-cited question of why English literary studies have so far failed to offer resistance to the oppressions and injustices of global capitalism. Said himself has variously censured postmodernist critical discourse for its affirmation of existing power structures with its decontextualized "fetishization and relentless celebration of 'difference' and 'otherness'" ("The Politics of Knowledge" 183). Its participation in the, as Grossberg puts it, "discursive machine of domination" ("Speculations" 44) has constructed political struggles "as always being about and around identities and differences" (44), thus ignoring that political agency is also and crucially about scrutinizing one's own as well as other social actors' (e.g. universities, university departments, writers, publishers and other cultural producers) location within, and implication with, the formations and vectors of neoliberal globalization. The aim of this chapter was to conceptualize and employ a materialist approach that makes this issue of situatedness and agency a key object and context of contemporary literary study.

In *Representations of the Intellectual*, Said conceptualizes the worldly intellectual as amateur, "moved not by profit or reward but by love [in its Latin origin, amateur means lover, devoted friend or pursuer of an objective] and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a specialty, in caring for ideas and values despite the restrictions of a professional" (76). For Said, postmodernist interpretive strategies relinquish the critic's responsibility for texts and hence what becomes of culture. They indulge in an unworldly practice of professional intellectualism that fully incorporates itself in the enclosed and exclusionary circles of academic specialization (see, for instance, his essay "Travelling Theory" in *The World, the Text, and the Critic*). In "Interdisciplining Canada: 'Cause Breaking Up Is Hard to Do,'" Len Findlay conceptualizes the kind of amateur intellectualism Said advocates as a process of "interdisciplining." As a literary practice, interdisciplining reassesses the strengths of traditional English literary study in the process of combining it with the so-called "new humanities" (e.g. indigenous studies, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, women's studies, communication studies) toward a more concerted activist disciplinarity (9).²⁴ According to Findlay, "[w]e must look more to critical interdisciplinarity [or interdisciplining] to preserve the best of tradition, probe the weakness of the current

hegemony, and demystify the market through the promotion of alternative forms of exchange and constructions of value (“Interdisciplining” 9-10). The process of interdisciplining “will not be politicizing the university but simply endeavouring to change its tacit but well established politics” (Findlay, “Always Indigenize!” 324), steeped in traditional beliefs of its anti-instrumental, apolitical nature and of knowledge-for-knowledge’s sake. Thus rejecting the Kantian ideal that assumes the modern university to be void of everyday politics, Findlay demands a renegotiation of the kinds of politics and values that constitute academic scholarship, teaching, and learning. His concept of interdisciplining constitutes an opposition and alternative to the contemporary academic division, specialization, and commercialization of knowledge/research in the “economic regime” of neoliberal capitalism.

Evidently, a Canadian literary study of globalization that partakes in the critical practice of interdisciplining cannot be limited to postmodernist idealizations or transnational histories of globalization; neither can it uncritically embrace the dominant discourse of Canadian nationhood and the concomitant discourse of American neo-imperialism. Rather, it proceeds in critical relation to the national, the postmodern, and the neoliberal, and pays close attention to its critical and institutional situatedness within the contemporary workings of neoliberal capitalism. Strictly speaking, this chapter – and this dissertation more generally – engages in a very limited practice of interdisciplinarity. It is limited, firstly, by its local specificity. The disciplines with which I engage in this dissertation are determined by the needs of the “local” scene under investigation. This “local” scene is, most broadly, Canadian literary culture at the present time of globalization, explored through analyses of Canadian literary studies, literary studies of globalization, local publishers and constituencies, Canadian cultural policy and publishing economics, Canadian history, local writers, and so on.

Secondly, this chapter – and this dissertation more generally – is limited as an interdisciplinary practice by its focus on theory. In other words, while the critical work of sociologists, historians, anthropologists, philosophers, “new” humanists, and scholars of globalization is key to the materialist literary approach of this dissertation, the latter is not (with the exemption of the interviews in chapter five) an interdisciplinary project in the sense of being methodologically situated within two (or more) disciplines at the same time, or within an interdisciplinary collaboration. Rather, it is situated at the junction of the fields of Canadian literary and cultural studies, using the theoretical insight of other disciplines and subdisciplines – a cross-disciplinary and intra-disciplinary theoretical exercise, strictly speaking – to introduce a fundamentally different view of (critical and literary) texts in relation to their social, cultural, and economic functions. As Szeman says, and I repeat here from an earlier passage, the aim of materialist criticism is “not to discover the meaning, significance, or logic of a literary...text elsewhere” (“A Manifesto for Materialism” 2), by

discarding with all literary approaches and rigorously applying the methods of other disciplines such as sociology or economics to the literary text. Rather, its aim is “to effect a fundamental reorientation of our approach to texts” (2), one which “attends to the ways in which institutions, concepts, and historical formations that are nonliterary...nevertheless structure literary...criticism just as much as they structure the production of the typical objects of critical analysis (novels, poems, etc.)” (2). This is the kind of interdisciplining that shapes the materialist literary approach of this dissertation.

In the next chapter, I employ the practice of materialist literary analysis to scrutinize the phenomenon of globalization as it finds expression in contemporary Canadian cultural policy-making and literary production. More precisely, chapter three exposes the contradictions and neoliberal undercurrents in official cultural nationalist proclamations of the “national value” of Canadian literature and Canadian-owned literary production. I will argue that what is at stake for cultural policy-makers today is not the survival of “Canadian culture” and “Canadian literature” – as tropes of non-material national values, “soul-stuff,” and markers of Canada’s cultural-national sovereignty – but the question of what it means to have access to and participate in places of cultural discourse and decision-making. Unmasking the active role the Canadian state has played in establishing a increasingly depoliticized, neoliberal state structure, I will reframe the desire to promote Canadian cultural goods and services that are not completely reduced to the logic of the market – expressed in demands for the protection of Canada’s “national culture” – as political demands for a more inclusive and radically democratic public culture. In other words, chapter three rethinks the interrelations of Canadian literature and globalization by querying the modern notions of democracy and the public sphere as they find expression in contemporary Canadian cultural policy-making.

¹ The missing part here is: “what new subjects, issues, and problems these perspectives have brought into discussion in these various periods; how these perspectives have been assisted or thwarted by specific critical methodologies; what impact the perspectives have had on inherited notions of the aesthetic, the historical, and the cultural in literary studies, as well as on relations between literature and other media, including the Internet; how this globalization has been conceptualized and critiqued.”

² E.g. In the fall of 2001, *Comparative Literature* published the special issue “Globalization and the Humanities.” David Leiwei Li describes the issue as “a continuing endeavor to chart humanistic inquiries in the ever-changing conflicts and consolidations of a planetary culture” that follows and adds to the critical work of the *PLMA* issue (276). Also, in the spring of 2002, *Modern Fiction Studies* issued a special edition, entitled “Postmodernism and the Globalization of English.” There are many other critics who have tackled the issue of English literary studies and globalization, such as J. Miller Hillis, Ali Tariq, Franco Moretti, Peter Hitchcock, Cooppan Vilashini, Vinay Dharwadker, and Michael Valdez Moses.

³ For instance, the historical perspective these texts provide find mention (not serious engagement) in Jay's essay as evidence for the "transnational character of English in the past" (46), for English literature's fundamentally transnational nature.

⁴ Kristin Ross makes a similar criticism in her examination of the World Literature and Cultural Studies program at the University of California, Santa Cruz: "When we speak about breaking out of a Western bourgeois model in our teaching, we cannot speak merely of adding on or integrating cultures...into a better, more representative totality, a fuller globe. For we will then merely reproduce what is essentially a Western bourgeois sociology of culture: Western civilization as a world civilization" (670). See also Moretti's "Conjectures on World Literature."

⁵ Jameson takes the term "late capitalism" from Ernest Mandel who, in *Late Capitalism*, periodizes it as a third stage of multinational and consumer capitalism that has succeeded the earlier stages of market capitalism (1840s to 1890s, simple circulation of money in trade, expansion of national markets) and monopoly capitalism (1890s to 1940s, money becomes capital, expansion of the imperialist system). His "borrowed" periodization of capitalist development has been criticized for ignoring the spatial variations of contemporary capitalism.

⁶ Szeman describes his argument as "an implicit argument on behalf of totality...the totality constructed by an antitranscendental and antiteleological 'insurgent science' that 'is open, as open as the world of possibility, the world of potential'" (*Zones of Instability* 63).

⁷ Other examples are Michael Thorpe's "Canadian 'Globalism'" and *The Fiction of Rohinton Mistry* (ed. Jaydipsinh Dodiya).

⁸ When launched in 1986, The Winfrey Oprah Show was owned by Capital Cities/ABC. In 1988, Winfrey, through Harpo Productions, took over the ownership of the show, which is still broadcast on ABC. In addition to her Harpo and daytime television ventures, Winfrey announced the foundation of the media company Oxygen Media LLC in 1998. The latter markets online properties for women. In 2000, she further introduced *O, The Oprah Magazine*, which appears monthly and is advertised as a personal growth-guide for American women.

⁹ Or, more bluntly, by Margaret Thatcher's proclamation that "there is no society, only individuals and families."

¹⁰ Winfrey has enhanced her public image of the philanthropic capitalist not only on the literary level. In September 1997, she launched Oprah's Angel Network, "a campaign encouraging people to open their hearts [or rather their wallets] a little wider and help those in need" (Audition Agency.com). The Network has established scholarships for students, made donations to institutions of higher education, and funded Habitat for Humanity homes.

¹¹ Similarly celebratory feature stories of Winfrey's profitably "magic touch" appeared in the magazines *Newsweek* (8 January 2001; "She's Changing More Lives Than Ever: Even Her Own") and *Life* (September 1997; "The Secret Inner Life of America's Most Powerful Woman: Oprah Between the Covers").

¹² MacDonald appeared on The Oprah Book Club on 5 April 2002 and *Mistry* on 24 January 2002.

¹³ It should be mentioned here that The Oprah Book Club sparked numerous, diverse and divergent reactions in the media. For less favorable responses see Russell Smith, Galvin McNett, and Mitchel Raphael.

¹⁴ Terry Eagleton remarks in "Ideology and its Vicissitudes" that "we have to be interpellated as some kind of subject...the alternative...would be to fall outside the symbolic order altogether into psychosis. But there is no reason why we should always accept society's identification of us as this particular sort of subject [e.g. as commodity] ...Althusser's model is a good deal too monistic, passing over the discrepant, contradictory ways in which subjects may be ideologically accosted" (217). As Hall puts it in "Re-thinking the 'Base and Superstructure' Metaphor," the ideological field is a historically specific field that is marked by contradictions and struggles that are located within broader economic, cultural, and political struggles.

¹⁵ Not surprisingly, governmental and media reactions to the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. on 11 September 2002 (9/11) reveal a similar ambivalence in their attempts

to reconcile Canadian nationalism with a post-9/11 surge of pro-Americanism. Parliamentary bureau chief Shawn McCarthy assured Canadians in a *Globe and Mail* statement that 9/11 “roused a new empathy for Americans among Canadians, without diminishing national pride...the attack crystallized Canada’s new maturity in relation to the United States.” Even though media reactions followed in this rhetoric and proudly announced that George Bush called “Mr. Chrétien ‘a personal friend’ and a great friend of America” (Lawlor), they also expressed indignation that America does not really care about its northern neighbor after Bush failed to thank Canadians in a speech that expressed gratitude to helping countries (Foss).

¹⁶ Evidently, ideas of globalization have worked through the nation paradigm for quite some time. Britain’s early colonialism is a foremost example in this regard. As During notes, the development of the modern nation-state organized around English cultural nationalism went hand in hand with the organization of colonies and the consolidation of colonial power.

¹⁷ As Frank Davey remarks in *Postnational Arguments*, this nationalist literary practice reveals “an overt move...to locate the unitary national text within the similarly unitary humanist one...Canadian writers are not only Canadian, but this Canadianness is of ‘world-rank’” (16).

¹⁸ As already indicated, this does not mean that Goethe defined *Weltliteratur* in exclusively great-works-oriented terms. Indeed, he remarked that “if such a world literature develops in the near future – as appears inevitable with the ever-increasing ease of communication – we must expect no more and no less than what it can and in fact will accomplish...What appeals to the multitude will spread endlessly and, as we can already see now, will be well received in all parts of the world” (227). As David Damrosch puts it, “Goethe is uncomfortably aware that there is a form of world literature [...] that does not include his work or similarly elite productions,” that the “worlds of world literature are often worlds in collision” (14).

¹⁹ See the essay collection *Cosmopolitics* (eds. Bruce Robbins and Pheng Cheah) and the chapter “The Possibility of Cosmopolitanism” in John Tomlinson’s *Globalization and Culture* for a more detailed treatment of this issue.

²⁰ See Taylor’s “Institutions in National Life” and “The Politics of Recognition.” Will Kymlicka makes a similar argument in *Finding Our Way*. Both Taylor and Kymlicka have been criticized for ignoring the internal differentiation of “other” groups and conceiving of difference as “the purview of minorities” (Abu-Laban 273).

²¹ In their study of globalization and Canadian public policy, Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel compare this trend in multicultural policy with the policy areas of immigration and employment equity. They scrutinize its “emphasis on markets, efficiency, competitiveness, and individualism...[on] a selling of diversity, whereby the skills, talents, and ethnic backgrounds of men and women are commodified, marketed, and billed as trade-enhancing” (12) rather than equality-enhancing. Katharyne Mitchell’s essay “In Whose Interest?” uses the example of Chinese real estate investment in Vancouver to demonstrate how the discourse of multiculturalism has come to serve Vancouver business contractors to push through their interests against warnings of escalating real estate prices and calls for preserving the city’s architectural character.

²² The postcolonial has served as a handmaiden of Canada’s economized multicultural vision. As Ken Adachi put it in a *Toronto Star* commentary on the mounting EuroAmerican interest in postcolonial fiction in the 1980s, “in Canada, too, we are singularly blessed with [postcolonial] writers of accomplishment or great promise...who have been influenced by the widening map of fiction and have made it a much more multicultural and international species,” a site of “big news and big money.”

²³ Moreover, it geographically reduces Canadian literature and experience to the Toronto area. The federal government and the major Canadian newspapers have been accused of a similar politics of Toronto-centeredness. This topic is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

²⁴ In given contexts, the process of interdisciplining may also extend beyond the new humanities into the social sciences, and even into such disciplines as the natural sciences and rigorous economics which are fundamentally different from literary studies and the humanities.

Chapter 3

The Neoliberal Trend in Canada's Cultural Policy-making and Book Industry: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Specificities

Long before globalization was identified as a force, Canada was grappling with the twin issues of cultural policy that now, in some form, occupy most countries: One issue was how to forge a cultural identity in a highly pluralistic society...The other was how to preserve a distinctive Canadian cultural presence in the face of overwhelming influence from the mass commercial culture of the U.S.A. (Shirley Thomson, acting director of the Canada Council for the Arts¹)

In the introduction to the special issue "Canadian Literature and the Business of Publishing" of *Studies in Canadian Literature (SCL)*, Jennifer Andrews and John Ball criticize the fact that "in most studies of Canadian literature, the material stuff of publication is bracketed off in favor of what can be said about a text's (immaterial) words" (2). They observe that "[w]hen the study of the published book and the publication processes has been discussed, it has been treated as a specialized area of research" (2), as in the case of the Canadian Center for Studies in Publishing at Simon Fraser University (7). In opposition to that trend, Andrews and Ball claim, the special *SCL* issue "extend[s] the conversation and show[s] that publishing continues to shape what we read and teach in the fields of Canadian literature and criticism" (7-8). It sets out to foreground a fact largely ignored in Canadian literary studies (and, for that matter, in most traditional studies of national literatures): the material side of the what Pierre Bourdieu calls "two-faced reality" of literature. As I mentioned in my opening chapter, Bourdieu introduces this concept in *The Field of Cultural Production*, where he uses the term to indicate a critical approach to literature that takes into consideration not only textual aspects (content and form) but also material processes of production, i.e. that which makes the very existence of a text possible.

In their analysis of the processes of literary production in Canada, Andrews and Ball call attention to the many challenges the book industry has faced over the past decades as an economy of small scale characterized by "huge geographical distances and regional differences...[and] the easy availability of British and American books published with economies of scale" (1-2).² They emphasize the crucial role the Massey Commission and the Canada Council for the Arts have played in the development of an independent Canadian literature and book industry. Council and government support not only advocated the emergence of small Canadian-owned presses in the 1960s, such as Coach House, House of Anansi, Fiddlehead, Sono Nis, Talonbooks, NeWest, Oberon, and Black Rose Press. They also enabled these publishers to take risks with promoting unknown authors and

authors writing about unconventional themes. Canadian literature flourished in this rather market-independent, state-sponsored environment of Canadian-owned literary production. It is this positive, interventionist environment that Andrews and Ball see breaking down due to the massive cuts in federal subsidies since the mid-1990s, cuts they ascribe to the Mulroney and Chrétien governments' submission to global market pressures.³ Having to switch to a competition- and sales-based publishing approach, many small Canadian publishers got into serious financial trouble in the 1990s. So did non-established writers, many of whom could not find a publisher anymore as they posed too great a risk for a book industry increasingly led by the rationale of profit – a book industry that today “lacks a definite mandate to serve Canadian cultural growth” while it “pander[s] to foreign interests” (3). Recalling the nationalist vision of the 1967 centennial edition of *Canadian Literature* and its 1973 follow-up, “Publish Canadian,” Andrews and Ball counter this commercializing trend by insisting that “publishing in Canada is unique and vital to our national identity” (3). What is needed, according to them, is the continuation of intense federal funding and protection for Canadian-owned presses, writers, and other players in the industry.⁴

Evidently, what motivates Andrews and Ball's call for a method of Canadian literary study that recognizes the materiality of literature is the nationalist image of and anxiety about Canada's “national literature” and “national culture” more generally. Their position draws attention to the materiality of Canadian literature by characterizing the literary product as a socio-historical phenomenon, which serves the promotion of Canadian national identity and publishing activity. Their cultural nationalist call for a forceful, protectionist cultural policy mandate that can counter the commodifying drive of the capitalist market implies a critique of the Canadian government's espousal of neoliberalism (although they do not use this terminology). However, it intimates that contemporary Canadian literature and its production can be effectively exempted from Canada's participation in international, neoliberal efforts to facilitate and deregulate the international flows of market commodities. By defining the Canadian literary product as exemptable national “soul-stuff” and not (also) as non-exemptable ordinary commodity, Andrews and Ball run the risk of overlooking the crucial nexuses at which the literary, economic, and neoliberal blur in Canadian cultural policy-making and publishing. This chapter examines just these nexuses, from a non-cultural-nationalist perspective that is unsettling of the neoliberal power structures and values that increasingly pervade cultural policies and markets in Canada and on a global scale. Contrary to Andrews and Ball's call for a reinvigorated, anti-neoliberal cultural nationalism, this chapter sets out to shift the terms of debate around Canadian cultural policy to the issue of creating a more inclusive and radically democratic public culture. With this approach, I do not dismiss the desire to promote Canadian literary goods and services that are not completely reduced to the logic of the market. Rather, I wish to reframe this desire –

expressed in demands for the protection of Canada's "national culture" – as political demands for a more inclusive and radically democratic public culture; "as political demands for a culture and a way of life in which everything has not been reduced to the laws of the market...[for] the recovery of our sense of the public, which decades of neoliberalism has dissolved" (Szeman, "The Rhetoric of Culture" 226).

The first part of this chapter discusses the inconsistencies in governmental decisions on foreign investment as they become evident in some of the book industry's more recent events: the collapse of General Publishing Co. Ltd. in 2002, the restructuring of McClelland & Stewart in 2000, Heritage Canada's authorization of Amazon.ca in 2002, and the sale of Distican to the American publisher Simon & Schuster, also in 2002. These examples give evidence of the rather unpredictable nationalist-neoliberal mandate in contemporary cultural policy-making. As the chapter will show, this mandate has evolved out of the Massey report into a protectionist discourse of Canadian national-cultural sovereignty – i.e. of Canada's right and ability "to make laws and policies that can effectively protect and promote its culture and cultural industries" and that cannot be disputed by external powers (Media Awareness Network, *Canadian Cultural Sovereignty*) – with a strong focus on competitiveness in Canadian-U.S. economic and cultural relations. In the second part of the chapter, I will engage in the larger philosophical and political debate on the modern notions of the public sphere and democracy. I will suggest that what is of primary importance for contemporary Canadian literary critics and policy-makers is not to fight against the loss of cultural-national sovereignty and, thus, for cultural protectionism in the form of exemption clauses and foreign investment limitations. What is of primary importance is the building of a cultural understanding that pays close attention to the social and political values that underlie and shape cultural decision-making. In other words, we need to scrutinize our taken-for-granted notions of the "public sphere," of what it means to have access to and participate in publics of cultural decision-making in this country and at this time.

The contradictions in federal support rationales for a Canadian-owned book industry

The fallout from his [Stoddart's] company's demise has swept through the vulnerable publishing industry like a tornado through a shanty town. (Martin, "Fall of the House of Stoddart")

For the most part of the year 2002, news headlines on Canada's book industry were dominated by General Publishing's collapse, an event with far-reaching consequences for Canadian publishers, retailers, distributors, and authors.⁵ The largest domestic publishing and distribution conglomerate in Canada, General Publishing, owned by Jack Stoddart Jr., consisted of General Distribution Services

Ltd. (GDS, which handled the books of about 200 publishers of which 60 were Canadian and the rest British and American), Musson (an agency that handled the import of books from British and American publishers), the publishing houses Stoddart, Irwin, Boston Mills, House of Anansi (which focused on Canadian titles), and minority stakes in the Canadian publishing houses Cormorant, Key Porter Books, and Douglas & McIntyre. In May 2002, General Publishing filed for bankruptcy protection in the hope of restructuring or finding buyers for its insolvent units. When this protection ran out on 31 August 2002, GDS and Stoddart Publishing, which could not be sold, filed for bankruptcy. Among the sold units, Boston Mills was purchased by the Canadian publisher Firefly Books, House of Anansi (as already mentioned) by Scott Griffin, Stoddart Kids by Ontario-based publisher and distributor Fitzhenry & Whiteside, and the educational publisher Irwin by the Canadian-owned multinational conglomerate Nelson Thomson Learning. In the end, the “big losers” from General’s collapse were the unsecured creditors, who were largely small Canadian publishers and retailers, the 200 plus people at General that ended up without jobs and severance pay, as well as GDS and the Stoddart imprint, which could not find buyers.

General attributes most of its difficulties to the former Chapters Inc. and Ottawa’s incapacitating rules on foreign investment in the book industry. In her coverage of General’s bankruptcy protection proceedings, retailing reporter for *The Globe and Mail* Marina Strauss noted that “Mr. Stoddart has been struggling for years as the troubled book industry was rocked by difficult times, many of them touched off by the former Chapters Inc.’s practice of stretching out payments and returning truckloads of books” (“Stoddart Assets”). Far from stopping, this practice increased after the Indigo-Chapters merger early in the year 2001, when the new CEO Heather Reisman extended Chapters’ payment terms up to 250 days (the traditional limit is 90 days). Reisman also continued to return large numbers of inventory to GDS to pay outstanding bills and cope with her company’s financial troubles.⁶ A three-term president of the Association of Canadian Publishers and dedicated nationalist, Stoddart has blamed the Competition Bureau and Heritage Canada for sanctioning (Indigo-)Chapters’ near-monopoly in book retailing⁷ and called for a review of Ottawa’s rules on foreign investment and ownership (e.g. in his 1995 *Address to the Standing Committee of Finance*). The *Investment Canada Act* of 1985 forbids selling Canadian publishing, retailing, and distribution units (defined as more than 49 per cent Canadian-owned) to foreign parties unless two requirements are fulfilled: The Canadian company must be in financial trouble and it must have demonstrated “full and fair” offering to Canadian buyers (Department of Canadian Heritage, *Investment Canada Act*).⁸ According to Stoddart, Ottawa’s investment restrictions prevented him from averting General’s bankruptcy by forming a partnership with the Ingram Book Group (a large American wholesaler which was interested in taking over 50.1 per

cent of GDS) and from transforming GDS into a co-op “in which Canadian publishers would have had 49 per cent ownership with the rest going to an outside investor” (Martin, “Stoddart”). Finally, in 2002, the government prohibited the sale of Stoddart Publishing to an American buyer, HarperCollins, and thus drove it into bankruptcy (Martin, “Stoddart”).

Of course, other voices have told a different story than Stoddart himself, adding to his account of General’s collapse such factors as mismanagement, hubris, the move to a huge warehouse, financial indulgence, prolonged systems failure in the company’s new computer system, and “sweetheart deals” to attract middle-sized publishers. Noah Richler, literary editor at *The National Post*, even goes so far as to claim that Stoddart “has only himself to blame” (“Stoddart”). Instead of taking measures against the power of Chapters Inc., “Stoddart was among those who did whatever they could to ingratiate themselves with the CEO of the company that was putting them under...Stoddart compounded his distribution company’s misfortune by relying even more on the services of the chain that was not paying him.” According to Richler, Stoddart should have sought non-traditional retail outlets such as book clubs, Sears, Home Depot, Costco, and Price Club instead of supporting Chapters’ book-retailing monopoly. Some critics also argued that General, unlike many Canadian book businesses, failed to manage the Chapters crisis even after the Ministry of Canadian Heritage helped with an advancement of about six months’ worth of grants to publishers in March 2001. In his response to General’s collapse, Scott Anderson of *The Quill & Quire* maintains that although “Stoddart should take a chunk of the blame for the current fiasco in Canadian publishing, the problems run deeper than a single company and won’t be solved when this particular crisis is over” (“When a Giant Falls” 22). I would agree with Anderson here. The “crisis” of Canada’s book industry is intensely intertwined with deep-rooted and ongoing complexities of cultural policy and federal support rationales. Kate MacNamara and Peter Kuitenbrouwer assert that “the collapse of Stoddart is a fine example of how government policy for the publishing industry, intended to build up a healthy and vibrant, Canadian-owned book publishing industry, has failed.”

Their criticism is significant and needs further exploration, especially when considering that Heritage Canada seemingly denied foreign investment in the case of General, while it flouted its investment rules in many other cases. One such case is the restructuring of the Canadian publisher McClelland & Stewart in June 2000. Then-owner of the press, Avie Bennett donated 75 per cent of his shares to the University of Toronto and sold the remaining 25 per cent to Random House Canada, which, as part of the Random House Group, is owned by the multinational multimedia conglomerate Bertelsmann AG. (Note that federal aid to publishers is only available to houses which are 75 per cent or more Canadian-owned.) The deal between Bennett and Random House, reached in five-year-long negotiations in

which the government was involved considerably, required the University of Toronto to keep its shares for at least three years. It remains to be seen whether McClelland & Stewart, one of Canada's oldest domestic publishers, ends up becoming yet another Canadian imprint of Bertelsmann, now that the latter has "not only a foot but a muscular shoulder inside the door of M&S" (MacSkimming 375). For now, Random House Canada has taken over some of "M&S's most crucial operating functions: sales, distribution, accounting, and financial management" (375). What has remained at McClelland & Stewart is "the editorial, design, and production functions, plus rights and promotion" (397). As a consequence, the press' "Canadian" books are currently warehoused and shipped (i.e. distributed) from the U.S. into Canada.

Another recent case of Heritage Canada's approval of foreign investment in the Canadian book trade is the authorization, vehemently opposed by the Canadian Booksellers' Association (CBA) and Indigo-Chapters, of Amazon.ca (i.e. a Canadian arm of the American-based multinational online-bookseller Amazon.com) in late June 2002. At the beginning of August 2002, the CBA and Indigo-Chapters applied for judicial review of the Amazon.ca operations in the Canadian Federal Court, asserting that the Amazon.ca business violates the regulations of the *Investment Act*. The Ministry of Heritage successfully refuted this accusation on the grounds that Amazon.com's investment in Canada does not involve the establishment of a new Canadian business or the takeover of an existing domestic business. Amazon.ca will not have an office or employees in Canada but will involve a Canadian contractor to handle its fulfillment services (delivery, packaging, warehousing, and so on). Significantly, this Canadian contractor turned out to be Assured Logistics, a part of the Canada Post (Crown) Corporation. The case of Distican followed right after the Amazon.ca "disappointment." As Roy MacSkimming points out in *The Perilous Trade: Publishing Canada's Writers*, the government decision to permit the sale of Distican⁹ to its major American agency Simon & Schuster (owned by Paramount/Viacom) in November 2002 "didn't merely bend the foreign investment rules, it broke them outright" on the grounds that this would save Canadian jobs (388). The fact that the government ruled for Amazon.com or for Bertelsmann in the McClelland & Stewart case and Paramount/Viacom in the Distican case seems inconsistent and somewhat arbitrary to many players in the book industry. One might contest, as some have done, the very maintenance of a policy that is regularly flouted by domestic and foreign investment tactics.

In order to get a better sense of the causes for the seeming inconsistencies in the present handling of investment rules and cultural policies related to book publishing more generally, I will look back to the initiation of the Massey Commission. Choosing the postwar period as a historical nexus of book publishing policy, I do not intend to ignore that, as George Parker states in the introduction to

The Beginning of the Book Trade in Canada, “[m]any of the characteristics and the problems of the twentieth-century book trade had their origins in Canada’s unique nineteenth-century situation, first as a group of separate colonies and then as an underpopulated, rather poor, and economically dependent Dominion” (ix).¹⁰ Canadian critics such as Harold Innis, George Parker, Rowland Lorimer, Pearson Gundy, Carole Gerson, Susan Crean, and Clarence Karr have variously demonstrated that “the history of Canadian book publishing policy dates back to before Confederation, to various iterations of British copyright law” (Lorimer 20). What is specific about the Massey years, though, is that book publishing policy began to actually develop and take shape beyond debates around copyright law (Lorimer 20; Gerson, “The Question of a National Publishing System” 314-15). As Paul Litt points out in *The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission*, with the establishment of the Massey Commission, direct government funding for the arts and letters in Canada gained serious public and political support for the first time. Litt notes that “the real significance of the Massey Commission lies less in the fate of its major initiatives than in the general impact it had upon the attitudes of the public and the policies of the government” (247). For instance, only a few years before calling the Commission into being, Prime Minister Louis Saint-Laurent remarked that “he did not think that the government should be ‘subsidizing ballet dancing’” (qtd. in Litt 24). It should rather stick to its existing involvement in cultural affairs, which then consisted of yearly allocations to the National Film Board, the National Museums, the National Gallery, and the CBC, as well as to university scholarships and research aid.

The report of the Massey Commission, published in 1951, clearly emphasizes “the immense importance of the Canadian publisher in the development of Canadian letters...the greatest of all forces making for national unity” (Canada: Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences 228, 225). According to the Commission, “what is really needed is more good Canadian books” (229) through which English- and French-Canadians can find some essential “Canadianness.” This, in turn, makes necessary a viable national book industry so that “our publishers [can] offer to the public a greater number of [Canadian] novels of outstanding quality” (229). The commissioners argued that the vastness of the country, combined with the smallness and dispersed settlement of its population, creates a situation that makes direct government support towards a steady and independent domestic book market indispensable (228-29). They intimated that a national Canadian literature (and culture more generally) can only survive in a country as fragmented as Canada if it is directly and sufficiently funded by the federal government. The small portion of the Massey report cited here is indicative of the interventionist-nationalist cultural policy stance Canada followed in the postwar years. The Commission’s work is symptom of a profound postwar change

in public attitudes and policies. Its formation happened at a time when the Canadian government, following the Keynesian formula of the welfare state, assumed increasing responsibility for the country's economic and social welfare.¹¹ High commissioner in Britain from 1935 till 1946, Vincent Massey envisioned a Canadian cultural infrastructure that emulated the nationalist approach of the British Council of the Arts (formed after the Second World War). He proposed the formation of a Canadian arts council shaped after the British model, a proposal that was put into practice in 1957 with the foundation of the Canada Council for the Arts.¹²

It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that the Massey report's recommendations regarding domestic book publishing were translated into action.¹³ The ultimate change in publishing policy was offset by the deep financial trouble the three largest Canadian-owned publishers, the Ryerson Press, McClelland & Stewart, and the book publishing division of W. J. Gage Ltd. encountered upon attempting to become completely independent houses (i.e. independent of agency publishing; living from the publication of Canadian titles only¹⁴). After Gage's takeover by the Chicago-based educational publisher Scott Foresman and Ryerson's takeover by the American subsidiary McGraw-Hill of Canada Ltd. in 1970, the Ontario Government appointed a Royal Commission on Book Publishing (led by Richard Rohmer, Dalton Camp, and Marsh Jeanneret). The Commission's inception coincided with McClelland & Stewart's public announcement of its financial troubles and need to sell in early 1971. On the Commission's advice, Ontario's Davis Government gave out a life-saving capital loan of \$961,645, interest-free, to McClelland & Stewart (Panofsky 105; for details see MacSkimming 148-49). On the federal level, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce appointed the private consulting firm Ernst & Ernst in 1970 to undertake the first economic and statistical review of the Canadian publishing industry.¹⁵ As well, in 1972, Robert Fulford, David Godfrey, and Abraham Rotstein brought forth a collection of essays by literary critics and publishers, entitled *Read Canadian: A Book About Canadian Books*, that fervently promoted a strongly-subsidized Canadian-owned publishing industry. *Read Canadian* was published by Lorimer, Lewis & Samuel at a time when James Lorimer had come to play a key role in the Independent Publishers' Association's (IPA) lobbying of the federal and Ontario governments. Finally reacting to these events, reports, essays, and IPA pressures, the Trudeau government, in 1974, not only prohibited all foreign takeovers of Canadian-controlled publishers but also empowered the newly-established Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA) "to regulate and restrict 'indirect' foreign investments in the book industry – that is, transactions where one foreign owner buys another. Henceforth such transactions would be allowed only if FIRA determined that they provided 'net benefit to Canada'" (MacSkimming 214; for more detail see 212-16). This regulation is still in place, albeit now under the authority of Investment Canada and the *Investment Canada Act*, with the important

addition that a Canadian publisher in dire financial circumstances can be purchased by a foreign investor provided that it has first demonstrated “full and fair” offering to Canadian buyers.

In addition to these more general legislative control measures, the federal government has, since the 1970s, issued several book publishing programs. These are directed towards building an independent, competitive domestic book publishing industry that can combat the threat of an American takeover. The most important initiatives of direct intervention are the Canada Council’s Block Grant Program (which was established in 1972 and gives grants for specific titles), Heritage Canada’s Canadian Book Publishing Development Program (CBPDP; established in 1979 to support Canadian-owned publishing houses), the Book Publishing Industry Development Plan (BPIDP, which replaced the CBPDP in 1986), the Cultural Industries Development Fund (CIDF, established in 1990), and the Loan Program for Book Publishers (December 1998 to January 2002). Heritage Canada points out in its 2000-2001 *Book Publishing Industry Activity Report* that today the BPIDP is the “cornerstone of the federal government’s support for book publishing,” with an annual budget of more than Can\$ 30 million.¹⁶ Relying on Statistics Canada data, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage points to the BPIDP’s decisive success in “ensur[ing] the creation of Canadian-authored books” (*Tomorrow Starts Today*). The latter website highlights that 80 per cent of Canadian authors reach their markets through Canadian-owned book publishers, that 46 per cent of all books sold in Canada in 1999 were authored by Canadians, and that 72 per cent of book exports in 1999 were Canadian-authored books.

As already indicated, the introduction of a public cultural agency in the early 1950s signaled, amongst other things, a governmental reaction to the perceived threat of Canadian culture being overwhelmed by foreign and, not least of all, U.S. influences. The Massey Commission reflected the belief of Canada’s cultural and political elite (to which the five commissioners Vincent Massey, George-Henri Lévesque, Hilda Neatby, N.A.M. MacKenzie, and Arthur Surveyer belonged) that mass culture is a foreign, American threat that can best be countered through the public promotion of “high” culture along the lines of Matthew Arnold’s “the best that has been thought and known.” However, the Massey report also acknowledged the benefits of Canadian-American cultural exchange:

American influences on Canadian life to say the least are impressive. There should be no thought of interfering with the liberty of all Canadians to enjoy them. Cultural exchanges are excellent in themselves. They widen the choice of the consumer and provide stimulating competition for the producer.¹⁷ It cannot be denied, however, that a vast and disproportionate amount of material coming from a single alien source may stifle rather than stimulate our own

creative effort; and, passively accepted without any standard of comparison, this may weaken critical faculties...we have made important progress, often aided by American generosity. We must not be blind, however, to the very present danger of permanent dependence. (18)

Canadian nationalism, as it finds expression in the Massey report and in policy documents succeeding it, is an elitist, protectionist, and competitive nationalism that focuses on national-cultural sovereignty and Canadian-U.S. relations.

Kevin Dowler notes in "The Cultural Industries Policy Apparatus" that "in the terms set out by the Massey report, culture constituted a form of defence against both internal and external threats" (338). The report itself makes the following comparison with the policy of National Defense: "If we, as a nation, are concerned with the problem of defence, what, we may ask ourselves, are we defending? We are defending civilization, our share of it, our contribution to it" (274). Writing out of an elitist-nationalist sensibility, the commissioners deemed it paramount to cultivate a strong, unifying national spirit through a distinct and sovereign "high" Canadian culture. The Canadian cultural elite, which rose into prominence in the 1920s and to which the five members of the Massey Commission belonged, was guided by a liberal humanist, Arnoldian agenda, which condemned "the immorality of capitalism's appeal to material selfishness" (Litt 91). It echoed Matthew Arnold's conviction that "high" culture is a form of intellectual training and enlightenment that improves humankind in mind, spirit, and morals and thus belongs at the center of any civilized society. High culture was seen as the source of an intelligent and responsible Canadian citizenry that defies the threat of American mass culture.

Notwithstanding, as Zoë Druick points out in her analysis of early Canadian and American membership in UNESCO in "A Bridge between Nations," one needs to be careful not to binarize the mythic images of Canada's Arnoldian and America's capitalist cultural visions. Frequently assumed in critical analyses of the Massey Commission (e.g. in Litt's work), this binary opposition has not only obscured America's enthusiastic participation, side by side with Canada, in early UNESCO. It has also disguised Canada's subscription to the latter's liberal-commercial vision of a world civilization of marketable national cultures. Druick notes that already in UNESCO's early stages, in which Canada participated as a founding member (Massey himself was part of the committee that drew up a constitution in 1945), "[t]he link of education, culture, and science with trade was never far from the surface" (15). The organization's initial goal to improve the cultural relations between sovereign, civilized nation-states was closely tied to the improvement in market relations. As the above citations from the Massey report show, the commissioners promoted the building of an independent, competitive domestic publishing industry that can stem the threat of U.S. cultural imperialism, while at the same time reaping

the benefits of Canadian-American exchange. On the one hand, the Massey report argues for government support for Canadian publishers as producers of “high” Canadian literature and thus cultivators of a strong and unifying national spirit and civilized society. On the other hand, it reflects the belief that competition is stimulating for literary creativity and quality, and that Canadian “high” literature should thus compete both aesthetically and in sales. In other words, the Massey commissioners showed support for the governmental promotion of a Canadian-owned publishing industry that produces both “high” national literature and competitive cultural exchange, which gets Canada and its literature internationally recognized as strong and mature. Never far from this dual ambition loomed the fear of a fully market-oriented approach that would destroy the uniqueness of Canadian literature.

While the notion of Canadian culture as Arnoldian – and with it the Massey Commission’s emphasis on Canadian literature’s key national functions as a form of “high” culture – seems to resonate less with contemporary political elites,¹⁸ the ideal of an independent Canadian culture that is non-American and a competitive part of the global market in national cultures is still prevalent in policy approaches. The linkage of cultural sovereignty and cultural competitiveness has remained key, especially when it comes to Canadian-American cultural relations. On the one side, governmental representatives such as the Cultural Industries Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade (SAGIT) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Department of Canadian Heritage commit their programs to the defense of Canadian cultural sovereignty. On the other side, they situate this commitment in a sphere of global market exchange and economic policy convergence, which poses a major practical challenge to the ideal of sovereign national culture and cultural industries. The relationship cultural policy-makers have assigned to Canada’s economic and cultural aspirations is one that, as SAGIT writes in *New Strategies for Culture and Trade: Canadian Culture in a Global World*, “acknowledges that cultural goods and services are significantly different from other products [and] that domestic measures and policies intended to ensure access to a variety of indigenous cultural products are significantly different from other policies and measures” (DFAIT: SAGIT). Domestic cultural policy measures include a combination of direct and indirect subsidies – financial incentives, requirements of “Canadian content,” rules on foreign investment and ownership, and intellectual property tools such as copyright protection. On the international level, Canada exempts its cultural industries from all major trade agreements to which it is a signatory. It argues that Canadian culture is more than a totality of commodities, of consumable and tradable goods and services. For instance, Canada opted out of the “most favored nation” status of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) under which all signing members agree to treat all of each other’s goods and

services equally on the domestic market. Moreover, Article 2005(1) of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement exempts Canada's cultural industries from the terms of the agreement. Article 7 of the Code of Liberalization of Capital Movements, a set of rules instituted by the OECD, permits Canada to restrict foreign investment in "activities related to Canada's cultural heritage or national identity" (Media Awareness Network, *Canada and the World*).

The topic of Canadian state intervention in the production of cultural goods and services (e.g. books, magazines, radio, film, television, sound recordings) has been widely discussed across academic disciplines. What diverse cultural critics such as Michael Dorland, Kevin Dowler, Ted Magder, Eva Mackey, Imre Szeman, David Throsby, Marc Raboy, and Gordon Laxer seem to agree on is that the pattern of intervention reveals several contradictions in the relationship it assigns to the market and culture. Contemporary policy-makers seem vexed by the question of how "to nurture [Canadian] culture and identity, and still be an active participant in the free trading world?" (DFAIT, *New Strategies*), of how to "promote the Canadian cultural sector at home and abroad while affording Canadians the benefits of trade liberalization" (Heritage Canada, *Trade & Investment*). The rhetoric of "national culture" as export staple and key vehicle of Canadian economic growth, as commodity with noncommercial national value, can be found on the websites of all major governmental agencies, including Heritage Canada, the Canada Council of the Arts, Statistics Canada, Industry Canada, and Foreign Affairs and International Trade.¹⁹ And yet, SAGIT's declaration that "Canada has always been at the forefront of international efforts to liberalize global markets and at the same time...has always been a champion of cultural sovereignty and cultural diversity" (DFAIT: SAGIT) is not as untroubled as it sounds. The maneuver between domestic and international, symbolic and material, cultural and economic policy objectives – between culture as industry and culture as "soul-stuff" – has created strong tensions and complicated, if not eroded, the translation into practice of the principle of cultural-national sovereignty.²⁰

As Throsby points out in *Economics and Culture*, the focus of cultural policy-making in protectionist countries such as Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and much of Europe "began to shift towards a more functional view of culture, with the emerging recognition of the cultural industries as engines of economic dynamism and societal transformation...in the 1970s" (145).²¹ Dowler locates the emergence of the term "cultural industries" in Canadian government discourse "[w]ith the tenure of Francis Fox as minister of communications in the late 1970s" ("Cultural Industries" 341). These years also show "an increasing convergence of industrial, economic and cultural policy" (341). Whereas for Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer the term "culture industry" signified the destructive nature of the dominant system of capitalist culture – a system pretending that the function of

industrialized cultural production is to enhance the project of human emancipation, while, in reality, taking control of habits of cultural consumption – it assumed a more positive, depoliticized connotation in 1970s cultural policy discourse. In contemporary usage in Canada and elsewhere in the Western world, the term “cultural industries” carries with it “a sense of the economic potential of cultural production to generate output, employment and revenue and to satisfy the demands of consumers” (Throsby 111). The term thus situates culture in an economic framework in which it can be produced, reproduced, and consumed like any other commodity. As Adorno and Horkheimer’s culture industry thesis makes clear, policy attempts such as Canada’s to protect the ideal of national culture and sovereignty by means of an interventionist system of “cultural industries” have avoided some crucial questions, such as: What are the economic conceptions and ideologies that underlie these attempts to establish internationally competitive Canadian cultural industries whose products are not completely commodified? Clearly, Canadian cultural policy opposes the non-interventionist U.S. cultural policy stance. Yet, it appears that it nonetheless follows a neoliberal rationale that is not unlike that of its neighbor. While state intervention protects Canada’s cultural industries from direct market dependency, especially from direct dependency on the U.S. market, it creates dependency on the state, whose itineraries are market-oriented, in particular towards Canadian-U.S. competitiveness (which brings up the question of whether Canada would be any different from the U.S. had it an economy of scale). Canada’s protectionist cultural policy approach is now part of the discourse of Canadian neoliberalism, of the latter’s attempt to profitably incorporate the ideological and aesthetic potential of culture and cultural production into its economic potential, while simultaneously decreeing as “common, public interest” the commercialization and privatization of cultural goods, policies, and public functions.

Reconciling the double movement of economic liberalism and cultural protection is also the objective of the Stockholm Meeting (UNESCO), the International Network of Cultural Policy, the First International Meeting of Professional Associations from the Cultural Milieu, and the World Commission on Culture and Development. International cultural policy initiatives such as these attempt to form a counter-weight to WTO, NAFTA, and World Bank efforts to fully incorporate “culture” into the global market in commodities. At the Stockholm Meeting, held by UNESCO in April 1998, cultural policy representatives of approximately 150 countries, among them then-Heritage Canada Minister Sheila Copps, agreed on an *Action Plan* on national culture. This plan promotes “the idea that cultural goods and services should be fully recognized and treated as being not like other forms of merchandise” and thus given specific prominence in international policy initiatives (UNESCO, *Final Report Stockholm* 16). The International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP), “a group of ministers of culture from...[a]pproximately 44

nations” (Marsh and Harvey) was initiated by Heritage Canada in 1998 as “an informal venue to discuss cultural policy challenges” (de Santis). The INCP closely collaborates with national and international arts NGOs organized in the International Network on Cultural Diversity (INCD). Both networks follow the principles of the *Stockholm Action Plan* in that they emphasize national cultural diversity and the legitimization of domestic cultural policies. The 1996 report of the World Commission on Culture and Development (appointed by UNESCO) introduced the idea of “cultural development policy” as a means to internationally negotiate cultural and economic policy objectives in a way that fosters regional, local, and national cultural identity, diversity, and exchange (UNESCO: World Commission on Culture and Development).

Cultural policy-making and its democratic alternatives?

INCD announces on its website that the key reason for its foundation is the fight against the unimpeded global rule of capital and the devastating cultural and social consequences that come along with it. The Network envisions “a different kind of globalization: one which encourages cultural production within nations [and] the dynamic coexistence of a diversity of cultures” (“Towards a Global Cultural Pact”). The latter can only be guaranteed through truly democratic practice, which the WTO and the World Bank as non-democratic institutions run by the laws of the market do not provide. INCD is strongly committed to the creation of a New International Instrument for Cultural Diversity, i.e. a truly democratic, global cultural pact that constitutes “an effective buffer from the trade agreements and...a solid legal foundation for measures that promote cultural diversity” (“Towards a Global Cultural Pact”). Important as this endeavor is, I see a major shortcoming in its aims and rationales. The INCD agenda intimates that INCD and INCP participants work “outside” of and against neoliberal globalization. Its vision of a genuinely democratic global cultural practice tends to uncritically assume the genuinely democratic nature of the national public sphere after which it shapes this practice. The INCD agenda fails to recognize the neoliberal, undemocratic undercurrents in the cultural policies of its member “democracies.” It does not consider the possibility that the neoliberal value system, which underlies INCP members’ economic policy-making and signature to the major international trade agreements, also underscores policy decisions in cultural matters.

In *Democratic Development 1990-2000*, an overview put together for the tenth anniversary of the International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development (a non-partisan organization that was created by Canada’s Parliament in 1988), Nancy Thede notes that “[g]overnments of the industrialized countries *have agreed* to cede broad areas of social and economic policy-making to international institutions (such as the World Trade Organization)” (14, emphasis added). Similarly,

Mitchell Evans, Stephen McBride, and John Shields argue in their essay “Globalization and the Challenge to Canadian Democracy: National Governance Under Threat” that Western democratic states have played an *active role* in curtailing state powers through their creation of and participation in international trade agreements and bodies such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO. They observe “a tendency in much of the globalization literature to regard this change [towards the shrinking of state involvement in both society and the economy] as an inevitable...product of structural economic and technological transformation” (80). This structural inevitability thesis has masked the “*active role* the state has played in establishing the governance mechanisms and a new state form congruent with a system of neoliberal regionalized trading and investment blocs” (93, emphasis added). Evans, McBride, and Shields maintain that in common with most Western countries, the Canadian state has contributed considerably to making itself a less relevant and powerful actor through its subscription to global economic convergence, in particular through its promotion of the Canadian-American Free Trade Agreement. It is this “degree of voluntarism that is often lacking from accounts of the state’s role in the new economy” (81). Both the structural inevitability thesis and efforts of cultural protectionism and exemptionism mask the fact that in the Canadian political sphere the “competitive position in the global markets [has become] the privileged barometer of well-being” (81).²²

The critics cited here draw attention to an important and often-ignored fact – namely that the depoliticization and shrinking of Canada’s public policy sphere cannot be ascribed to global or “outside” economic and governance forces only. Rather, it is a consequence of neoliberal thinking and action within Canada, which, according to Evans, McBride, and Shields, “can be understood best as the product of business pressures within Canada and the associated spread, within elite circles at least, of neoliberal ideology” (91). As Thede points out in her overview, the depoliticization of national public policy is paralleled by and reflects the international range of policy-making. Together, states and institutions such as the IMF, OECD, and the World Bank have depoliticized the concept of governance by reducing political space to “a site for management of resources rather than access to power” (32). This combined national-international approach “envisions ‘democracy’ as a well-oiled machine producing tangible results, rather than recognizing the fact that democracy is about debate, dissent, building compromises, broadening participation and even confrontation within certain broadly agreed-upon bounds, but often in a messy and ‘unmanageable’ way” (32). The 1994 OECD statement *Governance in Transition: Public Management Reforms in OECD Countries* predicts that the role for state governments will be increasingly that of “an enabler. It will be more about providing a flexible framework within which economic activity can take place” (88).²³ This includes providing a “flexible system of regulation that minimizes controls placed

over capital and encourages greater competition and innovation; [one which] ensures that public policy is directed toward human-capital development and research...and away from the social policy portfolio as such” (Evans et al. 87).

As Evans, McBride, and Shields point out, in the course of neoliberal globalization, most countries, Canada among them, “have parted company from the Keynesian policy framework” (87). Introduced after the Second World War as a means to guarantee political, social, and economic stability and progress in the capitalist Western world, the Keynesian policy framework was committed to full employment, social welfare programs, and a balance of market and state power. Since the 1989 collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the subsequent triumphant discourse of global capitalism, most Western countries have rekindled with the ideas of classical market liberalism, which emphasize individual economic enterprise and the rule of the market. They have in various ways consented to tailor their policies to claims of privatization, deregulation, lean production, and social control. Evans, McBride, and Shields note that public policy issues in Canada are increasingly decided by the annual budget of the federal Department of Finance, which directs policy priority at inflation control and public debt reduction (87). What we are experiencing today might be the last stage in the gradual erosion of the social democratic premise of government put forth in John Keynes’s *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* and T. H. Marshall’s “Citizenship and Social Class,” which Ian Angus describes as the “main founding document of the social democratic idea of ‘social citizenship’ which provided the foundation for the welfare state” (92).

This erosion has been nurtured not least by an elite practice of political representation that is common in most modern democracies. Joseph Schumpeter’s *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* has been of seminal influence in shaping this practice after the Second World War. In his book, Schumpeter argued for a reduction of the scope of public participation in political decision-making in order to make democracy compatible with the growing complexity of modern societies. His call for “controlled,” representative democracy regained salience in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a result of the social and political upheavals of that time, which led to the formation of the Trilateral Commission (Western Europe, the U.S., and Japan) and the Commission report *The Crisis of Democracy* (written by Michel Crozier, Samuel Huntington, and Joji Watanuki). Published in 1975, the report warned that modern society suffered from an “excess of democracy,” which was posing a serious threat to individual liberty and property.

In Canada and elsewhere in modern democracies, party elites and so-called “experts” constitute the majority of elected representative citizens. To a large extent their dialogue with the voting public takes place by means of election campaigning, formal functions, and media statements, which tend to avoid pressing economic and social issues. Political representatives “often consider that their own demands are the

essence of democracy, and do not examine how they might support the entry of new actors onto the scene” (Theide 8). Democratic decision-making has become a process by which so-called representative elites and experts prescribe laws and policies for society from “outside” (from the realm of the policy expert) instead of negotiating them in true dialogue and power-sharing with the populace. Robert McChesney notes in the introduction to Noam Chomsky’s *Profit over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order* that this is the preferable climate for neoliberalism, which “works best when there is formal electoral democracy, but when the population is diverted from the information, access, and public forums necessary for meaningful participation in decision making” (9). These criticisms of the current state of democracy raise questions such as: What is genuine democratic politics and policy-making? Does it exist in practice or is it merely an ideal? Is the concept of democracy still a viable form of social organization, even though its modern form has become a driving political force and subspecies of capitalism? Is it still viable at a time when, as Lawrence Grossberg notes, citizenship rights have been replaced by property rights and the modern liberal subject as bearer of citizen rights and freedoms has been deconstructed (“Figure” 73)? Grossberg asks, “Is it time to reevaluate our strategic options?” (74). Slavoj Žižek and Giorgio Agamben have answered this question in the affirmative. Žižek claims that we need to bring up the courage to abandon our uncritical faith in “the untouchable, properly fetishist, status of democracy as our Master-Signifier....We need to acknowledge the radical implications of Agamben’s questioning of the very notion of democracy” (“I: A Symptom – of What?” 493-94).²⁴ He observes that only too frequently, radical political practices and questionings such as Agamben’s tend to be “watered down into an element of a radical-democratic project” whose ultimate goal it is to gradually “destabilize and displace the power structure without ever being able to effectively undermine it” (494).

The questions and provocations posed here are part of an urgent and highly divergent critical debate about the future of modern democracy and its institutions that has emerged from different disciplines and intellectual traditions – and includes the voices of David Held, Zygmunt Bauman, Cornelius Castoriadis, Carl Boggs, Gordon Laxer, John Ralston Saul, Nancy Fraser, and Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, among many others. The underlying basis that these in many respects diverse and conflicting criticisms share is that classical liberalism, which gave rise to the modern version of democracy, was built on highly contradictory, dualistic values. While it “embraced the norms of consent, civic participation, self-directed activity, and the ‘rights of man’ measured before a system of laws...liberal ideology gave full sway to capitalist market values, which encouraged the most competitive, predatory forms of human activity in a way that tended precisely to undermine those democratizing values” (Boggs 115). Modern democracy came to represent both the

idea of the power of the people and the often contradictory idea of legally guaranteed individual rights and liberties. It came to function as both an ideal of direct popular government and the description of a concrete form of representative government that was expected to guarantee social stability and progress as well as individual freedom. The divide between the liberal democratic ideal on the one hand and its reality on the other has created many challenges for intellectuals committed to the concept of democracy.

For the French philosopher Castoriadis, the way to resolve this tension is a radical return to the Greek meaning of the word democracy; an approach Bauman terms “radical classicism” (168). In “The Greek *Polis* and the Creation of Democracy,” Castoriadis argues that genuine democracy is never limited to human rights or suffrage, even though that is the meaning the word commonly assumes in modern liberal discourse. He claims that “[a]ll this is very nice, but it’s just second- or third-degree-consequences. Democracy means the power (*kratos*) of the people” (107). Democracy in this view suggests more than a passive-representative-elitist attitude. Indeed, Castoriadis asserts that “representation is a principle alien to democracy” (108). Representatives use the political authority transferred to them “to consolidate their position and create the conditions whereby the next ‘election’ becomes biased in many ways” (108). On the contrary, true democracy guarantees the equal opportunity of all citizens to participate in political discussion and decision-making through membership in the public sphere. Accordingly, Castoriadis rejects the “abandonment of the public sphere” – as the mediating zone between state interests, private interests, and common welfare – “to specialists, to professional politicians” (91). He announces that “[t]he emergence of a public space means that a political domain is created which ‘belongs to all’...The ‘public’ ceases to be a ‘private’ affair – of the king, the priests, the bureaucracy, the politicians, and the experts” (112).

Where Castoriadis adheres to the nation-state as the framework for radical or alternative democracy, Hardt and Negri’s concept of democracy brought forth in *Empire* is pronouncedly non-national and global in scale.²⁵ It builds on Agamben’s return, in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, to the natural life of humans as the very basis for politics. Unlike “the people” or citizens that form a sovereign subject within a state structure that excludes certain people and groups from political participation,²⁶ Hardt and Negri’s concept of the multitude, which Hardt calls “our positive conception of the subject of democracy”²⁷ in “Globalization and Democracy” (16), stands for the rule of all by all. As “an active social agent – a multiplicity that acts” (16) – the multitude is invested with rights and access to political power on account of the simple fact of being human. Democracy is not limited to politically-legally qualified humans or groups of humans (citizens, “the people”) and their interactions in the public sphere, but includes all. It is non-

representative and non-national. As Hardt puts it, “[i]n refusing representation the multitude denies not only the national formation but sovereignty itself” (16), i.e. the sovereign power invested in the nation that keeps the ultimate power to itself.²⁸ Indeed, for absolute democracy to work, sovereignty needs to be resisted in all its forms, including nation-state and cultural-national sovereignty, the sovereign subject of the people, and the new global sovereignty of Empire. Differentiating between the negative elements of Empire (the monarchic and aristocratic powers of the Pentagon, IMF, WTO, transnational corporations, and nation-states as sovereign powers) and the positive ones (the democratic powers of the multitude), Hardt and Negri argue that it is a matter of rejecting the former and pressing on the latter.

Hardt and Negri are by no means the only ones who have distanced themselves from the notion of radical democracy brought forth by Castoriadis and others. Contestants of Castoriadis’s classicist appeal have accused him of idealizing and distorting ancient Greek politics – a politics that was limited to a small political elite of free and property-owning adult male citizens – as selfless and inclusive governance. They have further argued that the classical model of democracy, of face-to-face physical interaction and proximity in public spaces does not hold any relevance in contemporary societies. Bruce Robbins notes in “The Public as Phantom” that the Greek *agora* (an open square that was the marketplace and religious and civic center in ancient Greek city-states) “is only a phantasm. For the tradition thus conjured has nothing to do with the realities and limits of Greek democracy, or with the possibilities to extend our own” (ix). On the other hand, supporters of Castoriadis’s views, such as Boggs and Bauman, have emphasized his modeling of a dynamic, inclusive public sphere that challenges contemporary neoliberal ideology. Boggs, for instance, insists that Castoriadis’s classicist conception counters the current minimalist-elitist view of democratic opinion- and decision-making “that has largely abandoned even the pretense of striving for a political system grounded in broad-based civic participation and popular decision making” (7). Like Castoriadis himself, Boggs and Bauman do not claim that an ideal democratic public sphere once existed. Rather, it is a matter of using such an ideal form as a referent for making visible the deficiencies of actually existing liberal democracies and publics, and for working towards alternatives. I would argue that notwithstanding the fundamental theoretical differences between Castoriadis/his supporters and his critics, what they agree on is that we urgently need to rethink what has come to be known as (democratic) politics in the West and that this takes both thought and action.

Tracing the historical development of cultural production processes in Canada, Dowler remarks that unlike eighteenth-century Europe, where the bourgeoisie arrogated to itself the power over these processes, in Canada the development of a domestic cultural industry fell to the state (“Cultural Industries”

338). Like many postcolonial states, Canada, at its moment of independence, faced the challenge of an underdeveloped civil society and weak resources of private capital. This challenge was intensified by the country's small and vastly-dispersed population, which made processes of cultural production and distribution difficult and cost-intensive. Dowler notes that the weakness of private interest virtually compelled the state to take up a direct role in the production of Canadian culture: "If culture was to be Canadian, the government would have to build it" (335). And so it did. In "Early Innis and the Post-Massey Era in Canadian Culture," Dowler explains that "[s]imilar to the circumstances of Confederation, when a central government was formed to act as a 'credit institution' (as Innis put it) to finance the construction of transportation and communication networks in the absence of private initiative, the 'problem' of culture was likewise solved by government, through its financing of cultural activity" (343). The state established federal institutions and agencies such as the CBC, National Film Board, National Gallery, National Museum, Public Archives, and National Scholarships, which initiated and administered various cultural activities. In the course of the Massey years, the government's role changed to that of the developer of private industries as well as arm's-length cultural organizations (such as the Canada Council) that would simultaneously serve as a vehicle of cultural-national sovereignty and "profitable exchange in the potentially global marketplace of cultural production" ("Cultural Industries" 358). The state thus created a "simulated" public cultural sphere "in the form of [governmental and arm's-length] cultural agencies...inserted between the formal structures of the state and its citizens" (335-36). Today, most of these cultural agencies are comprised in the Heritage Canada portfolio and work on the basis of federally administered programs. Dowler notes that these agencies "act as the conduits through which cultural producers and communities can make their views and concerns known to government...being simultaneously the instruments of government policy and lobbying the interests for the cultural communities they serve" (335).

The significant questions that Dowler does not ask are: Which cultural communities do these cultural agencies really serve? How independent are they of government control; e.g. how unconditional are their annual allocations by the government? Who acts and makes decisions in these cultural agencies and how? In its response to the ninth report of the Standing Committee of Canadian Heritage (entitled *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Being*), the Government declares that in its "unswerving commitment to...reflecting and celebrating Canadian diversity...it matters that what is supported be about the Canadian experience in some way. It matters that the ideas, books, paintings, music, films, Internet content...reflect Canada to Canadians...Nurturing, enhancing and supporting what we have come to call 'Canadian choices' is what the role of the federal government in support of culture is all about" (*Connecting to the Canadian Experience*). As this quotation indicates,

governmental allocations to the Canada Council and other cultural agencies are based on the condition that the latter act as instruments and promoters of “Canadian culture” and “national identity” in their choices of support (for publishers, writers, retailers, books, and so on). Indeed, in its glossary of terms, the Canada Council states that as an arm’s-length agency it “operates *quasi*-independent from the federal government. It sets its own policies and makes its own decisions within the terms of the Canada Council Act (e.g. regarding funding amounts or artistic criteria of program), but is bound by governmental policies concerning Canada’s official languages, human rights and *other matters*” (*Glossary*, emphasis added). This means that even though the Canada Council is independent of the government in its organization, decision-making, and distribution of cultural support, its support rationales have to concur with those of the government, that is, with the official version of Canadian culture and its functions. This official version defines Canadian culture as a unified “multiculture” (see chapter two) that is produced by Canadian-owned cultural industries, forms a pillar of the country’s national economy and international competitiveness, and significantly contributes to Canada’s national sovereignty.

Still, I am not trying to deny, here, that the financial support of the Canada Council “has been vital to the development of Canadian literature” (Canada Council, *Block Grant Program Report* 1). As Robert Lecker points out in “The Canada Council’s Block Grant Program and the Construction of Canadian Literature,” “the Council has managed to support a very broad range of books, from all parts of the country, encompassing conventional and ex-centric forms” (446). Many small publishers and authors have profited from the latter’s Block Grant Program.²⁹ Moreover, the Council has established committee structures that are staffed by working writers, publishers, and booksellers, who are not necessarily advocates of the state agenda and represent a wide variety of cultural interests. For instance, in our interview conversation (see Appendix A), Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, publisher of the Aboriginal Kegedonce Press, gives a positive view of the Canada Council’s representation of Aboriginal interests. She notes that Kegedonce’s relationship with the agency “is actually quite good...[T]here are Aboriginal staff, an Aboriginal CC [Canada Council] advisory committee, CC board members (at least one), and Aboriginal participation in juries. There are Aboriginal specific grant programs in place, run by Aboriginal staff.” Unlike Heritage Canada, the Canada Council “recognizes some of the basic inequities that can exclude, and in the past have excluded, Aboriginal people from accessing and benefiting from their programs” (Akiwenzie-Damm). Nonetheless, as critics such as Lecker, Marlene Nourbese Philip (*Frontier*), and Daiva Stasiulis (“Authentic Voice”) have made clear, the cultural nationalist undercurrents of many of the programs’ eligibility criteria have foregrounded and promoted certain forms of literary expression as more “Canadian”

or “culturally relevant” than others. Lecker points out in his discussion of the Block Grant Program that “even while the Council supported publishers and artists with separatist or regional values...[s]uch support was intended to demonstrate that federalism could encompass – and still does encompass – difference” (441).³⁰ The Canada Council, through its Block Grant Program, may have been a key contributor to the invention, growth, and diversity of a Canadian “national literature” produced and circulated by a Canadian-owned book industry. Yet it has played this role of the literary patron at the cost of many publishers, authors, and books that have not been seen fit for support, that have been sorted in the category “not really culturally relevant.”

What happens to Canada’s “simulated,” government-based public cultural sphere, and through it to contemporary Canadian culture and its production, in the current climate of shrinking state powers and neoliberal thinking? Clearly, it does not remain unaffected by neoliberalism. As I have indicated above, the policy mandate of cultural protection, “national value,” and sovereignty that underlies Canada’s “simulated” public cultural sphere has masked the active role the Canadian state has played in restructuring its political power in depoliticized, neoliberal terms. It has obstructed the fact that the current protectionist-nationalist cultural policy approach reflects neoliberal understandings of culture and promotes rather than counters the commodification of cultural goods and services. The values that underscore Canada’s cultural policy-making are never radically different from those that underscore its policy mandate in economic matters.³¹ Subsequently, effective support of a non-neoliberal cultural environment needs to start by confronting the current neoliberal trend not only in cultural policy but also in economic and social policy. I would argue that instead of worrying about what might happen to Canadian culture and national-cultural sovereignty in the current context of neoliberal globalization, we need to scrutinize the political and social values that underlie and shape contemporary cultural practices, and rethink our taken-for-granted notions of what it means to have access to and participate in public decision-making. As Evans, McBride, and Shields point out, we are currently living in a transformative period in which “a strong state is a prerequisite to a flexible state...The state’s coercive hand must be sufficiently strengthened to enable it to effectively resist and counteract the ‘democratic pressures’ seeking to prevent...the neoliberal goal of market dominance” (94). Seen from this perspective, the struggle for a more inclusive and radically democratic process of cultural decision-making – and, with it, for a more inclusive and radically democratic public culture more generally – seems particularly vital at the present moment.

This struggle needs to be built on the awareness that modern democracy is not the only possible, universal politico-economic system along which societies can be organized. It is not even democratic, really, in its traditional equation of politics with

a minimalist-elitist model of citizen representation and its division between empowered citizens and disempowered “alien” residents. In “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” Nancy Fraser opposes to the liberal model of the public sphere – theorized most notably by Jürgen Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* – a “post-liberal” model that sees societal equality as a necessary condition for participatory parity in the public sphere.³² Fraser radically rejects the liberal claim that existing social inequalities between actors are transcended in the public sphere, that the latter is a depersonalized, disinterested sphere in which members only speak in their public voices. This claim wrongly “assumes that a public sphere is or can be a space of zero degree culture” (Fraser 64), while in reality, informal values, legalistic formalities, and norms of expression, behavior, and rhetoric perpetuate existing inequalities and exclusions. As Himani Bannerji (*The Dark Side of the Nation*), Marlene Nourbese Philip (*Frontiers*), Eva Mackey (*The House of Difference*), Susan Crean (*Who’s Afraid of Canadian Culture?*), and many other Canadian critics have demonstrated, official programs and policies to promote “Canadian (multi)culture” have perpetuated values and discursive mechanisms that make it harder for “certain” (non-expert, non-elite, non-English- and non-French-Canadian) individuals or groups from speaking and thus from participating in the public cultural sphere – not to mention non-citizens or non-permanent-residents who are completely deprived of the right to have access to publics of decision-making.

Concluding remarks

As the discussion here shows, to take a non-nationalist position vis-à-vis cultural policy does not mean to take an anti-state and anti-democratic position, a criticism made by Gordon Laxer in his essay “The Movement That Dare not Speak Its Name: The Return of Left Nationalism/Inter-nationalism.” On the contrary, it means to work towards more inclusive and radically democratic spaces of cultural participation and decision-making without nationalism; i.e. not built on the cultural nationalist ideals, fears, and exclusions that drive the claim of cultural-national sovereignty. This form of democracy subsequently commits to a real sharing of power in public spaces of cultural decision-making and ties this commitment to a struggle for increased societal equality and to the premise that all people in Canada are given equal access to cultural publics (independent of their expertise, ethnicity, education, political affiliation, class, gender, legal status, and so on). I would argue that to achieve such an alternative cultural policy approach, it does not suffice to demand a reorientation, as John Ralston Saul does, toward genuine representative democracy in which elected elites represent society, in which “the élites to whom we have entrusted our democratic system...do their jobs in a responsible manner” (498). Neither does it suffice to recapture, as Laxer attempts to do, a Red Tory approach of

“positive nationalism,” which builds on a combination of strong government, traditional conservatism, and social democracy. This approach implies a return to the Keynesian model of the democratic welfare state as a counterbalance to the worst effects of global trade and neoliberal governance.³³ I do not mean to disagree with Laxer that English Canada’s *raison d’être* (especially vis-à-vis the U.S. and continentalist incorporation) derived “from a wider concept of the public sphere in which the state takes a leading role” (“Surviving the Americanizing New Right” 72). However, I doubt whether this state-centered concept is still sufficient today and in the future.

I would argue that, today, it is rather a matter of critically engaging and working with Castoriadis’s decentralizing classicist approach to democracy, Fraser’s non-liberal model of the public sphere, Hardt and Negri’s concept of the multitude, and Žižek and Agamben’s questionings of the very notion of democracy. It is through these critics’ provocative perspectives that we need to approach the institutional and discursive structures that underlie today’s system of Canadian cultural policy-making. If we agree with Thede that “democracy is about debate, dissent, building compromises, broadening participation and even confrontation within certain broadly agreed-upon bounds” (32), we need a form of government that politicizes rather than de-politicizes Canadian public policy and democratic culture; that enhances broad participation rather than expert representation; that empowers social actors rather than a vision of “national culture.” This implies that we need to rethink our taken-for-granted notions of the public sphere and of public decision-making in non-nationalist and pluralized terms that enable us to move beyond the limitations of the present policy structure towards non-neoliberal alternatives.

Let us return to MacNamara and Kuitenbrouwer’s claim (cited earlier on) that “the collapse of Stoddart is a fine example of how government policy for the publishing industry, intended to build up a healthy and vibrant, Canadian-owned book publishing industry, has failed.” MacNamara and Kuitenbrouwer assume that a “healthy” industry is profitable, competitive, and does not live on “federal alms.” They argue that foreign-owned publishers in Canada which follow self-sustaining economic values contribute much more to a “healthy,” flourishing Canadian literature than those “‘sickly’...hundreds of Canadian publishers...struggling to survive until the next federal handout.” To support their argument they inform the reader that “last week, six of the top 10 bestsellers in Canada, on the hardcover list, were books by Canadians – all of them published by foreign-owned publishing houses that don’t get a nickel from the public purse.” Their use of an economized language of health and sickness to describe literary success ignores such values as literary diversity and equal access to cultural decision-making. Why is it necessarily “sickly” that Canada has a relatively large number of small-scale publishers of whom

hardly any are economically very profitable? Could the fact that most of these small-scale publishers are not prospering “like they should” mean that they are not predominantly driven by economic profit but by a cultural, social, local, regional, environmental, or ethnic objective? Indeed, many small publishers and retailers specialize in particular themes, authors, and genres or dedicate themselves to circulating a wide variety of Canadian titles. Many of them participate in the life of their communities. In this sense, cultural diversity and democratic venues of literary expression and participation in Canada seem to depend to a large extent on these small-scale circuits. One could counter MacNamara and Kuitenbrouwer’s argument, then, by noting that while such a diversified and localized publishing infrastructure might be economically “sickly,” it is culturally and socially rather “healthy” or democratic, and that government money is well spent on supporting it.

It is based on this view that I agree with Andrews and Ball that we need “a wide range of publishers who are willing to take a gamble in all areas of Canadian literary production, not just guaranteed commercial success” (4). We need a publishing policy that, as Arsenal Pulp Press’ marketing director Blaine Kylo puts it in the interview I conducted with him (see Appendix D), “enable[s] publishers to produce books that NEED to be published, because they are important in one way or another, but which may not sell sufficient copies to cover costs.” Such a policy mandate does not imply the end of the BPIDP but a revision of its mandate, or at least the introduction of additional programs that support small- and micro-scale publishers, which fall outside the eligibility criteria for BPIDP support, and that make a concerted effort to promote the development of an Aboriginal publishing industry in Canada (this theme will be picked up in chapter five). Likewise, it does not necessarily imply the end of foreign investment regulations regarding book retailing, publishing, and distribution in Canada, but it necessitates a radical interrogation of its current functioning, functions, and objectives. Why, for instance, would it legitimate Canadian-owned quasi-monopolies such as Indigo-Chapters and GDS, or foreign investment in the McClelland & Stewart and Distican cases? Moreover, it is worthwhile considering that a loosening of Ottawa’s foreign investment rules would affect mid- and large-sized Canadian-owned book businesses (e.g. the major Canadian-owned agency publishers, Indigo-Chapters, Key Porter, McClelland & Stewart) more so than their small- and micro-sized counterparts. Firstly, many of the latter cannot afford to buy shelf space at Indigo-Chapters anyway and, secondly, they tend to operate on different business tactics, values, and goals and frequently address different audiences, themes, and authors than big foreign-owned enterprises.³⁴ In other words, it would most affect those Canadian-owned book businesses that best fit the Canadian government’s neoliberal agenda.

In this chapter I have intimated that it is based on the premise of a more inclusive and radically democratic public culture that the issue of cultural

protectionism (e.g. foreign investment legislation, exemption clauses in international trade agreements) and governmental financial commitments to literary production (e.g. BPIDP) need to be addressed. I would argue that strategies of cultural protectionism and a more radically democratic approach to cultural decision-making are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, the problem with the present practice of cultural protectionism is that it tends to mask the commodity aspect of literature (and culture more generally) in order to ascertain literature's/culture's non-material national values, even while serving the neoliberal agenda. As I have shown in this chapter, if we approach the literary product as ordinary commodity, we realize that contemporary Canadian literature and its production cannot really be exempted from Canada's participation in neoliberal trade and policy agreements aimed at the facilitation and deregulation of the global flows of market commodities. Hence, I have reframed our desire to promote contemporary Canadian cultural goods and services that are not completely reduced to the logic of the market as an issue of social and political values and public decision-making – not “national culture.” The above discussion makes clear that it is not a “new” desire, specific only to the present climate of neoliberal globalization. Rather, it is a desire that has persisted at least since the postwar Massey years in the vision of a national culture and culture industry that can enhance both Canada's national sovereignty and global market relations. It is this vision that I have queried in this chapter and replaced by a vision of an inclusive, radically democratic public culture that implicates all aspects of Canadian life, the cultural as much as the economic, political, and social. As I intimate in this chapter and reaffirm in chapter five, a key reason for the inconsistencies in current investment decisions lies in this vision. The McClelland & Stewart case is indicative of this. Even though McClelland & Stewart's key commercial functions went to the multinational publisher Random House in the University of Toronto-Random House deal, it is still eligible for and receives governmental BPIDP funding.³⁵ The present publishing policy objective is to build an internationally competitive national book publishing that, if necessary, can be and is (part) foreign-owned. Foreign-owned publishers and foreign-owned/Canadian-owned publishing alliances such as McClelland & Stewart's can and do serve the current neoliberal-nationalist policy agenda more so than micro- and small-sized Canadian-owned publishers producing mostly Canadian titles and Aboriginal publishers in Canada.

As becomes clear from the discussion in this chapter, it is futile to counter the current neoliberal trend by reclaiming Canadian cultural policy as a genuinely liberal, sovereign public sphere. It is equally futile, as chapter two has shown, to aspire for Canada and its literature to be recognized as “really” autonomous and non-American. Indeed, as I have demonstrated in the previous two chapters, Canadian literary critics and policy-makers need to work towards alternative perspectives of Canadian literary processes, globalization, and their interrelations; perspectives which

require the renewal of the present notions of a cultural public sphere and of cultural decision-making, and thus a refocus on social and political values. In the following chapter, I reframe this search for alternative perspectives as a search for “allochronic” or differently-timed globalization narratives that defy the rhetoric of an “isochronic” world dominated by the vanguardist time scheme of Western modernity. More precisely, chapter four analyzes the challenges the allochronic writings and writerly positions of Nega Mezlekia, Thomas King, and Taiaiake Alfred pose to the totalizing, isochronic claim of a single world-system built on Western or, rather, U.S. economic and cultural dominance and to Canada’s concurrent claim that its literature be recognized as “really” Western isochronic. King and Alfred’s allochronic perspectives indicate a way to translate the political demands, made in chapter three, for a more inclusive and radically democratic public culture in concrete policy terms in the context of Aboriginal cultures and life in Canada.

¹ Thomson was replaced as acting director by John Hobday in January 2003.

² The Canadian book market is 8 per cent of that of the U.S. (Mulcahy).

³ The most massive federal cuts resulted from then-finance minister Paul Martin’s 1995 budget. A lot of the funds to publishing were restored when Sheila Copps became Heritage Minister in 1996. It remains to be seen how the situation will develop under the new Liberal minority government – flanked by the “pro-cultural” (James Adams) NDP and Bloc Québécois – with Paul Martin as leader and Copps replaced by first Hélène Chalifour Scherrer and now Liza Frulla, a former Quebec cultural-affairs minister and advocate of cultural protectionism.

⁴ In this call for a forceful, protectionist cultural policy, Andrews and Ball concur with non-state civil actors such as the Writers’ Union of Canada, the Literary Press Group, the Association of Canadian Publishers, and the Canadian Booksellers’ Association.

⁵ General’s collapse caused numerous media reactions. E.g. in *The National Post*: “‘Catastrophe’ Hits Book Industry” (Kuitenbrouwer), “Stoddart Has Only Himself to Blame” (Richler), “Foreign Buyer Likely for General” (MacNamara), “Ottawa’s Role in the Collapse of Stoddart” (MacNamara and Kuitenbrouwer). In *The Globe and Mail*: “Debts Pound Stoddart’s Book Empire” (Saunders), “Turn the Page on Publishing” (James Laxer), “Fall of the House of Stoddart” (Martin), “Porter Mulls Buying Stoddart Assets” (Strauss). In *The Quill & Quire*: “Debunking the Demonology” (Hunt), “When a Giant Falls” and “Days of Reckoning for General Publishing” (Scott Anderson).

⁶ For details on the Indigo-Chapters crisis see Strauss (“Federal Aid”) and Strauss and McNish.

⁷ When Chapters was to be sold, Ottawa denied the U.S. book retailers Borders and Barnes & Noble (the latter holds a 20 per cent interest in Chapters) to compete with Canadian offers for the book chain. Thus, with Ottawa’s consent Chapters merged with Indigo into a Canadian-owned retailing monopoly. Ottawa’s attempt to divert the monopoly by demanding Indigo-Chapters sell 23 of its stores to Canadian-owned businesses failed, since there were no such potential domestic purchasers.

⁸ Even after domestic bids fail, foreign offers are subject to the approval of the Heritage Minister. The authority to review foreign investment in Canada’s cultural industries was transferred to Heritage Canada from the Minister of Industry in May 1999.

⁹ After taking control of General Publishing’s PaperJacks/Pocket Books operation in 1989, Susan Stoddart renamed the latter Distican. As Distican’s CEO, she “wrested the Simon & Schuster agency away from her brother [Jack Stoddart Jr.]” (MacSkimming 349).

¹⁰ Indeed, I will deal with this period in more detail in chapter five.

¹¹ Canadian Keynesianism is also known as the Second National Policy. An initiating government document was the 1945 “White Paper” on employment and income. For more detail see Stephen McBride’s *Paradigm Shift* (chapter two) and David Wolfe’s “The Rise and Demise of the Keynesian Era in Canada.”

¹² As Crean points out, “the Canada Council was not the first arts council in Canada. Alberta and Saskatchewan both had cultural funding agencies even before the Massey Commission was convened” (*Who’s Afraid* 132). Moreover, in 1945, a coalition of arts associations and artists’ groups formed the Canadian Arts Council, later renamed The Canadian Conference of the Arts, as an arts lobby (132). The latter has become the arts community’s main national representative. Sarah Corse adds to this that the Canada Council was originally established “by two individual philanthropists” (52). It was only in 1967 that the federal government began funding the Council. Paul Schafer and André Fortier provide a summary of the formation of arts councils in postwar Canada.

¹³ Philip Resnick argues in *The Land of Cain* that the decade of 1965-75 witnessed “a spectacular take-off of nationalist sentiment in English Canada” (145). It was “the weakening of American military, economic and political power [an America of race riots, ghettoization of the poor, and Nixon’s Vietnam and Watergate fiascos] that provided the setting for the upsurge of Canadian nationalism between 1965-75” (197). According to Resnick, “it is difficult to assess to what extent English Canadian intellectuals (including academics) created the new nationalism...or to what extent they themselves were merely responding to a political force let loose by the waning influence of the United States” (165).

¹⁴ Since the trade book publishing of Canadian titles alone was unprofitable, Canadian publishers had to complement the latter with the more profitable work of schoolbook and agency publishing. In the latter case, Canadian publishers served as agents of large British and American publishing houses. For further detail see Gundy and Crean. MacSkimming’s chapter “Surviving Prince Jack” gives a detailed account of the late 1960s and early 1970s at McClelland & Stewart. For a detailed account of the Ryerson case see Parker’s “The Sale of Ryerson Press.”

¹⁵ The report showed, among other things, that in 1969, “of the estimated \$220 million worth of books consumed by Canadians, 65% were imported, 25% were Canadian published, and 10% were adapted books manufactured in Canada” (Parker, “The Sale of Ryerson Press” 47).

¹⁶ Most of that money goes to publishers (\$27.2 million in 2002-2003). The rest goes to aid to industry and associations, supply chain initiative, and international marketing assistance (Heritage, *Final Report*). The latter was budgeted at \$4.8 million in 2002-2003 and consists of four components aimed at “increasing the visibility of Canadian books and publishers around the world”: foreign rights marketing assistance, export marketing assistance, new market development fund, and export expertise development fund.

¹⁷ Compare this to a statement made by the then-director of the Canada Council Shirley Thomson: “I am even prepared to advance the radical hypothesis that without the stimulus of the American empire on its doorstep, Canada would have remained a duller, and less innovative society” (Thomson).

¹⁸ As Coach House Press’ current struggle to save its original location demonstrates, the relatively close connection between literary, political, and economic elites that characterized the Massey era has been interrupted. In the present media culture, the ideological power to define Canadian national culture seems to lie less with producers and creators of “literature” than it did decades ago, and (cultural) policy-makers seem very much aware of that.

¹⁹ DFAIT also established an Arts and Cultural Industries Promotion Division and a Program for Export Market Development to help Canadian cultural exporters “compete and succeed in international markets and to present Canada’s image abroad” (*The Arts and Cultural Industries*).

²⁰ The WTO ruling against Canadian excise tax protection in the split-run magazine conflict with the U.S. provides a good example of this tension and complication. The WTO ruled against Canadian legislative protection of its magazine industry (as a cultural industry) on the grounds that

it violated GATT. As a result, the House of Commons passed a new magazine policy (Bill C-55) that removed the custom tariff for the importation of split-runs and eliminated the excise tax. For more detail see *Canada Versus the U.S. on "Split-Run" Magazines* (Media Awareness Network), Heather De Santis's "Mission Impossible?," Imre Szeman's "The Rhetoric of Culture," or Ted Magder's *Franchising the Candy Store*.

²¹ This functional view is pronounced in recent government statements, such as *Canada in the World/Le Canada dans le monde* by the Chrétien government, which asserts that "cultural affairs, in addition to politics and the economy, are one of the pillars of our foreign policy" (38). On its website, the government announces that in its efforts to transform Canada from a resource-based into a knowledge-based society, it increasingly relies on "the capacity of [Canada's] cultural industries to compete globally" (*Connecting to the Canadian Experience*).

²² For an extended discussion of the effects of this transformation in Canada's political sphere – e.g. financial stringency, privatization, contracting out of service delivery, erosion of social and cultural programs, labor-market deregulation – see McBride and Shields's *Dismantling the Nation*, McBride's *Paradigm Shift*, Shield and Evans's *Shrinking the State*, as well as the essay collections *Globalization and Its Discontents* (eds. McBride and Wiseman) and *Restructuring and Resistance* (eds. Burke, Mooers, and Shields). See also Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel's comparative analysis of Canada's policies of immigration, multiculturalism, and employment equity in *Selling Diversity*.

²³ Indeed, the Canadian government is now "small" by OECD standards.

²⁴ In *Homo Sacer*, Agamben displaces Michel Foucault's claim that bare life's inclusion into politics marks the threshold of modernity. He argues that "Western politics is a biopolitics from the very beginning, and that every attempt to found political liberties in the rights of the citizen is, therefore, in vain" (181). Using the archaic *homo sacer* figure – the figure of sacred man "who may be killed and yet not sacrificed" (8) – he demonstrates that bare life has always existed in the *polis* in a state of exception. The state of exception now has become the rule; in modern democracy, *homo sacer* and the citizen are "virtually confused" (171). Echoing Carl Schmitt's definition of the rule of sovereignty as the ability and power not to exercise the law, Agamben notes that modern democracy's "sovereign subject (...what is below and, at the same time, most elevated) can only be constituted as such through the repetition of the sovereign exception" (124). He calls for "a politics in which bare life is no longer separated and excepted, either in the state order or in the figure of human rights" (134).

²⁵ So are David Held's idea of cosmopolitan democracy and Richard Falk's advocacy of global civil society. While Held/Falk and Hardt/Negri agree that a global form of democracy is the only adequate response to the present processes of economic globalization and the concomitant divergence of economic and political geography, they radically deviate in their conceptualizations of this form of democracy. Whereas Held and Frank wish to create liberal democracy on a global scale, Hardt and Negri radically reject the liberal model.

²⁶ Agamben notes that "[i]n the system of the nation-state, the so-called sacred and inalienable rights of man show themselves to lack every protection and reality at the moment in which they can no longer take the form of rights belonging to citizens of a state" (126).

²⁷ This conception has encountered much criticism. Michael Rustin, for example, notes that Hardt and Negri seek to rescue "the revolutionary tradition of republican self-determination" (10), however, without asking why the defeat of this tradition took place. "It is necessary to take account of the...destructive potentials of human nature, as well as of its...creative potentials" (11), and Hardt and Negri's sole and idealized emphasis on the latter is insufficient. According to Rustin, it is in no way clear that the weakening of containing structures such as nation-states and unions will necessarily lead to global solidarities, to the radically democratic, global social agent called multitude.

²⁸ The nation "completes the notion of sovereignty by claiming to precede it" (Hardt and Negri 102), thus suppressing knowledge of the historical and social constructedness of the national

political order. With their proposition that “resistance precedes power,” Hardt and Negri refer to the long historical process of struggle of “a transcendent constituted power [e.g. the nation-state, the monarch] against an immanent constituent power [e.g. the subjects of the nation-state or the monarchy], order against desire” (74). Their radical rejection of sovereignty has provoked criticism among postcolonial thinkers who consider the nation-state strategically inevitable in processes of decolonization and who have emphasized that Hardt and Negri’s generalizing approach ignores the reality of various and specific national movements and insurrections, not all of which are based in a modern understanding of national organization.

²⁹ Under the Block Grant Program grants are given to publishers for specific titles. The grants are intended “to offset future publication deficits...[and are] based on the publisher’s recent production, stated future intentions and a peer assessment of its artistic and professional excellence” (Canada Council, *Glossary*).

³⁰ Nourbese Philip’s and Stasiulis’s critiques show that this strategy is also apparent in Council support for books by ethnic minority writers.

³¹ The Massey Commission and the cultural programs that were launched by the federal government in the 1960s and 1970s were coterminous with commissions (e.g. the Royal Commission on Canada’s Economic Prospects, the Watkins Task Force) and initiatives (e.g. the foundation of the Canadian Development Corporation, FIRA, Petro-Canada, and a National Energy Program) promoting Canadian economic nationalism.

³² Fraser argues that apart from, as Habermas acknowledges, being an unrealized ideal, the liberal or bourgeois public sphere of the nineteenth century was also, as Habermas does not take into account, “a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule” (62). Fraser further censures Habermas for not taking into account that a full understanding of the “official” bourgeois public sphere cannot be achieved without looking at its “unofficial,” non-bourgeois counter strands, such as nationalist publics, elite women’s publics, peasant publics, and working class publics (60-61).

³³ As Michel Aglietta notes, “Keynesian theory failed to extend its criticism of the neo-classical conception of market adjustments to a criticism of the neo-classical conception of economic subjects and relations” (11). Similarly, Étienne Balibar remarks that the Keynesian state “provided the ‘structural forms’...that enabled bourgeois hegemony over the reproduction of labour-power to move on from nineteenth-century paternalism to twentieth-century social policies” (172). Shields and McBride argue in *Dismantling a Nation* that the “genius of Keynes was his ability to devise a technical solution to the crisis of capitalism, one that sanctioned a measured degree of government intervention while maintaining market dominance” (37).

³⁴ This argument is confirmed in the interviews I conducted with small- and micro-sized publishers in Canada (see chapter five). The interviews are discussed in chapter five and documented in the appendices.

³⁵ It seems that at McClelland & Stewart, BPIDP contributions must be used for operations that fall under the authority of the University of Toronto-owned part of the press. BPIDP support for publishers “must be used for operational activities such as editing, marketing and printing, and for payment of author royalties” (Heritage, *Final Report*). Still, in the end at least some form of indirect governmental/Heritage support also goes to Random House.

Chapter 4

Globalization's Allochronic "other"

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere. The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country...In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations...The bourgeoisie compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst...In a word, it creates a world after its own image. (Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" 474-77)

The account Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels gave in 1848 of what is now commonly called globalization in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" might have seemed unrealistic in their day, but it renders a compelling depiction of the world as it is currently constructed by many economists, social scientists, and scholars of the humanities in the Western world. Theorists as diverse as Immanuel Wallerstein, Francis Fukuyama, Marshall McLuhan, and Milton Friedman have portrayed today's world as a "single place" of unbounded capitalism, built on Western or rather U.S. economic, cultural, and technological dominance. Perpetuating the notion that there is only one single and universally-applicable model of capitalism – the Western model – they have in significant ways enforced the grand narrative of universal modernity. The latter reduces historically-constituted differences between places to the binary opposition of the progressive Western world and the belated non-Western world, which tries to catch up with the Western vanguard and lives by its universal time regime called Greenwich Mean Time.¹ Imre Szeman notes in "Globalization" that what has given this Western-centric, totalizing discourse of globalization much of its rhetorical power "is its function as a periodizing term, that is, as the name for the 'natural' economic and political order existing at the 'end of history'" (211).

More recently, counter-voices to this narrative of globalization as a uniform, Western-led, and historically inevitable movement have been growing. Critics such as Lawrence Grossberg, Stuart Hall, Roland Robertson, and Arif Dirlik have variously demonstrated that contemporary processes of globalization are characterized by contradiction, disorder, conflict, and unpredictability. Today's local/global relationships are highly complicated and uneven processes "in which homogenizing and heterogenizing tendencies are mutually implicative" (Robertson, "Glocalization"

27). These processes have created volatile divisions and rivalries which follow their own dispersed logics. As Thomas Peyser puts it, “[g]lobalization is not the clamping down of a static Western system upon all regions of the globe, but rather the replication of a Western-style *dynamic* whose effects are impossible to predict” (259). Szeman similarly remarks that even though “globalization may be seen as the continuation and strengthening of Western imperialist relations” (“Globalization” 214), the forms of imperialist power have changed – as new nation-states have been formed and old ones fallen apart, as nation-state sovereignty declines or reshapes, as transnational alliances have been strengthening with the explosion of global communication technologies, as corporations downsize and outsource, as national legislatures and policies are increasingly pressured by what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call monarchic political powers (e.g. the WTO, IMF, World Bank) to conform to American-style principles of trade, ownership, intellectual property, and so on. The present dynamics of global power are “at one and the same time centered in the United States [as the only “superpower”] and supra- or trans-national, dispersed into fully deterritorialized logics and circuits of power” (214). Moreover, as Paul Smith notes in *Millennial Dreams: Contemporary Culture and Capital in the North*, “[t]he narrative march toward the overcoming of time and space is cut through by the fact that the divisions established by time and space are themselves made more acute in actuality. Not only does the North-South divide of the Enlightenment narrative about space still exist, but now in the millennial moment it looks even deeper and wider” (14). The celebratory rhetoric of life at the end of history and the actuality of time and space divisions form a sharp contrast.

Contributing to this critical debate around the contradictory and contingent nature of contemporary processes of globalization, this chapter sets out to expose the failures of and to explore alternatives to the rhetoric of “isochronic” (Greek, the property of keeping the same time or equal intervals) time that shapes Western-centric globalization discourse and constitutes a powerful vehicle of neoliberal ideology. As Szeman notes in “Belated or Isochronic? Canadian Writing, Time, and Globalization,” the image of an isochronic world “in which everything happens at the same time” conjures away not only the contradictions created by imperialist capitalism but also those “created by an intensified neoliberal capitalism that has in fact deepened the divide between North and South, the West and the rest” (150). It builds on the binary opposition of Western vanguardism and non-Western belatedness, thus constructing the non-West as the belated Other of vanguardist Western modernity, which, in its current neoliberal form, flaunts the ideal of a liberalized market whose global progression will lead the world on its path to ultimate perfectibility. In this chapter, I analyze narratives that reconfigure this rhetoric of an isochronic world by means of allochronic (Greek *allos*, other) counter-time. In other words, the chapter explores the potential of “allochronic”

globalization narratives that defy the rhetoric of an “isochronic” world dominated by the vanguardist time scheme of Western modernity. More precisely, I will examine the challenges the allochronic positions of Ethiopian-Canadian writer Nega Mezlekia and the Aboriginal-Canadian writers Thomas King and Taiaiake Alfred pose to the totalizing, isochronic claim of a single world-system and to Canada’s concurrent claim that its literature and standing as a country be recognized as “really” Western isochronic. As indicated in chapter two, with this choice of theme and authors/texts, I also seek to methodologically probe the encounter between traditional English and English-Canadian literary studies, postcolonial studies, indigenous studies, and cultural studies – i.e. the practice of materialist literary study of globalization as a site of what Len Findlay calls “interdisciplining.”

King and Alfred’s expositions of Aboriginal life in Canada, presented in King’s novel *Truth & Bright Water* and “Borders” story and in Alfred’s critical essay *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, and Mezlekia’s autobiographical account of Ethiopia’s more recent history in *Notes from the Hyena’s Belly: Memories of My Ethiopian Childhood* demonstrate that processes of globalization are constituted by multiple, competing, differently-timed, and historically-conditioned modernities and capitalisms. *Notes from the Hyena’s Belly* complicates the binary opposition of first world vanguardist progress and third world belatedness by depicting Ethiopia as a country in which several historically specific capitalisms, modernities, and colonialisms have intersected in highly conflictual and asymmetrical ways. Written and first published in Canada, the book displays the ambivalence of an allochronic narrative written against and within the framework of isochronic normativity. One instance that has highlighted this ambivalence and will be discussed below is the controversy around the book’s authorship that took place in Canada after the Governor General’s Awards ceremony in November 2000. King’s fictional narratives and Alfred’s critical essay add an important dimension to Mezlekia’s allochronic stance. They reveal that the poly-centredness of contemporary capitalism, modernity, and colonialism is not merely characteristic of third and first world relations but also of Aboriginal-state relations within first world countries such as Canada. Their texts’ dealings with Aboriginal contemporaneity comprise an important and frequently ignored challenge to Canada’s subscription to the isochronic discourse of neoliberal globalization.

This challenge is also directed at the complicities of literary and cultural critics in Canada. In the last part of the chapter, I foreground the significance of King, Alfred, and Mezlekia’s allochronic narratives and positions for the literary study of globalization. I will argue that instead of following Frye’s or A.J.M. Smith’s aspiration for a cosmopolitan Canadian literature that is “really” Western isochronic, as contemporary Canadian literary critics we need to unearth and scrutinize a key reason for this desire: our anxiety, which we share with Frye and Smith, about

Canada's belatedness as a Western country. We need to become cognizant of (the meaning of) our complicities with the discourse of isochronic globalization that this anxiety entails – complicities that are highlighted not only in our dominant notions of what constitutes a “good” writer and “good” literature but also by the fact that these notions frequently function “in the gray areas of seemingly obvious facts and common sense” (Amin viii). In opposition to the isochronic ideal of a mature and globally competitive Canadian literature, the study of Mezlekia, King, and Alfred's allochronic globalization narratives undertaken in this chapter emphasizes the usefulness of retaining a positive notion of the belatedness of Canada and its literature. In addition to reminding us “of the social and political bases of our sense of what [literature] is and how we image its relationship to the production of the nation” (Szeman, “Belated or Isochronic?” 152), a positive reevaluation of Canada's belatedness also constitutes a significant source of opposition to what Hardt and Negri call “the unique danger of the present moment of capitalism” (Brown and Szeman 5): the elimination of discussions about social and political alternatives.

Renarrating the isochronic globalization script

Taking apart left discussions that gloomily define globalization as an all-encompassing, inevitable penetration of non-Western resources and market frontiers, J. K. Gibson-Graham argues in “Querying Globalization” that the danger of such an interpretation lies in the normalization of the act of Western invasion. The consequence of this normalization is a blind acceptance of the Western globalization script – the script being “a series of steps and signals’ whose course and ending is not set” (4-5) – as self-evident, void of alternatives. Gibson-Graham characterizes this Western-centric globalization script by comparing it with what the essay calls “the standardized rape script.” The essay denounces this script for proceeding on the false assumption that “men are naturally stronger than women, and...biologically endowed with the strength to commit rape”; that “women are naturally weaker than men” and thus cannot physically stop the act of rape (5). The acceptance of biological weakness makes women fearfully acquiesce in the actuality of rape. In the standardized Western globalization script, capitalism, like the man in the rape script, is assumed to be naturally stronger than any non-capitalist, non-Western economy. Like the woman in the rape script, the latter is by nature too weak to resist the capitalist invasion to which it fearfully succumbs.

In opposition to the Western globalization script, Gibson-Graham develops a revised script that accounts for the reciprocity of capitalist and non-capitalist flows. “Querying Globalization” sets out to reveal the “cracks and gaps” in the “body” of capitalism that show that the latter is not merely a masculinist, isochronic “body” but also the (feminized) object of “penetration” (7). The text uses the example of family-based Mexican farms that operate on money acquired from seasonal labor in the U.S.

to unmask the alleged hardness, impermeability, and pervasiveness of the capitalist “body” as fluid and permeable (21). According to Gibson-Graham, this example constitutes an instance of globalization where capital does not only “seep out” and invade non-capitalist forms but where the latter (the family-based Mexican farms) also “seep in” and exploit capitalist economies (the U.S. farming industry). The author asserts that “[w]ere we not bedazzled by images of the superior morphology of global capitalism, it might be possible to theorize...capitalist globalization as coexisting with, and even facilitating, the renewed viability of noncapitalist globalization” (21). The problem I see with this claim of reciprocal “invasion” is its dual notion of capitalism and non-capitalism. I would argue that the family-based Mexican farms described by Gibson-Graham are not non-capitalist but capitalist spaces in the sense that they evolve from and depend on processes of capitalist exchange between the U.S. and Mexico, i.e. the exploitation of unskilled and often illegal Mexican labor power. They reveal a specific dimension of capitalism and thus give evidence to Hardt and Negri’s claim that “radically different formations and relations are subsumed under and even produced by capital” (Brown and Szeman 186).

Hardt and Negri emphasize in *Empire* that “[e]ven zones of the world that are effectively excluded from capital’s financial and commodity flows – parts of sub-Saharan Africa are certainly excluded in this way – are nonetheless controlled within the dynamics of capital’s control” (186). As Dirlik puts it in “Globalization as the End and the Beginning of History: The Contradictory Implications of a New Paradigm,” “globalization is incomprehensible without reference to the global victory of capitalism” (11). “The world may be reconfigured, but the reconfiguration takes place under the regime of capitalism” (12-13), which is now poly-centric and “continues to reproduce under new circumstances, and in new forms, the inequalities built into its structuring of the world” (13). Dirlik describes contemporary capitalism as “‘pan-capitalism,’ a conglomeration of capitalisms based on variant social and cultural repertoires...subject to internal competitions and reconfigurations... rather than a Global Capitalism that is homogeneous in its practices” (28-29). Accordingly, one might argue that Gibson-Graham’s example does not illustrate the reciprocity between capitalist and non-capitalist productive modes but, rather, the multi-dimensional and often contradictory nature of capitalism (i.e. Marx’s thesis that capitalism advances on contradictory terms). This rereading of Gibson-Graham’s revised globalization script makes clear that the project of formulating an alternative, non-isochronic globalization script must move beyond dual notions of capitalism and non-capitalism toward the recognition that contemporary capitalism is constituted by multiple capitalisms and modernities. For critical theorists of globalization it is hence a matter of abandoning the search for an “outside” of

capitalism (that does not exist) and constructing alternative subjectivities and ways of life from within. Dirlik argues that

[f]rom a temporal perspective, it [contemporary globalization] is at once an end and a beginning. An end, because it is indeed the culmination of a historical process in which EuroAmerican expansion over the globe (not just materially but also culturally) played a crucial part...The very appropriation of the globe for EuroAmerica brought into scope of globalization the differences that mark the globe...different claims on history...In this sense, globalization is also a new beginning...We have all been touched by modernity, but we have been touched differently" (47).

In fact, with the rise of globalization studies in Western academia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the notion of "multiple modernities" has gained increased critical currency, especially in the social sciences, with scholars such as S.N. Eisenstadt, Jean and John Comaroff, and Anthony Giddens.² These critics emphasize that globalization generates multiple modernities, diffused on a global scale in highly conflictual and asymmetrical ways, rather than a uniform Westernized logic of modernization.³ In the field of postcolonial studies, Paul Gilroy's metaphor of the "black Atlantic," E. K. Brathwaite's concept of creolization, and C.L.R. James's idea of Caribbean federation constitute some of the more prominent manifestations of alternative, non-Western modernities engendered by, but not reducible to the experience of Western colonialism. These modernities cannot be lessened to mere imitations or copies of the "primary" and "authentic" Western model; they have a life and logic of their own and they exhibit both convergences and divergences. According to Eisenstadt, what we are experiencing today is not "the end of history" in the sense of "an end of ideological confrontational clashes between different cultural programs of modernity" (23). We are neither living through the end of the universalist program of modernity nor are we confronting what Samuel Huntington describes as a "clash of civilizations" between the West and Islamic/Confucian groupings. While there may be no outside of modernity, just as there is no outside of capitalism, there nonetheless is a "continual reinterpretation of the cultural program of modernity...the continual development of multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt 24) – and with it of multiple possibilities for alternatives to the current neoliberal trend of globalization.⁴

Challenging the Eurocentric notion of isochronic temporality in "Belated or Isochronic?," Szeman repositions the anthropological concept of allochronism within the current context of globalization. Introduced by Johannes Fabian in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, the term allochronism constitutes a radical critique of Western anthropology's exclusion of non-Western cultures from modernity's isochronic normativity. Fabian critiques Western anthropologists for

denying to non-Western cultures contemporaneity with the West, thus imposing on them an allochronic “Other” time scheme that distances the observed “Other” from the vanguardist time of the Western observer (*Time and the Other* 25, 143). He directs his rebuke at traditional European ethnography and natural science whose study of the exotic “Other” normalizes the “Other” society, codifies its differences from Western society, and fixes the ethnographer and natural scientist in a timeless present of normative description. The “Other” is contained in a temporal order of belatedness and primitivism, which affirms EuroAmerican developments as vanguardist and ascribes to all “Other” developments a sense of “arriving too late on the historical scene, at the end of a Western modernity that ha[s] completely mapped out the global landscape in advance” (Szeman, “Belated or Isochronic” 188). Fabian uses the phrases “denial of coevalness” and “imposition of allochronism” to refer to this temporal distancing and fixation. Szeman’s recontextualized discussion of allochronism⁵ takes Fabian’s critique a step further by intimating the positive potential of allochrony. Conceptualizing allochronism as the positive “other” of contemporaneity with the West – not “Other” in the sense of “outside” isochronic time but “other” in the sense of “inside” with a radical resistant and alternative potential – Szeman builds on the allochronic “other’s” agency. He suggests that it is in this agency that challenges to the discourse of isochronic modernity need to be located.

In *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, Néstor García Canclini makes a similar argument from a contemporary Latin American perspective, albeit without expressly using the terms “allochronic” and “isochronic.” *Hybrid Cultures* emphasizes the importance of belatedness in Latin American modernity, the latent oppositionality of the latter’s hybrid, both modern and traditional nature. In the introduction to *Hybrid Cultures*, García Canclini states that “the first hypothesis of this book is that the *uncertainty* about the meaning and value of modernity derives not only from what separates nations, ethnic groups, and classes but also from sociocultural hybrids in which the traditional and the modern are mixed⁶... We doubt that the primary objective should be to modernize us, as politicians, economists and the publicity of new technology proclaim” (1-2). This passage not only maintains that in Latin America the different temporalities of the traditional and modern coexist and grapple, but that the Western isochronic scripts of modernity and globalization are changeable and, indeed, become transformed and hybridized whenever they are inserted in a specific regional or local context. García Canclini’s model of global modernity asserts the hybrid experience as the new “central” global experience. While this reclaiming of a hybrid “center” is problematic in its creation of new centers and peripheries of power and its negligence of the many ways in which prevailing hegemonic structures are refigured in processes of hybridization,⁷ García Canclini’s concomitant reclaiming of allochronic agency is crucial in that it exposes

the bankruptcy of the Western-centric isochronic binary of vanguardist-active Self and belated-passive, imitative Other.

***Notes from the Hyena's Belly's* allochronic agency and the Canadian media**

Notes from the Hyena's Belly, Mezlekia's autobiographical account of Ethiopia's recent history, offers a literary example of such allochronic agency. The narrative depicts globalization as a phenomenon that, in Ethiopia, has been driven by poly-centric and highly conflictual processes of capitalism, modernity, and colonialism. It exposes inhumane violence and environmental devastation in Ethiopia as a consequence of the coexisting and competing ambitions of Western modernity and elitist-Ethiopian modernity. Influenced by his extended visits to Western countries between the 1920s and 1940s, Ethiopia's emperor Haile Selassie set out on a modernization course for his country that would recontextualize and rival the EuroAmerican model.⁸ As Mezlekia's narrative demonstrates, this rivalry intensified the already tense divide between Ethiopia's ruling-aristocratic elite and the common people. In *Notes from the Hyena's Belly*, the narrator's movement from a quasi innocent, peaceful childhood to a traumatized, "bloodstained" adulthood coincides with the devolution of Selassie's modernist ideals for Ethiopia (ideals of technological innovation, membership in the humanitarian and capitalist world community, and African Unity) into devastating reality. Mezlekia's account of the disastrous famine in the Ethiopian lowlands in 1973 denounces Selassie's government for its mismanagement and environmental destruction in the name of "progress" (e.g. the "progress" of mono-crop farming methods). Moreover, it draws attention to the fact that the famine could have been prevented by fairly distributing the surplus harvested in Ethiopia's highlands during the years of severe drought in the lowlands. However, the surplus harvest, "to the astonishment of the Devil himself, was being sent out of the country" (*Notes from the Hyena's Belly* 122) and thus transformed into economic capital by the politically-powerful and land-owning aristocracy. The famine threw into sharp light what had been a looming reality for some time: Combined with Selassie's ideals of Ethiopian modernity, the country's ancient system of land tenancy and heavy taxation deprived the tenant farmers and the common people of income and food necessary for survival.

At the same time that the narrative exposes the destructive failures of Selassie's project of Ethiopian modernization, it also pronounces upon the West's share in Ethiopia's problems. Mezlekia inserts his depictions of the famine and of the rule of Selassie and the subsequent military junta under Mengistu Haile Mariam into a global context of unequal power structures and (neo-)imperialist self-interest. The Ethiopia of *Notes from the Hyena's Belly* is not located outside of Western modernity and its isochronic ideology but constitutes one of the many third world battlegrounds of EuroAmerican, Soviet, Arabic, and domestic capitalist-imperialist

forces. The narrative exposes Ethiopia's ethnic conflicts as historical, ideological, and economic struggles carried out on Ethiopian territory between the competing narratives of EuroAmerican capitalism, Soviet communism, and Arabic and Amharic colonialism. In the country's struggle against Muslim invasion at the turn of the twentieth century, "the Italians [having tried to take over Eritrea and Ethiopia without success] obliged by lending him [the Amhara Emperor Menelik II who reigned from 1889-1913] four million francs...They also granted him armament [which] was meant to be used to subjugate the Muslims occupying the lowlands" (*Notes from the Hyena's Belly* 196-97). When Haile Selassie took over the throne in 1930, Ethiopia was surrounded by Italian, British, and French colonies and pressured by Italian colonial ambitions, which in 1935 mounted an invasion that disregarded Ethiopia's official protection from Western colonization through its membership in the League of Nations. Likewise, over forty years later, in the 1974 coup led by the military junta against the government of Haile Selassie, "the usual sponsors of war in Africa [were taking] sides: the Soviets were backing the military junta; the Arabs were arming the Eritreans...and the Americans were preparing the deposed feudal lords to return to power" (150). When recounting the war situation of 1977, Mezlekia brings the absurdity of this ideological-economic power play to full light: "Americans hate communism and fight it by supporting other communists [in this case the Somalis]....The Soviets didn't see any contradictions in arming both sides. After all, both Somalia and Ethiopia were socialist rookies, so the aid was obviously advancing the cause of socialism" (203, 205).

Besides complicating the Western-centric script of isochronic modernity, *Notes from the Hyena's Belly* also challenges the understanding of colonialism as an exclusively Western phenomenon.⁹ As Mezlekia notes, "many of the present-day Somali problems have their root in the European scramble for African territories, *not to mention Ethiopia's own imperial ambitions*" (194-95, emphasis added). Already in his boyhood, Mezlekia is made aware of his ethnically and socially privileged status as an Amhara, a member of the leading ethnic group in Ethiopia at the time. His father's work as government administrator in the colonized Ogaden region in southeastern Ethiopia brings Mezlekia's family in direct contact with one of the many ethnic groups colonized by the Amhara, Ogaden's predominantly Somali population. At one point in the narrative, Mezlekia mentions that he and his siblings "are always warned, before going to the market, of the harm that may come [their] way because the Somali are not yet convinced that [the Amharas] are there to civilize them" (133). In the Ethiopia of Mezlekia's childhood and adolescence, Western colonialist aspirations coexist and grapple with the Amharic elite's own colonial ambitions towards Eritrea, Somalia, and the many ethnic groups which have been incorporated into the present nation of Ethiopia. *Notes from the Hyena's Belly* clearly shows that for

the ethnically diverse Ethiopian and Somalian people the colonial ambitions of the leading Amharas were more immanent and salient than were those of Britain or Italy.

This does not mean, however, that the text disclaims the vigor of the Western capitalist system and its isochronic ideology. Rather, it elucidates the latter's incapacity to grasp today's complex workings of globalization by means of binaries of tradition/ modernity, feudalism or non-capitalism/capitalism, and colonizer/colonized. Mezele's text manifests that there are more useful and accurate non-binarist (i.e. allochronic) ways of perceiving the world. The authorship controversy that accompanied *Notes from the Hyena's Belly's* winning of the Governor General's Award for non-fiction in 2000 represents an instance in which this allochronic, non-binarist perspective clashes with isochronic, binarist assumptions. While media responses for the most part lauded *Notes from the Hyena's Belly*, they anxiously choked speculations of collaborative authorship between Mezele and Anne Stone.¹⁰ After the memoir won the Governor General's Award, Stone, herself a writer, came out in the media with the claim that she had worked together with Mezele on an early version of the manuscript for four years and had written all but twenty pages of the draft that went to Mezele's publisher Penguin Canada. Stone further claimed that Mezele had promised to acknowledge her as editor of the book, a promise he never fulfilled (see Dinitia Smith's coverage in *The New York Times*). In the course of the ensuing authorship controversy, she revealed letters in which Mezele threatened and insulted her, with the consequence that Mezele filed a libel suit against her and her publisher. Since then, the whole issue has gradually disappeared from the media.

The questions that arise from this are: Why was the Canadian media so anxious to dismiss the possibility of an author-collaboration between Mezele and Stone? What would it have meant to admit of this possibility? It would have meant to admit a form of authorship that blurs isochronism's separation of Westerners and non-Westerners, Northerners and Southerners, native and foreign English writers. It would also have meant to redirect Noah Richler's accusation of "the long history of Mezele's obsession with the idea of authorship" ("Real Author?") towards the Canadian media to which Richler belonged as then-literary editor of *The National Post*. According to the rules of the isochronic globalization script, Stone cannot be co-author of Mezele's "exotic" memoir. She is a "native" and "serious" EuroCanadian writer and as such has to fit into the dominant principles of literary taste and judgement that legitimize her writerly position as "naturally" superior (more sophisticated, aesthetically appealing, mature) to Mezele's exotic-inferior style and language. Only the "foreigner" Mezele can thus be author, that is, sole author of the memoir commonly characterized in the media as bedazzling, richly descriptive, linguistically anachronistic, grammatically awkward, and exotically authentic. Stone is the Western editor-helper, Mezele the non-Western author-helped. In an interview

with Richler, Stone actually described her relationship with Mezlekia as a therapist-patient relationship that helped the latter to find a way to channel his confusion, anger, and trauma into writing (Richler, "Real Author?"). In an attempt to normalize the Stone-Mezlekia authorship controversy as one of many conflicts between authors and editors, *The Montreal Gazette's* Paul Gessell vouched that "many authors, especially those writing in a second language, solicit professional help of this sort, even before submitting a manuscript to a publisher." Marni Jackson of the *Globe and Mail* reinserted the situation into isochronic normality by making a somewhat odd comparison between a birthing cow/vet and birthing author/editor relationship. What each one of these coverages of the Mezlekia-Stone case engaged in (purposely or not) is an isochronic process of denying a differently-timed, hybridizing interaction between the vanguardist Western Self and the belated non-Western Other, between the Western helper-editor and non-Western helped-writer.

An examination of Mezlekia's own refusal to share the authorship of his story with Stone is a delicate endeavor. His defense of the sole authorship of his memoir, whose fierceness might have offended "our" Canadian sensibilities and social-cultural norms (or at least Richler's; see his "So Just Who Is the Real Author?"), can be read as a defense of his writerly attempt to recover from the traumatic experiences he went through in the Ethiopia of his adolescence and early adulthood. In light of the text's allochronic perspective of globalization, Mezlekia's refusal of shared authorship takes a twofold meaning. On the one hand, it reads like a refusal of containment in the Eurocentric-isochronic binary of non-Western helped/storyteller and Western helper/editor. On the other hand, it tells the story of a man, who in the nearly two decades that he has lived in Canada, has been interpellated by some of that society's Eurocentric-isochronic thinking. The "Canadian" student¹¹ and writer Mezlekia has been inserted in a discourse of symbolic and material capital exchange that staunchly holds onto the myth of the author as sole creator and owner of the private property of the book (in the form of a Ph.D. thesis or a literary work). His anxieties about authorship are to some extent social and economic anxieties that he shares with the media, the literary field of production, and the academic institution in Canada and in Western societies more generally. Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi point out in the introduction to their essay collection *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* that it was material considerations (e.g. issues of copyright, royalty, contracts with publishers, ownership of the private property "book," etc.) that led nineteenth century writers such as Wordsworth and Coleridge to fight for an understanding of authorship in solitary, romanticist terms.¹² These material considerations played a crucial role in the establishment of the modern regime of authorship built on the notion of the originary genius-proprietor. As the Stone-Mezlekia case indicates, in the complex network of contemporary relations between writers, editors, publishers,

media outlets, and award juries, each party involved is interested in investing its (aesthetic, social, economic, cultural, intellectual) capital in such a way as to derive maximum profit from participation. For a writer, this (most commonly) means to assert single authorship.

The allochronic agency of Aboriginal globalization scripts

While Mezlekia's memoir and authorship dispute upset isochronic assumptions from the perspective of third world and first world relations, the very presence and anti-colonial resistance of Aboriginal peoples in invader-settler countries such as Canada – a presence and resistance which successive colonial governments have attempted to legislate “out of existence” (Dickason 14) – threatens and complicates this narrative from within the West. Especially since the civil rights and “Red Power” movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Aboriginal challenges to the Western isochronic discourse of modernity have multiplied in Canada and elsewhere.¹³ In the Canadian context, Howard Adams, Jeannette Armstrong, Maria Campbell, Armand Ruffo, Olive Dickason, Taiaiake Alfred, Thomas King, James Henderson, and many others have reclaimed their peoples' heterogeneous histories, voices, and traditions. To use Gibson-Graham's analogy of the rape script, they have committed their writing to exposing the cracks in the EuroCanadian rape script of colonization and globalization, which constructs Aboriginal peoples as “naturally” inferior and thus incapable to stop the colonizer's rape. Refuting the EuroCanadian colonizer's imposed image of the belated and homogenous Aboriginal “Other,” they have asserted positive positions of allochronic contemporaneity. As Henderson maintains in “*Ayukpachi: Empowering Aboriginal Thought*,” Aboriginal peoples in Canada are no longer willing to serve EuroCanadians “as a self-congratulatory reference point against which Eurocentric society measure[s] its own progressive historical evolution” (254).

In King's novel *Truth & Bright Water*, the Aboriginal trickster-artist Monroe Swimmer uses his art as a venue of decolonization and healing that has real life effects. He paints away the church (missionization) near the town of Truth by blending it into the landscape and, by the end of the novel, moves on to his next project of painting away a former residential school. By painting the church “so that it blends in with the prairies and the sky” (*Truth* 43), Swimmer layers traditional spirituality over the church/colonization. Similarly, he entreats the buffalo to return to the prairies by nailing iron buffaloes into the landscape around the church, using the same technique the colonizers used when laying the railroad tracks for the Trans-Canada Railway (132). His art creates new myths and meanings that adapt old traditions to the current realities of Aboriginal life. Art is a life-giving process: it revives old traditions by cross-pollinating them with current realities. King's own narrative is comparable to Monroe's art in this respect. Inspired by King's

connectedness to Aboriginal tradition, *Truth & Bright Water* is nonetheless set in the contemporaneity of Aboriginal life. The novel's many references to contemporary popular culture and cultural commodification make any nostalgic conjuration of traditional Aboriginality impossible. Swimmer and the novel's protagonist Tecumseh might initiate a traditional honor ceremony in order to celebrate the return of the (iron) buffalo to the prairies, but the music they chose for the ceremony is the popular title song from the American musical *Oklahoma!* (132). This manifestation of allochronic contemporaneity demystifies the Eurocentric image of "true" Aboriginal life mired in an authentic past constructed by colonial desire. Like Swimmer's art, King's fictional account constitutes a challenge to the EuroCanadian practice of dehistoricizing and mystifying Aboriginal history, a practice which has provided historians, politicians, and academics with a powerful isochronic instrument and legitimizer of colonization.

In "Always Indigenize! The Radical Humanities in the Postcolonial Canadian University," Findlay maintains that Canadian universities have participated in the continued colonization of Aboriginal peoples, especially through the academic fictions of *terra nullius* and scientific objectivity (310). To go along with the isochronic narrative of the unchanging, prehistoric Native Indian,¹⁴ the land Aboriginal peoples had lived on for thousands of years was conjured as both *terra nullius* (empty, uninhabited land; untamed, unoccupied wilderness) and *terra incognita* (unknown land that can be claimed). Findlay wants his exclamation "Always Indigenize!" to be heard by contemporary Canadian critics "as a strategically indeterminate provocation to thought and action on the ground that there is...no real or imagined *terra nullius* free from the satisfactions and unsettlements of Indigenous (pre)occupation" (309). This implies "rewriting and rereighting" (309) the profound impact some of Canada's most influential twentieth-century writers and literary theorists, including Northrop Frye and Stephen Leacock, had with their fictions of *terra nullius*. Frye's mythologized image of Canada as the hostile, empty, lonely land denied the existence of the Native Canadian whom Frye reverted to a prehistorical time long past. Analogous to Frye, Leacock asserted in *Canada: The Foundations of Its Future* that "the continent remained, as it had been for uncounted centuries, empty. We think of prehistoric North America as inhabited by the Indians...But this attitude is hardly warranted. The Indians were too few to count. Their use of the resources of the continent was scarcely more than that by crows and wolves, their development of it nothing" (19).

Analyzing the continuation of this discourse in contemporary Canadian legislation and historiography in "Towards a Détente with History: Confronting Canada's Colonial Legacy," Joyce Green describes European justifications of colonial land theft as a narrative of what I call isochronic colonial globalization. She notes that "[c]olonial land theft was legitimized by the construction of paradigms explaining Aboriginal social, political and cultural development as deficient (now,

‘different’) therefore making ‘them’ incapable of...resisting the civilizing, modernizing impulse of colonial domination” (89). According to European historical accounts, colonial land theft and colonization more generally took place in the service of progress and civilization. On the scale of evolutionary progression of human development, Europeans saw themselves as clearly superior and asserted that “the more ‘advanced’ society is entitled to claim political supremacy which benefits the ‘primitive’ [stagnant and unchanging] societies with accelerated development” (90). Instituted in 1879 by then-Prime Minister John Macdonald, post-Confederation “National Policy” was dependent upon Aboriginal land (theft) in order to build a transcontinental railway, settle western Canada, and exploit profitable resources. Moreover, it was dependent upon the appropriation and homogenization of Aboriginal peoples’ cultural customs and expressions, which came to serve as a vehicle of resistance against the imperial center, England. As Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson point out in *Paddling Her Own Canoe: The Times and Texts of E. Pauline Johnson*, cultural colonization became instrumental in the assertion of a unique postcolonial AngloCanadian literature, distinct from British literature in its theme of Aboriginal-Canadian encounter. Moreover, the nineteenth century Herderian notion that national identity should be rooted in an indigenous folk culture made AngloCanadian settlers search within Aboriginal cultures for “local equivalents of the Classical and Celtic underpinnings of Anglo-European literature” (Strong-Boag and Gerson 120). As Rick Monture points out in “‘Beneath the British Flag’: Iroquois and Canadian Nationalism in the Work of Pauline Johnson and Duncan Campbell Scott,” the “Aboriginal theme” was not only helpful in distinguishing Canada from imperial England but also from the United States. Considered “the highest aboriginal type” (122) and most loyal ally of the Crown, the Iroquois or Six Nations were seen as especially suited to represent to the U.S. what was unique about Canada’s national identity.

Aboriginal writers and critics such as Howard Adams, Greg Young-Ing, Kimberly Blaeser, and Beth Brant have argued that though some non-Aboriginal literary critics must be credited with increasing the academic recognition of Aboriginal writing in recent years, this recognition has led to the creation of a school of mostly non-Aboriginal experts on Aboriginal literature. “[U]ltimately blocking-out the Aboriginal Voice” (Young-Ing 182), this margin-center correlation between Aboriginal voice and literary studies validates Aboriginal literature “by its demonstrated adherence to a respected literary mode, dynamic or style” (Blaeser 56). This quotation from Blaeser’s “Native Literature: Seeking a Critical Center” is evocative of the authorship dispute around Mezlekia’s *Notes from the Hyena’s Belly*, an incident that highlighted the extent to which the Canadian media continue to be mired in Eurocentric standards of what constitutes a “real” or “good” (Canadian) writer. Like ethnic minority writing (e.g. Mezlekia’s text), Aboriginal writing in

Canada has tended to be abased as “unsophisticated,” “immature,” “anachronistic,” and thus unable to fulfil the isochronic Eurocentric norm of progressive, (post)modern, and internationally competitive Canadian literature. Young-Ing remarks that even today, the fictive works of Aboriginal writers tend to be shelved in the “Native Studies” sections and not in the “Literature” sections of Canadian bookstores, “as if they are not legitimate literature” (185).¹⁵ The racialized label “Native” diminishes or precludes the literary authority of a text written by an Aboriginal author.

Asserting that “we go against what has been considered ‘literature’...[and] are moving outside the mainstream and dominant prescriptions of what constitutes good writing” (8), Brant gives a positive, oppositional meaning to the fact that only few Aboriginal writers are taught and studied in Canadian universities and reviewed in literary journals. This kind of assertion has been variously made by Aboriginal literary critics reclaiming control of Aboriginal stories and images – e.g. in essay collections such as *Looking at the Words of our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature* (edited by Armstrong) and *(Ad)dressing Our Words: Aboriginal Perspectives on Aboriginal Literatures* (edited by Ruffo). Using King’s idea of an “interfusional” critical language for Aboriginal literature, i.e. a language that is “a stylistic and thematic hybrid of the oral and the written...the Aboriginal and the Western” (Ruffo 7),¹⁶ Ruffo emphasizes that Aboriginal literary criticism does not discount Western literary theory *per se*. Rather, it uses the latter “where applicable and in the context of Indigenous ways of knowledge” (8).¹⁷ Ruffo insists that the Western tradition of literary criticism is not the only, all-applicable, universal approach to texts; as soon as such a claim is made, Western literary criticism becomes colonizing.

Alfred makes a similar argument in *Peace, Power, Righteousness* when commenting on the problems of political and juridical interaction between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state. He denounces the strategy, common among Aboriginal communities, of repositioning Aboriginal land claims or claims of self-determination within the existing EuroCanadian legal and political framework. This framework is largely regulated by the EuroCanadian institutional matrix of the *Indian Act*, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), and the elective band council system. According to Alfred, “[t]o argue on behalf of indigenous nationhood [or self-determination] within the dominant Western paradigm is self-defeating” (58), since the argument remains caught in the legal and structural confines of the still-colonial state structure of Canada. The insertion of Aboriginal perspectives and claims into the dominant Canadian political and legal framework assimilates and thus neutralizes dissenting Aboriginal voices. On the contrary, an efficient Aboriginal politics of decolonization “resurrect[s] a form of indigenous nationhood (a traditional objective),” which in legal terms means “the existence of the indigenous right to self-determination” (99). It is reoriented towards

traditional cultural values, social organization, and political governance. Alfred insists that it does not suffice for Aboriginal people(s) to have access to particular EuroCanadian places of power and decision-making (such as band councils, parliament, governmental agencies, legal institutions, and universities) but to have a form of access and belonging that empowers them to enact their traditional forms of governance and decision-making as well as their traditional knowledges, values, and belief-systems.¹⁸

So does King, though in an entertainingly humorous way. King's fictional account, in *Truth & Bright Water*, of the corruptedness of Bright Water's band council exposes the insufficiencies of the liberal model of representative democracy, its inaptness as a model for Aboriginal governance. During a public band council meeting on the future of Bright Water's RV park, three members of the reserve call for the closure of the park, a request upon which the council thanks the three claimants and then "vote[s] to add twenty new parking pads to Happy Trails [the trailer park]" (100). Bright Water's band council furthermore makes money off turning the reserve into a government-sponsored garbage dump (the official name being "landfill development project") for Western consumer waste, i.e. the waste of progress, of the isochronic globalization project.¹⁹ The river between Truth and Bright Water is littered with hospital waste, empty beer cans and packages of cigarettes, styrofoam cups, popsicle sticks, and other kinds of garbage. These manifestations of contemporary Aboriginal life not only displace stereotyped Western assumptions that Aboriginal people are more primitive, nature-bound people with an inherent, biological connection to the earth. They also highlight the artificiality of the Western-centric, isochronic-neoliberal salvation narrative of global democratization, of bringing happiness and progress via Western democracy to a backwards, unchanging Aboriginal people, an oppressed Iraqi people, an outdated Ethiopian monarchy, a guerilla-infested, corrupted Latin America, and so on. King's and Alfred's accounts of the still-colonial nature of contemporary Aboriginal-state relations emphasize that Aboriginal agency should mean something else than Aboriginal participation in liberal democratic publics. It should involve a form of Aboriginal empowerment that works through the recovery of traditional knowledges and systems of social and political order. This process of recovery inevitably calls into question the whole framework of Canadian state power and agency: its coercive and hegemonic functions, colonial legacies, and repression of the idea of a hybridized multinational state.²⁰

This does not imply that the model of traditionalist Aboriginal self-determination Alfred promotes (and King might insinuate) is separatist but that it denotes the right of Aboriginal peoples to choose their system of governance freely. Alfred clearly emphasizes that "[i]ndigenous peoples do not seek to destroy the [Canadian] state, but to make it more just and to improve their relations with the

mainstream society” (53). He agrees with Atsenhaienton, a traditionalist and international spokesman for the Mohawk (*Kanienkehaka*) people, that “in the realpolitik sense...we [the people of the Six Nations, *Haudenosaunee*] can coexist with the Canadian and American governments without violating our own constitution” (113). The Six Nations tribes living in Canada do not struggle for the creation of an independent state but for the Canadian state to officially recognize the “Two-Row Wampum” treaty or *Kahswentha*. This treaty sees the Six Nations as an independent people within both Canada and the U.S. (112-13).²¹ Alfred asserts that “the time has come to recognize our mutual dependency...to embrace the notion of respectful cooperation on equal terms” (53). The fact that his model of Mohawk self-governance is rooted in a traditional Aboriginal philosophy of government does not preclude its adoption of Western ideas and practices in a way that is compatible with contemporary Aboriginal concerns. Alfred emphasizes that with his conceptual and structural return to traditional governance, he does not want to nurture romantic and nostalgic hopes of returning to an “authentic” pre-European lifeworld but to mediate EuroCanadian and traditional Aboriginal principles and practices towards the best possible society in the contemporary world (29). The return to a traditional perspective is a movement “back” in time and space in order for Aboriginal people to find a path ahead in the here and now. It is an allochronic process of “self-conscious reflection and selective re-adoption of traditional values...that are appropriate to the present social, political, and economic realities” (81).

In the conclusion to *Ethnicity and Aboriginality: Case Studies in Ethnonationalism*, Michael Levin conceptualizes Aboriginal claims such as Alfred’s as ethnonational claims. Levin notes that the “exclusive sovereignty of the [e.g. Canadian] state is questioned in ethnonational claims made by First Nations peoples through the assertion that they are equally ‘nations.’ This claim...is based on precedent, treaties with the Crown, and autonomy prior to colonial intrusions” (169).²² Solutions to ethnonational claims require new notions of the state, such as the notion of the hybridized multinational state brought forth by Alfred, that do not depend on the exclusionary and Eurocentric concept of a “national culture” (177). They require us to remember the specific colonial and romanticist bases of our sense of “national Canadian culture” and to take seriously Grant’s manifestation of the impossibility of the settler-colonial Canadian nation. But more than that, they demand a rethinking of the social and political values and taken-for-granted assumptions that are grounded in these bases and underlie our present notions of “national culture” and of the “Canadian.” As the Aboriginal publisher Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm put it in our interview conversation, “to build a national identity upon such an outright lie [i.e. the pretense that the history, literature, and political and social organization of Canada only began with “discovery”] seems ridiculous to me....Just as we [Aboriginal people] need to re-establish ourselves as nations...we need to do it in terms of our

literature...I see us as equal, or at the same level as Canadian literature not beneath or part of or overwhelmed by or whatever" (see Appendix A). Alfred similarly asserts that "I'm not a Canadian. I don't believe in that. I think that if you're strong in your nation, then that's what you are" (19).²³ Dickason starts the introduction to her Aboriginal history of Canada by asserting that "Canada has fifty-five founding nations" (11). With this assertion, she not only disrupts the official historical narrative of the two European founding "fathers" (France and Britain) but also emphasizes the heterogeneity of Aboriginal cultures and nations in Canada – a heterogeneity that has been frequently misrepresented as a homogeneous Aboriginal presence and incorporated into the cultural nationalist narrative of unique Canadian nationhood and culture.

King's "Borders" story and novel *Truth & Bright Water* add a geopolitical dimension to this issue. Both narratives emphasize that for many Aboriginal people the U.S.-Canadian border is an artificial, arbitrary borderline, a symbol of past and present colonization. "There's Canada...And this is the United States...Ridiculous, isn't it?" (131), exclaims *Truth & Bright Water*'s trickster artist Swimmer. While the border created two new nation-states, it destroyed the geopolitical structure of Aboriginal nations such as the Blackfoot in the prairies, which is where both story and novel are set. The "Borders" story calls into question the European-made U.S.-Canadian borderline that now divides the once-united Blackfoot nation by challenging the absorption of Blackfoot nationhood into the American and Canadian citizenship models. The mother of the story's narrator refuses to accept this imposed citizenship when attempting to cross the Canadian-American border at Coutts, Alberta and Sweet Grass, Montana. Asked by an American border guard to declare her own and her son's citizenship, she answers "Blackfoot" and thus enters into a legal-political quagmire. Neither the American nor the Canadian side let her enter the country as a Blackfoot citizen. For several days, mother and son are trapped – like First Nations denied the right to self-determination and equal nation status within the official Canadian and American discourses of the "nation" – in the space of "country-less-ness" between the two border stations.²⁴ One way in which colonialist attitudes and practices such as these have been justified is by arguing that Aboriginal political systems and values of governance do not fit into the modern isochronic age. (Post)Industrialized societies need a modern state structure to which the pre-modern social order of Aboriginal tribal life has nothing to contribute. As King intimates with the "Borders" story, isochronic myths such as these need to be re-written and re-righted.

Concluding remarks

Seen from the allochronic perspectives explored in this chapter, Marx and Engels' prediction that the Western bourgeoisie "creates a world after its own image"

remains but a Eurocentric prophecy or construct that “assumes that there is only one view of human reality: the ‘self-evident’ superiority of European culture” (Howard Adams, *A Tortured People* 26). It is a construct that is grounded in the Hegelian conception of modernity according to which “modernity is historical, in the sense of progress, history is progress, and if progress stops, history stops and we fall back in a mythic age” (Goldbaek). This is a construct that conspicuously concurs with present-day neo-conservative, neoliberal discourses of isochronic globalization, which aver that, as Alexander Rose puts it in his response to a speech given by George W. Bush in June 2002, “the trend of history heads inevitably and inexorably toward an ultimate goal of perfectibility” that can be found in the only surviving model of human progress: liberal Western democracy and a liberalized, inherently democratic market. Against this “New World Order” discourse of isochronic globalization, allochronic “other” time constitutes an important alternative and challenge. The different allochronic narratives discussed in this chapter describe a world made of multiple, historically-conditioned, and intersecting modernities, capitalisms, and globalization scripts. The allochronic perspectives brought forth by Mezlekia, Alfred, and King are written against and within the framework of neoliberal globalization. They show that the relationship between allochronic and isochronic scripts is marked by clashes, conflicts, and highly asymmetrical power relations, which are legitimized and continuously reproduced by Western-centric narratives of a uniform and one-directional movement of global modernity.

I agree with Gibson-Graham and Hardt and Negri that one of the unique dangers of the isochronic script of globalization is that it imposes itself as self-evident and inevitable. The intellectual’s unique danger in all this is to blindly subscribe to the “rape script” of isochronic globalization in which the complicity of knowledge with isochrony is rewarded with a position of social and cultural privilege (e.g. with a “progressive” academic career). This complicity has led to the incorporation of Aboriginal and non-Western literary expressions into the isochronic norms and aesthetic modes of Canadian literary criticism and canonicity (e.g. the “good” writer, the “masterpiece,” “the author,” and so on). In other words, then, the intellectual’s or literary critic’s unique danger is not to recognize what is at stake in current discussions of globalization: namely its potential to articulate and make public allochronic and other alternatives. Commenting on the need to decolonize the study of Aboriginal literature, King remarks that “I don’t know if Native scholars or non-Native scholars are going to try to develop some kind of a Native-based critical process to look at Native novels...I’d like to think that a Native-based process could happen but I don’t know who’s going to do it” (Andrews 185). According to Findlay, for contemporary English studies in Canada participation in this process of decolonization is crucial. However, he insists on a very specific form of participation, one that constitutes a movement toward “a more concerted activist disciplinarity

which will have at its centre....Indigenously led, strategic interdisciplinarity” (308, 312).

Some of Canada’s key thinkers of the twentieth century – George Grant, Marshall McLuhan, Northrop Frye, Harold Innis – have called attention to Canada’s belatedness as a “nation,” to its coming into being at a moment of global-colonial modernity (see introduction). Frye, for instance, argues in his conclusion to the first edition of the *Literary History of Canada* that Canadian literature, “beginning as it did so late in the cultural history of the West” (835), did not have the chance to develop or mature a unique national form and tradition. Canadian literature thus could be “true” literature only to the extent that it became part of a cosmopolitan, archetypal, Eurocentric world and world literature. Frye’s approach to Canadian literature conspicuously concurs with the isochronic globalization script’s assumption that every place attempts to and eventually will catch up with “ideal” Western modernity. For Frye, there was no possibility of an alternative (non-Eurocentric, non-isochronic) Canadian modernity that would rewrite the story of European literary vanguardism. As chapters two and three have shown, the anxiety about Canada’s belatedness and a matured Canadian literature that can live up to vanguardist standards continues to find expression in contemporary cultural policy, literary criticism, and the media. Echoing Frye and A.J.M. Smith before him, more recent assurances of the coming of age of Canada and its literature (such as Di Brandt’s, William Riggan’s, John Baker’s, Anita Elash’s, and Diana Turbide’s)²⁵ have tended to ignore the crucial ways in which Aboriginal and ethnic minority writings in Canada have complicated the Eurocentric categories of the national and the cosmopolitan/global. Canadian cultural policy-making, especially since the 1950s, has relied on measures of protectionism and interventionism to make up for Canada’s belatedness and smallness in both cultural and economic terms. Cultural “nation-builders” like the Massey Commission and the Department of Canadian Heritage have aspired to develop strong cultural industries that promote the development of a mature, competitive (especially vis-à-vis the U.S.) Canadian national culture. Their approaches and discourses have denied, assimilated, and/or appropriated Aboriginal and ethnic minority cultures in their “obsession” with Canada’s ambivalent, both progressive and belated position within the isochronic globalization script.

This chapter changes the grounds of this discussion in that it maintains that Canada’s belatedness and ambivalence as a Western country opens important sites of alternative modernity and globalization, sites that were deemed impossible or irrelevant by Frye, Grant, McLuhan, and Innis. It points toward the articulation of alternative, allochronic scripts of Canadian modernity and globalization that depart with the isochronic fetish of maturity and progress and bring into play “other” values of societal organization. As the discussion in this chapter makes clear, to maintain Canada’s position as an allochronic or “differently-timed” Western country means to

acknowledge the failures and inaptitudes of the isochronic binary of a homogeneous, modern Western world and homogeneous, backward non-Western world (as third world or Aboriginal world). It elucidates the contemporary reality of multiple modernities, capitalisms, and globalization scripts. Moreover, it displaces the EuroCanadian ideal of a national literature in the Herderian-nationalist sense of the *Volks*-bearing collective. This ideal is replaced by a non-nationalist, Indigenized awareness of Canadian literature as the literature of a society borne in modernity as a result of the isochronic project of European colonialist globalization. Thus, a positive reevaluation of Canada's belatedness is closely related to the question of how we define the function of Canadian literary scholarship at this point in time. More than that, as I argue in the conclusion to this project, it requires the extension of this question to the university and its function as a public sphere, which is increasingly defined in isochronic, neoliberal terms as Canadian universities "aspire to full membership in the ranks of the leading public research universities of the world" (Prichard 44). As I detail in the chapter following this one, the question as to the function of Canadian literary scholarship also brings up the question of what we mean by our claim for an independent Canadian publishing and book industry.

Analyzing instances of regional, multinational, Toronto-based, and small-scale independent publishing, I demonstrate in chapter five that the "national" and the "neoliberal" are neither (perceived as) opposites in the everyday workings of publishers in Canada, nor can they be equated, as is commonly done in cultural nationalist discourse, with "Canadian-owned publishing" and "foreign-owned publishing" or "regional publishing" and "Toronto-based publishing" respectively. Chapter five highlights the fact that the claim for an independent Canadian publishing industry at a time of neoliberal globalization is about a complex multitude of literary and non-literary issues, such as literary-cultural diversity, the state in its public functions, the situation of Aboriginal publishing and literature, the workings of Heritage Canada and its provincial counterparts, the spending of Canadian tax dollars, and the confrontation of dominant values. To reduce this claim to the isochronic, cultural-nationalist claim of international competitiveness, cultural maturity, and cultural-national sovereignty ignores what is really at issue right now: the very notion of "national literature," the meaning of cultural participation and decision-making, and the potential of allochronic (and other) alternatives.

¹ First introduced in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, Greenwich Mean Time came to dominate all other forms of time measurement in 1884 when it was established as global standard. It actually was the Canadian Sanford Fleming, one of the main engineers of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who introduced the idea of standardized times zones around the world. He developed the idea while trying to organize the time schedule for the Canadian Pacific Railway.

² See, for instance, the special *Daedalus* issue “Multiple Modernities,” edited by Eisenstadt (Winter 2000), the essay collection *Modernity and Its Malcontents*, edited by the Comaroffs, or Giddens’s *The Consequences of Modernity*.

³ Indeed, as Eisenstadt emphasizes, European modernity was practically from the beginning constituted by internal antinomies, contradictions, and tensions, and thus never a single, unified project. Multiple modernities developed first not outside the West but “within the broad framework of Western civilization” (13).

⁴ It is on the basis of this perspective that some scholars consider globalization as a positive force.

⁵ Szeman here draws on Paul Smith’s reading, in his work *Millennial Dreams*, of Fabian’s concept of allochronism.

⁶ García Canclini defines hybridity as the mingling of cultures from different territorial locations brought about by increasing migration amongst cultures. Hybridity is a sociocultural process caused by global modernity at the composite sites where traditional and modern temporalities meet, clash, and compete.

⁷ John Tomlinson offers an interesting viewpoint on García Canclini’s version of hybridity by comparing it to Salman Rushdie’s and Homi Bhabha’s versions (141-47).

⁸ As Roberto Schwarz notes in his analysis of Brazilian culture in *Misplaced Ideas*, the act of copying Western ideas and experiences in third world countries such as Brazil is not an act of indiscriminate mimicry but the discriminate copying of one class, namely the ruling class.

⁹ This, then, complicates Hardt and Negri’s rather Western-centric claim of “[t]he end of colonialism” (137). So does the continued colonization of Aboriginal peoples in invader-settler states such as Canada, an issue that will be discussed further along in this chapter.

¹⁰ See, for instance, the *Globe and Mail* reviews and commentaries by Marni Jackson, Paul Gessell, Michael Posner, and Margaret Wente, and Noah Richler’s coverage of the issue in *The National Post*.

¹¹ Mezlekia studied civil engineering at the University of Waterloo and McGill University from which he received a Ph.D. in 1994.

¹² Woodmansee and Jaszi note that contrary to common assumptions, the modern regime of authorship is “far from being timeless and universal” (2). It is “the result of a quite radical reconceptualization of the creative process that culminated less than 200 years ago in the heroic self-representation of Romantic poets” (3). Besides, it is not that collaborative practices disappeared altogether with the author-genius myth. They even persisted in the poetry of such staunch promoters of the romanticist ideal of the solitary author as Wordsworth and Coleridge.

¹³ Maivân Clech Lãm notes that the Aboriginal mobilization during that time “was set off by the increased intrusion of the global economy” (34): i.e. the economic ascendancy of Japan, postwar economic boom in North America, increased activities of the World Bank, growing global pressure on resources, and processes of recolonization masked as trade liberalization.

¹⁴ Dickason’s Aboriginal counter-history *Canada’s First Nations* unmask “modern history” as a Eurocentric and document-bound discipline that ascribes the label “prehistoric” or “protohistoric” to whatever has not been officially written down in pen and paper, such as the orally-based histories of Aboriginal peoples. This labeling makes sure that Canada’s history only began with the arrival of Europeans and creates a binary of Aboriginal fantastic-mythical storyteller and EuroCanadian objective-scientific historiographer (11).

¹⁵ A similar statement can be found in the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: “In major bookstores, creative works by Aboriginal authors are usually found in the Aboriginal studies section, not the literature section” (641).

¹⁶ King discusses the idea of a distinct Aboriginal critical language in his essay “Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial.” Rejecting the term “postcolonial” for analyzing Aboriginal literature, he introduces the terms “tribal,” “polemical,” “interfusional,” and “associational” as critical markers. Many Aboriginal critics and writers have agreed with King that the descriptor “postcolonial” fails to recognize that the history of Aboriginal literature started long before colonization.

¹⁷ For a more radical, separatist model of Aboriginal literary criticism, see Craig Womack's *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*.

¹⁸ As Grossberg puts it in "Identity and Cultural Studies," "[a]gency involves relations of participation and access, the possibilities of moving into particular sites of activity and power, and of belonging to them in such a way as to be able to enact their powers....The question of agency is, then, how access and investment or participation (as a structure of belonging) are distributed within particular structured terrains" (99-100).

¹⁹ Adams denounces in *Prison of Grass* that "[i]t is a common practice of imperial governments to use middle-class native elites to provide support for their administration...value system and ideology...[as well as] political stability for the capitalist system" (156).

²⁰ In "Patriotism and Its Futures," Arjun Appadurai argues that in India discourses of the nation are "deeply implicated in the discourses of colonialism itself" (411). In India and many other postcolonial countries – including former invader-settler countries such as Canada – the postcolonial nation-state was formed after the European nation-state model, thus ignoring traditional indigenous forms of political and economic organization. As a territorially-defined, bordered unit, "the nation-state has often created...or fractured ethnic identities that were previously fluid, negotiable, or nascent" (414).

²¹ Monture points out that the most important of the treaties negotiated by the Six Nations with the British is the "Two-Row Wampum" or *Kahswenhta*. It "symbolizes two vessels travelling side by side, one containing the Iroquois, the other the Europeans nations. It is said that the languages, religions, cultures, and beliefs of the two peoples are contained in the respective vessels, and each is not to interfere in the affairs of the other. In short, both nations are to enjoy 'separate but equal' status, reflective of the principles and recognition of sovereignty" (121).

²² Ethnonational claims constitute an instance where nation-state sovereignty is not pressured from "outside" forces of global governance (sanctioned by states themselves) but from forces active "inside" nation-state boundaries (and not sanctioned by state governments).

²³ At another point in the text, Alfred deplors that "a lot of our Native people imagine themselves to be Canadians. And that's not true. In the words of the ritual [he means the *Rotinohshonni* condolence ceremony], those Canadianized Indians are 'in the darkness'; they've had their eyes shut to their true being, they can't envision a future in which we are nations" (xxi).

²⁴ The colonial condition of Aboriginal "country-less-ness" is especially acute in the case of the Métis in Canada who for the longest time have been denied land rights, Aboriginal status, and recognition as a distinct people with its own traditions, laws, and forms of social and political organization.

²⁵ It should be noted here that this anxiety about Canada's belatedness has, at times, found expression in a denial thereof. Stephen Henighan, for instance, maintains that "Canada is in fact one of the world's oldest functioning states, its geographical boundaries and basic institutions have been moulded more than two hundred years ago; significant aspects of our present arrangements reach back almost four hundred years. Few other countries match this record of geographical and institutional continuity" (152). He condemns the literary field in Canada for submitting to "the neo-con project of recasting Canada as a 'new land'...This fad for 'newness' represents an annexing of Canada to the United States' ideal of the eternal new dawn" (152).

Chapter 5

"There's Some Weird Sleeping With the Enemy Going on Here": Publishing in Contemporary Canada

Q: Why should you buy Canadian books this holiday season?

A: So you can buy them next year, too.

Mark Abley, Caroline Adderson, Paul Ains, Neil Agnew, André Alexis, Ralph Alfonso, Anne Arns, George Amabile, Hope Anderson, Gail Anderson-Dargatz, Julie Archer, Diana Armstrong, David Aronson, Tracy Ashley-Rolls, Margaret Atwood, Ken Babcock, Linda Bailey, Angela Baldassarre, Nelson Ball, Pamela Blasing, Douglas Barbour, Joan Barfoot, Jennifer Barwood, John Barrow, Michael Basilides, Helen Barmby, Donal Basheba, Vee Bagdasarian, Henry Beaulieu, Jonathan Bennett, Michelle Berry, Beverly Bidleman, Sandra Birdsell, Michael

Robert Kroetsch, Gunda Lambton, Patrick Lane, Joseph Lima, Don Ledger, Paul Ledoux, Dennis Lee, Elise Levine, Lenore Lieberman, Shirley Lambert, Allison Lobana, Damien Lopez, Jeanette Lyness, Bill MacDonald, Ann-Marie MacDonald, David MacFarlane, Ray MacKinnon, Shannon Lee Mason, Annie Manson, David Margolis, Nicole Marston, Daphne Marlet, Sandra Martin, Ashok Mathur, Susane Mayr, JoAnne McCaug, Anne McDermid, Michele Mc-Gill, Don McKay, Steve McOrmond, Tara McLean, Mary McKillop, Susan Molokilo, Anne Monaghan, A. F. Moritz, Erin Mount, Alice Munro, Jane Southwell Munro, Joh Nichols, Billeh Nickerson, Yvonne Nolan, Lisa O'Leary, David O'Meara, Michael Ondaatje, Cathy Oulere, P. K. Page, Brian Panahy, Erna Paris, Miriam Parson, Marzula Pearson, Elyn Pearson, Allison Pick, Robert Platt, Michael Poole, Michelle Power, T. K. Pratt, Andrew Pyper, Slim Quynne, Kenneth Radu, Jan Rapoport, Michael Redhill, Roberts Rees, John Rebus, D. C. Reid, Harold Rhenisch, Nuno Rucci, David Adams Richards, Bill Richardson, Christian Ruel, T. F. Rugehoff, Karen Rivers, Gord Robertson, Jill Robinson, Renee Rodin, Carver Rodriguez, Linda Rogers, Ken Rolston, Leon Rooke, Ingrid Rose, David Rothenberg, Stuart Ross, Jeffrey Ross, Sherrill M. Rowan-Lygg, Jan Ruzumsky, Niko Rybicki, Judy Ann Sadler, Lake Saper, Kerri Sakamoto, June Salmons, Deon Sampson, Ian Samuels, Robyn Sarah, Sean Sawchenko, Larry Scrymgeour, Duane Schenker, Seven Sisters Writing Group, Sarah Sheard, Bob Sherrin, Sandy Shreve, Anastasia Silcuk, Merilyn Simonds, Anne Simpson, George Sipos, Carolyn Smart, E. Russell Smith, Barbara Smith, Sharon Smith, Karen Smith, Steven Rose Smith, Karen Sobie, Glen Sorenson, Mary Lou Soutar-Hynes, Lisa Spalding, Linda Spalding, Heather Stern, Dick Spromson, Renata Soudak, Ellen Stafford, Robert A. Stebbins, Fred Steenson, Ricardo Sternberg, Gilian Seward, Betty Southern, Rosemary Sullivan, Meraa Summers, Susan Swan, Diane Swanson, Todd Swift, Amy Swick, Elise Sz, Nikki Tate, Timothy Taylor, John Terpsie, Sharon Thorne, Eva Tihanyi, Sherwin Tju, Marzian Towns, Loli Tourville, Helen Tzeng, Alexander Tumanov, Alla Tumanov, Michael Twa, Liu Ugras, Jane Unger, Voo

Robert Kroetsch, Gunda Lambton, Patrick Lane, Joseph Lima, Don Ledger, Paul Ledoux, Dennis Lee, Elise Levine, Lenore Lieberman, Shirley Lambert, Allison Lobana, Damien Lopez, Jeanette Lyness, Bill MacDonald, Ann-Marie MacDonald, David MacFarlane, Ray MacKinnon, Shannon Lee Mason, Annie Manson, David Margolis, Nicole Marston, Daphne Marlet, Sandra Martin, Ashok Mathur, Susane Mayr, JoAnne McCaug, Anne McDermid, Michele Mc-Gill, Don McKay, Steve McOrmond, Tara McLean, Mary McKillop, Susan Molokilo, Anne Monaghan, A. F. Moritz, Erin Mount, Alice Munro, Jane Southwell Munro, Joh Nichols, Billeh Nickerson, Yvonne Nolan, Lisa O'Leary, David O'Meara, Michael Ondaatje, Cathy Oulere, P. K. Page, Brian Panahy, Erna Paris, Miriam Parson, Marzula Pearson, Elyn Pearson, Allison Pick, Robert Platt, Michael Poole, Michelle Power, T. K. Pratt, Andrew Pyper, Slim Quynne, Kenneth Radu, Jan Rapoport, Michael Redhill, Roberts Rees, John Rebus, D. C. Reid, Harold Rhenisch, Nuno Rucci, David Adams Richards, Bill Richardson, Christian Ruel, T. F. Rugehoff, Karen Rivers, Gord Robertson, Jill Robinson, Renee Rodin, Carver Rodriguez, Linda Rogers, Ken Rolston, Leon Rooke, Ingrid Rose, David Rothenberg, Stuart Ross, Jeffrey Ross, Sherrill M. Rowan-Lygg, Jan Ruzumsky, Niko Rybicki, Judy Ann Sadler, Lake Saper, Kerri Sakamoto, June Salmons, Deon Sampson, Ian Samuels, Robyn Sarah, Sean Sawchenko, Larry Scrymgeour, Duane Schenker, Sarah Sheard, Bob Sherrin, Sandy Shreve, Anastasia Silcuk, Merilyn Simonds, Anne Simpson, George Sipos, Carolyn Smart, E. Russell Smith, Barbara Smith, Sharon Smith, Karen Smith, Steven Rose Smith, Karen Sobie, Glen Sorenson, Mary Lou Soutar-Hynes, Lisa Spalding, Linda Spalding, Heather Stern, Dick Spromson, Renata Soudak, Ellen Stafford, Robert A. Stebbins, Fred Steenson, Ricardo Sternberg, Gilian Seward, Betty Southern, Rosemary Sullivan, Meraa Summers, Susan Swan, Diane Swanson, Todd Swift, Amy Swick, Elise Sz, Nikki Tate, Timothy Taylor, John Terpsie, Sharon Thorne, Eva Tihanyi, Sherwin Tju, Marzian Towns, Loli Tourville, Helen Tzeng, Alexander Tumanov, Alla Tumanov, Michael Twa, Liu Ugras, Jane Unger, Voo

A message to Canadian readers from 400 Canadian writers

As a Canadian reader, you're probably aware that it's been a tough year for Canadian publishers, but perhaps you don't know how tough it's been.

Our presses publish world-class writing that's read all over the planet, but here at home, many of these very same companies are struggling to stay alive. They've all suffered, but the hardest-hit publishers are Canada's small presses, regional presses, and those that are independently owned. These publishers support a great deal of this country's poetry, drama, and emerging fiction, as well as grassroots, experimental, and critical writing. And many of Canada's best-known writers were first published by them.

This year, all publishers—large and small—have been hit hard. Lots of them have had to cut back on the number of books they publish, many have been brought to the brink of financial ruin, and some have even closed. We are worried that more may close. As both readers and writers, we want to ask Canadian book-buyers to remember Canadian publishers this holiday season. Please join us in showing our publishers that we support them in their struggle to keep making books and that we affirm that their survival is essential to our culture.

Mark Abley, Caroline Adderson, Paul Ains, Neil Agnew, André Alexis, Ralph Alfonso, Anne Arns, George Amabile, Hope Anderson, Gail Anderson-Dargatz, Julie Archer, Diana Armstrong, David Aronson, Tracy Ashley-Rolls, Margaret Atwood, Ken Babcock, Linda Bailey, Angela Baldassarre, Nelson Ball, Pamela Blasing, Douglas Barbour, Joan Barfoot, Jennifer Barwood, John Barrow, Michael Basilides, Helen Barmby, Donal Basheba, Vee Bagdasarian, Henry Beaulieu, Jonathan Bennett, Michelle Berry, Beverly Bidleman, Sandra Birdsell, Michael

Robert Kroetsch, Gunda Lambton, Patrick Lane, Joseph Lima, Don Ledger, Paul Ledoux, Dennis Lee, Elise Levine, Lenore Lieberman, Shirley Lambert, Allison Lobana, Damien Lopez, Jeanette Lyness, Bill MacDonald, Ann-Marie MacDonald, David MacFarlane, Ray MacKinnon, Shannon Lee Mason, Annie Manson, David Margolis, Nicole Marston, Daphne Marlet, Sandra Martin, Ashok Mathur, Susane Mayr, JoAnne McCaug, Anne McDermid, Michele Mc-Gill, Don McKay, Steve McOrmond, Tara McLean, Mary McKillop, Susan Molokilo, Anne Monaghan, A. F. Moritz, Erin Mount, Alice Munro, Jane Southwell Munro, Joh Nichols, Billeh Nickerson, Yvonne Nolan, Lisa O'Leary, David O'Meara, Michael Ondaatje, Cathy Oulere, P. K. Page, Brian Panahy, Erna Paris, Miriam Parson, Marzula Pearson, Elyn Pearson, Allison Pick, Robert Platt, Michael Poole, Michelle Power, T. K. Pratt, Andrew Pyper, Slim Quynne, Kenneth Radu, Jan Rapoport, Michael Redhill, Roberts Rees, John Rebus, D. C. Reid, Harold Rhenisch, Nuno Rucci, David Adams Richards, Bill Richardson, Christian Ruel, T. F. Rugehoff, Karen Rivers, Gord Robertson, Jill Robinson, Renee Rodin, Carver Rodriguez, Linda Rogers, Ken Rolston, Leon Rooke, Ingrid Rose, David Rothenberg, Stuart Ross, Jeffrey Ross, Sherrill M. Rowan-Lygg, Jan Ruzumsky, Niko Rybicki, Judy Ann Sadler, Lake Saper, Kerri Sakamoto, June Salmons, Deon Sampson, Ian Samuels, Robyn Sarah, Sean Sawchenko, Larry Scrymgeour, Duane Schenker, Sarah Sheard, Bob Sherrin, Sandy Shreve, Anastasia Silcuk, Merilyn Simonds, Anne Simpson, George Sipos, Carolyn Smart, E. Russell Smith, Barbara Smith, Sharon Smith, Karen Smith, Steven Rose Smith, Karen Sobie, Glen Sorenson, Mary Lou Soutar-Hynes, Lisa Spalding, Linda Spalding, Heather Stern, Dick Spromson, Renata Soudak, Ellen Stafford, Robert A. Stebbins, Fred Steenson, Ricardo Sternberg, Gilian Seward, Betty Southern, Rosemary Sullivan, Meraa Summers, Susan Swan, Diane Swanson, Todd Swift, Amy Swick, Elise Sz, Nikki Tate, Timothy Taylor, John Terpsie, Sharon Thorne, Eva Tihanyi, Sherwin Tju, Marzian Towns, Loli Tourville, Helen Tzeng, Alexander Tumanov, Alla Tumanov, Michael Twa, Liu Ugras, Jane Unger, Voo

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

The Globe and Mail, 15 December 2001

As pointed out in the previous chapters, binary divisions between Canadian literary circuits and global literary markets – variously manifested and debated by past and present scholars, writers, publishers, policy-makers, and representatives of the national media – have given rise to powerful nightmares of a commodified, homogenized global literature that swallows Canada’s unique national literature. The advertisement campaign “Buy Canadian This Holiday Season” (see above), which was launched by the Canadian writers Michael Redhill and Esta Spalding in *The Globe and Mail* in November and December 2001, constitutes a contemporary example of this cultural nationalist, binarist stance. In their campaign, Redhill and Spalding present the issue of preserving Canadian literature as an issue of both Canadian-owned book publication and conscious Canadian book consumption. The ad addresses Canadian readers as “naturally” responsible, loyal, and proud citizens who are dedicated to protecting the Canadian nation and its literature against global market pressures. It intimates that one direct contribution ordinary Canadian citizens can and must make is to buy Canadian-produced books. “A message to Canadian readers from 400 Canadian writers,” the ad constitutes an attempt to intervene in Canadians’ book consumption patterns on the basis of nationalist sentiment and writerly authority (the impressive number of 400 author-signatures frames the ad’s main body). Moreover, in a *Globe and Mail* article entitled “Selling Culture in the Free Market” and written concomitantly with the ad, Redhill and Spalding warn their readers that the Canadian “market model,” if not kept in check by state interventions, is a “culture-killer.” Canadians need to defend and nurture the country’s interventionist tradition, since it protects the nation’s literary and cultural products and services from global “free-market” pressures.

For Redhill and Spalding, then, resistance to the free-market model comes from a strong national literature (and culture more generally), which in turn depends on the united efforts of Canada’s writers (creators), readers (consumers), publishers (producers), and policy-makers. Apart from failing to recognize that the term “free market” is a misnomer that masks the deeply interventionist nature of contemporary neoliberal market forces, their notion that the Canadian-owned market in books can be sheltered in an interventionist non-free-market zone obscures the crucial nexuses of the neoliberal, the national, and the cultural *inside* Canada. It obfuscates the fact that Canadian-owned literary production and the consumption and direct governmental support of that literature do not constitute sites of resistance and alternative to neoliberal globalization *per se*. This chapter demonstrates that the “national” and the “neoliberal” are neither (perceived as) opposites in the everyday workings of publishers in Canada, nor can they be equated with Canadian-owned, government-funded publishing and foreign-owned, market-driven publishing respectively. It shows that matters are not, as frequently assumed in cultural nationalist proclamations such as Redhill and Spalding’s, either/or when it comes to

contemporary publishing in Canada, but that they are highly ambivalent and tangled. In the following, I explore this ambivalence in the specific instances of regional publishing, publishing in Toronto, multinational publishing, and the publishing venues of the small- and micro-sized independent publishers Kegan Press, Turnstone Press, Insomniac Press, and Arsenal Pulp Press.

The first part of the chapter consists of a discussion of more recent regionalist-nationalist claims that the literary region constitutes an opposite and alternative to the Toronto-centered, commercialist and Americanized production of “Canadian literature.” Debinarizing this division as well as putting it in the historical context of publishing in Canada, I demonstrate that the effects of the current neoliberal restructuring of cultural policies and values are not limited to publishing in metropolitan Toronto but pervade literary production throughout Canada. By the same token, it is reductive to assume that literature written and published either in Toronto or elsewhere in Canada is a mere site of neoliberal book and show business. Rather, it is a site of highly complex relations. With this debinarizing reassessment of Canada’s publishing industry, I do not deny the fact that Toronto is Canada’s largest economic center and, as such, a key site for the workings of neoliberal capitalism, and that this also shows in the publishing sphere. The Toronto area, indeed, is the location of most multinational (both foreign- and Canadian-owned) publishing corporations in Canada whose operations are commercialist in nature and oriented towards the global market. In “The Global and the Local,” Arif Dirlik uses the term “global localism” to denote the process by which multinational corporations simultaneously decentralize and standardize their operations on the local level of business divisions in order to maximize their profits on the globalized level of corporate management.¹ The second part of the chapter comprises an analysis of the workings of global localism in multinational publishing conglomerates that operate in Canada, which means in Toronto predominantly. This analysis reveals that even though decentralization and local diversity serve these corporations as strategic funnels of corporate global capital, they also create the potential for highly ambivalent processes of alternative and resistance.

The third part of the chapter complicates the notions of “national publishing” and “commercialist publishing” from the perspectives of the Aboriginal publisher Kegan Press and the small-scale independent publishers Turnstone Press, Insomniac Press, and Arsenal Pulp Press. The interviews I conducted with publishers and editors at these presses deal with the following themes: the government’s increasing run-for-profit attitude in cultural funding; the contradictions in current publishing and cultural policies; literary commodification; multinational publishers in Canada; the notion of “Canadian literature”; coverage by the national media; as well as the present state of Aboriginal publishing and literature in Canada. Describing their experiences with cultural institutions and funding practices, the

interviewees, each one from her/his own particular perspective, point to the promises, failures, and neoliberal undertones of contemporary publishing policies and the public spheres in which these policies are negotiated and implemented. The operations and business strategies of the four presses make obvious that independent publishing today frequently functions in strategically contradictory terms, i.e. inside the dominant neoliberal and cultural nationalist policy and industry framework in a way that makes use of the latter's resources but does not recognize or comply with its ideologies and values.

"TorLit" vs. regional literature?

"TorLit, the successor to CanLit, is about money," Stephen Henighan proclaims in a chapter of *When Words Deny the World* entitled "Vulgarity on Bloor: Literary Institutions From CanLit to TorLit" (159). In this chapter Henighan argues that regional publishing in Canada, which blossomed in the 1980s, is increasingly "superseded by a slick, image-obsessed, Toronto-centric commercial publishing industry serving as a supply depot for the global book market" (158). Today, the best-known regional writers (he mentions Wayne Johnston and David Adams Richards) live in Toronto, where they receive more attention and ultimately more success with their writing than they would if they still lived in their home regions (160). Henighan contends that "[n]o longer the place where a Canadian way of creating literature could be imagined, the city [Toronto] has declined into a cultural assembly plant supplying a global market with literary widgets of predetermined size, shapes and colours" (176). Toronto's nationalist 1960s and 1970s have come to a close. It has failed as a place of national literary creation and production by subscribing to American-style literary and cultural commercialization and media show business. Henighan invokes the region as the new central place of national literature and culture,² an invocation which has seen many antecedents and has many supporters. As Laurence Ricou notes in his entry on "Region/Regionalism" to the *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada*, "[c]onfiguring Canada's culture (and its history, politics, economics, even its religion) within regional boundaries is both pervasive and persistent" (948). Past and contemporary literary and cultural critics (such as Frank Davey, John Ralston Saul, Herb Wyile, Eli Mandel, W. H. New, Edward McCourt, and Henry Kreisel) have variously asserted the decentralizing power of regionalism as a reactive discourse that writes back to the centers of both nationalist and globalist literary and cultural homogenization and thus instigates the creation of a more heterogeneous national model of Canadian literature and culture.³

In their introduction to the essay collection *A Sense of Place: Re-evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing*, the editors Herb Wyile, Christian Riegel, Karen Overbye, and Don Perkins note that, in the 1990s, poststructuralist critical theory has contributed "a decentralizing approach to literary criticism and literary

history, which in Canada and the United States have been dominated by a centralizing nationalism that privileges the cultural capitals of North America: New York, Los Angeles, and Toronto” (xii). The growing suspicion of centralized national culture and literature has revived regionalism and asserted it as “an alternative and equally legitimate discourse...[as] part of a larger critique of cultural hegemony and a recognition and celebration of diversity” (xii). John Ralston Saul summarizes its positive outcomes in *Reflections of a Siamese Twin* as follows: as a reaction to the “normalization” of central standards, regionalism promotes Canada’s literary diversity (441); as “a frustrated reaction to the difficulty of sustaining public debate when the élites have embraced the inevitabilities of expert answers” (441), it speaks up for “real democratic power” (441); and as a reaction “to globalization and the related sense of powerlessness” (441), it enhances local-national agency. Both Ralston Saul and Wyile et al. consider the discourse of regionalism as an important contemporary alternative to Canada’s centralist-nationalist predominance. And yet their notions of regionalism are driven by the same cultural nationalist ideology that underlies their centralist “opponent.” In other words, they subscribe to the vision of a sovereign twenty-first-century national literature and culture while rewriting it in regional terms. While contesting the centralist notions of Canadian literature and the Canadian nation-state, Ralston Saul, Henighan, and Wyile et al. nonetheless adhere to and thus reproduce in regional guise the social and political values and tenets – cultural-national sovereignty and representative democracy – that underlie these notions.⁴ As shown in the previous chapters, these values and tenets need to be challenged in demands for more literary diversity, “real democratic power,” and local agency in Canada.

This is not to deny the fact that the above critics are conscious of the shortcomings that disconcert the prevalent discourse of regional national literature. Wyile et al. are very well aware that feminist, Aboriginal, and ethnic minority critics, writers, and publishers are increasingly challenging the Eurocentric bias underpinning the dominant definitions of Canada’s regions and regionalisms (xiii). Moreover, they admit that “[c]ontemporary critiques of canonicity and representation also extend to regionalism” (xiii). Similarly, Davey acknowledges that regionalism to some extent “responds to and mimics the homogenizing call of the nation-state” (“Regionalism” 3), that the writing of particular regions has frequently been homogenized and coded in terms that fit the dominant Eurocentric, cultural nationalist paradigm. For instance, in her analysis of Newfoundland regionalism in *Marketing Place: Cultural Politics, Regionalism, and Reading*, Ursula Kelly shows that the voices of women, people of color, Newfoundland Francophones, and Aboriginal peoples “have been historically underrepresented in the writings of Newfoundland” (33). She attributes the reason for this deprioritization of societal differences in the region to the fact that “included in the ‘coding’ of what characteristics make a book a ‘Newfoundland

book' are these aspects of White and patriarchal domination as well as those of the Anglo-Irish tradition" (33). Considering the complexity of the social, cultural, and political issues that underlie Newfoundland regionalism and, for that matter, any other form of regionalism in Canada, Wyile et al.'s poststructuralist claim to redefine the writing of particular regions "in more pluralistic terms" (xiii) seems oversimplified. Though it recognizes that regional literary diversity has been a conditioned, Eurocentric diversity, it does not account for the myriad exclusions of access to print media of communication (publishing, lingual and textual norms) and to public spheres of cultural opinion- and decision-making (cultural policy, governmental grant programs and cultural institutions, literary criticism, the media) on which the discourse of regional literature is based. Their claim of pluralism lacks material reference and in the end remains mired in the official version of "Canadian literature" as a literature of conditioned and uneven diversity.

Raymond Williams asserts in *Towards 2000* that "a 'region'...is from the beginning a subordinate part of a larger unity, typically now a part of a 'nation'... '[R]egional' identities and loyalties are still allowed, even at a certain level encouraged, but they are presumed to exist within, and where necessary to be overridden by, the identities and loyalties of this much larger society" (181). In *Writing in Society*, he specifies this process as "a conscious programme to regulate and contain what would otherwise be intolerable divisions and confusions" (192). Kelly sees this nationalist strategy of contained and conditioned diversity very much in action in Canada. She describes Canadian nationalism as a discourse that feeds on the "internal colonization of First Nations peoples...[and] the 'creation of regional dependency'" (19), both in terms of political economy and cultural policy and signification. Provincial literary movements frequently function as regional instruments and offshoots of federal definitions and marketing strategies of Canadian "multi-culture." In this sense, the literary region can be as much a site and agent of literary commodification as Toronto, Canada's commercial center of literary production. Conversely, Toronto can be as much a place of non-commercialist literary production as the "region." The Toronto area is home to most foreign-owned multinational literary publishers that have branches (so-called branch plants or subsidiaries) in Canada: Random House of Canada and its "sisters" Doubleday, Bantam, Dell, Vintage, Seal, Knopf, and Anchor; Penguin Canada, its imprint Viking and "parent" Pearson Canada; HarperCollins; Oxford University Press (Don Mills); and Simon & Schuster (Richmond Hill). At the same time, it accommodates the dominant English-language national publishers McClelland & Stewart, Key Porter, House of Anansi, and, until recently, General Publishing. But it is also the residence of independent local presses such as Seventh Generation Books, Sister Vision, Between the Lines, Second Story Press, TSAR, and Insomniac Press.⁵ As David Coish points out in "Small Canadian Book Publishers: How Are They Different?,"

small-scale independent presses “are not so much found in less populous provinces or regions, but rather are found in niche markets within each province or region” (3), that is, everywhere in Canada.

Similarly, one needs to acknowledge that the presence of American and British forces in Canadian publishing has always been marked and centered in Toronto. The Macdonald government’s “National Policy,” whose objective it was to create a national market in the Canadian Dominion – “to encourage the replacement of foreign imports with Canadian-made goods and so provide jobs for Canadians” (Laxer, *Open for Business* 14) – subordinated the development of the vast western and northern territories to the needs of the federal center in southern Ontario.⁶ On the plane of publishing, the period of 1889 to 1895 saw several attempts at obtaining the manufacturing clause in Canadian copyright legislation. Canada’s Justice Minister and later Prime Minister Sir John Thompson, the editor and publisher G. Mercer Adam, the librarian Richard Lancefield, and the Copyright Association of Canada were especially prominent in their commitment to the clause, which would have restricted copyright to foreign works printed first or simultaneously in Canada on Canadian type set.⁷ They argued that favorable economic conditions for Canadian publishers and printers were indispensable to the process of creating a national literature as part of a national culture and industry that could stem the American imperialist threat (see, for instance, Mercer Adam’s “Literature, Nationality, and the Tariff,” Lancefield’s *Notes on Copyright*, and Thompson’s *Despatch on Canadian Copyright*). After each of their attempts to obtain the manufacturing clause failed, the Copyright Act of 1900 focused on and laid the foundation for the development of branch-plant and agency book publishing, with the latter being a form of contract by which a Canadian publisher functions as the exclusive agency in Canada for the titles published by a foreign press. Branch plants and agency publishing thus became the new strategy for curbing Canada’s publishing industry, which largely developed in Toronto.⁸ As Gordon Laxer points out in *Open for Business: The Roots of Foreign Ownership in Canada*, the conservative economic nationalism of the Macdonald era “was curiously contradictory. While its adherents vociferously opposed free trade and economic union with the United States [i.e. Liberal arguments for continentalism or reciprocity] as ‘veiled treason,’ they positively welcomed foreign ownership and control of the economy” (6). In the context of publishing, this approach led to what Roy MacSkimming describes as a double-edged form of colonialism in *The Perilous Trade: Publishing Canada’s Writers*. On the one hand, Canada remained a publishing colony of Britain and the United States, and on the other, the Canadian west became a publishing colony of Toronto (219).

In the policy and copyright climate of the early twentieth century, agency publishing became the main strategy by which Canadian publishers participated in the British and American share of the Canadian market in books. The four major

English-language Canadian publishers of that time – Ryerson Press, McClelland & Stewart, Clarke, Irwin, and W. J. Gage – all relied on agency activities as a source of income that enabled the publication of Canadian titles (see MacSkimming and Parker for more detail). After the passing of the 1900 Copyright Act, several British and American publishers set up Canadian branch plants – among them Oxford University Press (in 1904) and Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd. (in 1905). These publishers give evidence that the process of “global localism” was evolving more than a century ago, in the name of Canadian nation-building under the first National Policy. The Canadian subsidiaries of Oxford University Press, Macmillan,⁹ and McGraw-Hill became involved quite considerably in the promotion of Canadian writers and the vision of a national literature, “while returning profits to their corporate head offices” in New York and London (Parker, “The Sale of Ryerson Press” 52). Indeed, one can observe a comparable trend in the contemporary workings of foreign-owned multinational publishers in Canada. The growing popularity and profitability of Canadian-authored books¹⁰ that emerged in the 1990s has led to an increased investment by multinational branch plant publishers in Canadian literature, and especially in Canadian novels. In 1991, Louise Denny, formerly of the independent Canadian publisher Lester & Orpen Denny, became the head of Knopf Canada and has since “directed one of the strongest and most critically successful trade lists in Canada, headlined by her ‘New Faces of Fiction’ program” (MacSkimming 309). Likewise, HarperCollins Canada, Doubleday Canada, and Random House Canada have hired outstanding Canadian editors and publishers to recruit promising Canadian authors of fiction. At Penguin Canada, until her retirement in 2003, Cynthia Good built up a, in MacSkimming’s words, “nationalistic non-fiction program worthy of Jack McClelland in his prime” (371). However, MacSkimming also notes that in spite of this increased interest in Canadian literature, the “subsidiaries’ primary source of profit continues to lie, as it always has, in marketing the parent company’s titles” (369). The publication of Canadian books is an add-on to this prime directive.¹¹

As this discussion demonstrates, Canadian publishing, like most of Canada’s domestic economic activity, has been involved with and dependent on foreign (especially American and British) capital/investment since its beginnings. It is not just lately, in the often-bewailed age of globalization, that Canadian publishers have had to face the impact and market strength of foreign-owned multinational publishers (not to mention Canadian-owned agency publishing companies). According to Parker and Laxer, the key cause of this foreign dependency was the 1900 Copyright Act. Laxer’s *Open for Business* insists that branch plants and agencies turned out to be “merely a more intensive method of selling an American product in foreign markets” (14). The “made in Canada” label attributed to branch plant and agency products such as books in practice meant “made in the U.S.” and assembled

in Canada. In the context of Canadian book publishing, this “could mean as little as having a Canadian title page inserted into a book printed and bound in London or New York” (Karr 31), since the Copyright Act of 1900 guaranteed “the right to import books, sheets, or plates of a book published outside Canada for a Canadian edition” (31). Hence, while the guises of the impact and power of foreign-owned publishing companies may have changed, the phenomenon as such is not new and, as the past decades have shown, has not been reversed systematically by means of the economic and cultural nationalist policies set up in the 1960s and 1970s.¹² Rather, as chapter three demonstrates, the latter have come to work through neoliberalism, as “enablers” of a national economy that is flexible, internationally competitive, and, if necessary, foreign-owned. Seen from this perspective, the regionalist claims of Henighan, Ralston Saul, and Wylie et al. do not offer an effectual alternative to these nationalist, “enabling” policies. And clearly the issue is more complicated than Henighan’s “TorLit” vs. regional literature binary suggests.

Global localism in contemporary publishing in Canada

All this is not to deny that Toronto (or southern Ontario) is Canada’s largest publishing center and, as such, has been a foremost site of global localism. As discussed in chapter three, after Gage’s takeover by Scott Foresman and Ryerson’s takeover by McGraw-Hill, the Ontario Government appointed a Royal Commission on Book Publishing, which right away was faced with McClelland & Stewart’s public announcement of its financial troubles. Though a regional/provincial commission, the latter had implications on the federal plane. As MacSkimming notes, “[i]n the wake of Ontario’s actions, Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier...announced in March 1972 the first federal measures for book publishing” (213), which included a substantial increase in the Canada Council’s block grants and, in 1974, the prohibition of direct foreign investment and restriction of indirect foreign investment in Canada’s publishing industry. It was a federal response to a mainly provincial crisis, since in the early 1970s, most publishing in English was done in southern Ontario. On the whole this situation has not changed, even though publishing has become more geographically dispersed. In its *Book Publishing Industry Activity Report, 2000-2001*, Heritage Canada records that in 1998-99 almost 75 per cent of book publishers in Canada were located in Quebec and Ontario. Of the 300 domestic and foreign, large and small publishers surveyed for the report, 109 were located in Ontario, 114 in Quebec, 13 in Atlantic Canada, 34 in the Prairies, and 30 in British Columbia.¹³

The *Activity Report* documents that Ontario publishers show the highest profit margins. The 114 surveyed Quebec publishers earned \$473,000,000 of the industry’s total revenues, whereas the 109 surveyed Ontario publishers earned \$1,474,000,000, approximately three times as much. This huge difference is in large part due to the

concentration of foreign-owned multinational publishers in the Toronto area. Though only publishing 12 per cent of all titles in Canada, the latter generated 34 per cent of the total industry revenues in 1998-99. The *Report* shows that in that year 95 per cent of book publishing firms in Canada were Canadian-controlled and earned approximately 66 per cent of total revenues, which means that the 5 per cent of foreign-controlled firms earned 34 per cent. As these numbers illustrate, foreign-controlled firms are powerhouses of commercial publishing with much higher profit margins than their Canadian counterparts, which are predominantly small in size and economic scale. While the 627 Canadian-owned publishers on average earned \$116,000 total revenues per title published in 1998-99, the 16 foreign-owned firms generated an average of \$411,000 per title published in Canada¹⁴ (*Activity Report*). Talking about his experiences as editor at the Random House “sister” in New York, Pantheon Books, in *The Business of Books*, André Schiffrin points out that editors at Random House are obliged to make a “P&L” (profit-and-loss) statement on each book “before being allowed to sign it up....by so-called publishing boards, where the financial and marketing staff play a pivotal role” (107, 105). These strict market-based controls on editorial choices leave “little room for books with new, controversial ideas or challenging literary voices” (7). The *Activity Report* data confirms Schiffrin’s assessment in the context of publishing in Canada. It shows that Canadian-owned publishers “contribute largely to the diversity of genres as opposed to foreign publishers, who are more likely to focus on the commercially successful books they are publishing and selling in Canada” (*Activity Report*).

Albeit instructive in terms of overall publishing activity in Canada, the *Activity Report* data distracts from an important aspect – namely that a comparison between foreign-owned multinationals and Canadian-owned big book businesses, such as Nelson Thomson, Harlequin, Hushion House, H.B. Fenn, Thomas Allen & Son, and Raincoast Books, might yield revenue numbers and business strategies that are not all too different. Breaking down the average revenues per title of Canadian-owned publishers by region, the *Report* demonstrates that publishers in Ontario earned approximately \$200,000 per title in 1998-99, while their counterparts from the Atlantic region only generated an average of \$60,000. A further breakdown of Ontario publishers would, most likely, bring that figure close to the \$400,000 range (and thus close to the range of foreign-owned publishers) for the big book businesses cited above. Alternatively, a comparison based on the categories textbooks, tradebooks, children’s books, and scholarly, reference, and other professional books would most likely emphasize the disparities between big foreign- and Canadian-owned publishing businesses and independent Canadian-owned publishers in the tradebook category, and especially in the subcategories of fiction and literary non-fiction. The *Report* shows that while, in 1998-99, “72.3% of all books published in Canada were authored by Canadians...[t]he category with the lowest

share of Canadian authors [was] tradebooks, which include mass-market paperbacks, trade paperbacks and trade hardcovers, with 51.2%” (textbooks figured at 94.2 per cent). Considering that of the Canadian-authored books in that year 80 per cent reached their markets through Canadian-owned publishers (*Activity Report*) and that most titles by small Canadian-owned publishers are Canadian-authored tradebooks (Coish 1-2), this indicates that, in 1998-99, a considerable number of tradebooks (including fiction and literary non-fiction) were not Canadian-authored and released with the multinationals and with Canadian-controlled agency publishers. The revenues made in this category, likewise, would have gone largely to these multinational and agency publishers. A separate Heritage Canada overview of the Canadian book publishing industry further shows that in the year 1996-97, exclusive agency distribution and sales represented approximately half the sales in Canada of Canadian-controlled and foreign-controlled firms (*Overview*); the number would have not changed considerably for 1998-99.

In the following, I want to take a closer look at how multinational publishers are organized and make their publishing decisions both in Canada and beyond. What do their operations say about the books that make it onto Canadian bookshelves? Boosting itself for producing “the highest quality in the world as a media powerhouse,” the Random House “parent,” Bertelsmann AG, claims to take “an active role in shaping media markets in numerous culture and language regions, thus making a valuable contribution to the development of our society” (Bertelsmann, Home Page). This statement raises three significant issues. First, it indicates the current trend away from mere book publishing to an all-encompassing undertaking of media entertainment, including publishers, book and music clubs, newspapers and magazines, radio and television activities, film studios, print shops, distribution, warehousing, and e-commerce. It signifies a highly centralized production and management of cultural commodities and information. Second, Bertelsmann aims at achieving this goal on a far-reaching international basis. The professed “valuable contribution to our society” is actualized in the form of literary and, more generally, cultural commercialization on a global scale, i.e. along the trajectory of capital- and consumer-rich countries. Third, one has to ask whom Bertelsmann refers to as “our society.” The answer to this question is twofold. Most obviously, “our society” can be understood as the community of localized Western cultures whose global expansion creates a kind of Westernized world literature and culture. Not only Bertelsmann but multinational media corporations in general see themselves as important contributors to this globalizing development. Announcing the “Internet Century” and “media revolution,” AOL Time Warner proudly proclaims on its website that “a new world is emerging – a more converged world, a more interactive world. At AOL Time Warner, we want to lead this new world” (*Public Policy*). Penguin is similarly ambitious, but uses a different tactic. It emphasizes its long-

standing “commitment to democratize culture” and dreams of “bringing intellectual ideas and compelling stories to a broad [globalized] reading public” (*About Us*). The Ballantine Publishing Group, subdivision of Random House and thus Bertelsmann, even launched a “truly multicultural...One World” imprint in 1992 (*One World*). The motor for this “One World” literature is a smoothly and globally working, technologized culture industry that can guarantee the worldwide distribution of cultural commodities and services.

As indicated above, the question as to whom Bertelsmann refers to as “our society” has a twofold answer. Hidden within the more obvious answer just discussed, “our society” also stands for Bertelsmann’s managerial “globalized spaces of ‘cultural compression’” (Tomlinson 7). With this phrase, which is taken from *Globalization and Culture*, John Tomlinson refers to the artificially constructed, globalized and standardized spaces in which executives of multinational businesses operate. He compares these spaces to the airport environment: “it is like arriving by plane and never leaving the terminal, spending one’s time browsing amongst the global brands of the duty-free shops” (6). The globalized “connecting corridors” (7) of the airport, the international hotel, and the company division guarantee the smooth flow of business personnel, operations, and relations. They are the matrix for a corporation’s efficiency and maximization of profit. Evidently, these globalized spheres distinctly differ from the local realities in which the various business divisions (publishing houses, mediastores, printing presses, warehouses) are situated. Unlike the globalized spaces of executive business rationale, the local spheres pulsate with cultural diversity and with different editorial and artistic traditions, legal and fiscal organizations, and public policies. The jargon commonly used to characterize these local-global structures is that of “sister houses” or “cousins” with a “parent” presiding over the “family.” The corporate, multinational family consists of a head and independent members that are guided by a core set of familial values and rules. Central to this structure is a combination of cooperation and decentralization that allows for intramural “difference in unity.” In its management guidelines, Bertelsmann proclaims that “decentralization is the key factor of our success. Our operating units enjoy greatest possible autonomy” (*Essentials*). However, decentralization is subordinated to the framework of “responsible...effective cooperation [in] the interest of the Bertelsmann group” (*Essentials*) – i.e. to the goal of maximum profitability and market value. Its purpose is to “generate the flexibility, responsiveness, and efficiency needed to excel in changing and highly competitive markets” (*Essentials*).

In “The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity,” Stuart Hall draws attention to Marx’s thesis that capitalism advances on contradictory terms as an early statement of globalization’s inherent local/global dialectic. According to Marx’s thesis, capital “works in and through specificity” (Hall 180) in its drive to

commodify everything; it is decentered and decentralizing. Global capital “recognizes that it can rule only through other local capitals” (179). Bertelsmann’s subdivisions or “sister companies” stretch across industrialized countries with sufficient capital resources, marketing cultural products and services that are ultimately decided upon and managed in artificial, globalized spaces of cultural compression. The latter concentrate power by adjusting to local specificities in capital- and consumer-rich countries and by excluding capital from consumer-poor countries. Bertelsmann does not invest in Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa), Eastern Asia, and the South Pacific region, which do not offer the vast and profitable consumer societies needed to swallow the mass production of cultural products and services. As a site of global localism, the Bertelsmann “family” hence points to the inconsistencies in the isochronic narrative of globalization as one singular integrated and homogenous global movement (see chapter four).

Moreover, the fact that multinational multimedia corporations – the major ones being Bertelsmann, General Electric, AT&T, Disney, AOL Time Warner, Sony, the News Corporation, Viacom/CBS, and Seagram – have a variety of media holdings poses the “very real risk that [they] will not report news that might diminish the profitability of other branches of the firm” (Schiffrin 133). In other words, it poses the very real risk of monopolizing and commercializing information on a local and translocal scale. In *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, Robert McChesney argues that multinational multimedia corporations have played a central role in the development of neoliberal democracy, a “democracy without citizens” (2)¹⁵ in which a few corporate elites have become the core information-, opinion-, and decision-makers. As the *Activity Report* data and Schiffrin and McChesney’s statements suggest, multinational publishers (which are for the most part subdivisions of even larger multimedia corporations) function as agents of a standardized culture of bestselling, internationally marketable star authors, products, and spectacles. Their strategies of conditioned decentralization and local diversity serve the better marketability of their products. More moneyed and powerful than small (local, regional, national) publishers, they are in a position to lobby not only their parent but also their host governments – especially when these governments, as is the case in Canada, define themselves in neoliberal terms – and the making of international copyright legislation and trade agreements.

In Canada, multinational publishers have come to organize their interests in the Canadian Publishers’ Council (CPC). The latter was established in 1910 as a branch of the Toronto Board of Trade and has since been dominated by large and mostly foreign-controlled firms. Its current members, which are all located in the Toronto area and include all foreign-owned publishers in that area, “collectively account for nearly three-quarters of all domestic sales of English-language books” (CPC, Home Page). I want to emphasize here that most CPC members are foreign-

owned multinationals, but not all. For instance, the members Harlequin Enterprises and Nelson Thomson are Canadian-owned multinational publishing companies. Scott Anderson observes that “[t]hey no more export Canadian culture to the rest of the world (or provide it to us) than Penguin can be said to export British culture to the world, or Random House to export German culture” (“Looking for Clarity” 10). In other words, they are as much sites of global localism as their foreign-owned counterparts. It does not matter who owns these publishers (a Canadian or a “foreigner”) but how they are run and which values and goals drive them. The system by which large-scale multinational publishers operate is “one that advances corporate and commercial interests and values...[T]he impetus behind [it] is far more corporate and commercial expansion than national geopolitics” (McChesney, *Rich Media* 103).

In chapter four, I discussed Thomas King’s “Borders” story in the context of exploring allochronic alternatives to the neoliberal, isochronic globalization script. What interests me about “Borders” in the context of this chapter is its take on the subversive potential of the media. The storyline revolves around an Aboriginal mother and her son as they drive back and forth between the American and Canadian border stations, going through the same routine question – “Citizenship?” – answer – “Blackfoot” – and rejection – “I can understand how you feel...But you have to be American or Canadian....It’s a legal technicality, that’s all” (136, 139). Communication or negotiation between the mother and the American/Canadian border officers fails in both legal and cultural terms. It is only when local television crews arrive and start reporting on the border quagmire that officials are in a hurry to find a solution or, rather, to make an exemption. The television crews’ power to turn the situation into a politically-charged and sensational media event “resolves” the dispute in favor of mother and son who are allowed to officially pass the border as Blackfoot citizens. Choosing this specific ending for his “Borders” story, King seems to intimate that contemporary Aboriginal issues need to be made public by popular venues of communication such as television, radio, and literature. King himself is one of the few Aboriginal authors in Canada whose writing has been made public and popular on a mass national and international scale. His novels *Green Grass, Running Water* and *Truth & Bright Water* as well as his short story collection *One Good Story, That One* (to which the “Borders” story belongs) were published by the Canadian division of the multinational publisher HarperCollins, an imprint of Rupert Murdoch’s multimedia News Corporation, and translated in many languages. And still, what does it mean that the “Borders” story is published by a multimedia powerhouse that is interested predominantly in the market value of its titles? Does it mean that King has “sold out” his fictional critique of the continued colonization of Aboriginal peoples by signing up with a powerful multinational publisher, which, as part of a giant multimedia conglomerate, contributes to the monopolization,

commodification, and depoliticization of information and communication? Has he canceled out the alternative potential of his writing with his choice to publish “multinational”?

The contradictoriness King’s writing and publishing venues appear to display brings other, equally complex cases to mind: such as Makeda Silvera, a radical feminist writer and activist of color who has variously attacked dominant Eurocentric discourses of Canadian “multiculture” and economic liberalism. In 1985, Silvera co-founded Sister Vision: Black Women and Women of Color Press with Stephanie Martin after having her book *Silenced: Talks with Working Class Caribbean Women about Their Lives and Struggles as Domestic Workers in Canada* rejected by both large and small, Canadian and non-Canadian publishers. While much of her poetry and non-fiction carry the radical feminist Sister Vision imprint, Silvera’s first novel, *The Heart Does not Bend*, was launched by Random House Canada in 2002. A subdivision of Bertelsmann, Random House stands for the very (neo)liberal, Western-centric values and rationales that Silvera has untiringly attacked in her political activism as non-fictional writer, poet, and publisher. Did she “sell out” by having her novel contracted with a publisher that sustains its power by perpetuating social and economic inequalities or, in other words, (neo)liberal market values? How can she publish with both Random House and Sister Vision, which was born out of the motivation to create alternative, more equitable spheres of literary expression and production? And what does it mean that Sister Vision has recently stopped publishing altogether? Other prominent Canadian cases that come to mind are those of the acclaimed radical writers Hal Niedzviecki and Naomi Klein. Both have been actively involved in Canada’s indie/zine culture, Klein as editor of *This Magazine* and Niedzviecki as co-founder of the annual Canzine Festival of Underground Culture and the zine magazine *Broken Pencil* (of which he also was editor). At the same time, they have also published with the big multinational/national houses. Niedzviecki edited *Concrete Forest: The New Fiction of Urban Canada*, which carries the McClelland & Stewart imprint, and published several other pieces of fiction and non-fiction with the Canadian subsidiaries of Random House, Penguin, and Doubleday. Klein’s world-renowned bestseller *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* and her globalization commentary *Fences and Windows: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Globalization Debate* appeared with Random House (Knopf Canada and Vintage Canada).

Have King, Silvera, Niedzviecki, and Klein “sold out” by signing up with major national and multinational presses? Or do they constitute sites of resistance and alternative within multinational media/publishing corporations and dominant national presses? Does such a position exist at all? Do their publishing histories constitute examples of the flexibility of neoliberal and nationalist ideologies, which can thrive upon internal resistance, especially when that resistance is expressed in a

bestselling form? Or do they demonstrate that it does not matter where you publish but what you publish and that you reach as wide an audience as possible? Surely, more people have read the writings that they published with the large media- and business-savvy presses. More people have read them and, by doing so, increased the profit range and consolidated the status of these publishing ventures. As these questions indicate, the relations between the above writers and dominant publishers complicate binarist notions of local resistance (taking place “outside” the commercialist clutches of big press environments) and global/national complicity (i.e. writers publishing in these environments).¹⁶ In other words, they suggest that to publish with a multinational publisher or with McClelland & Stewart does not necessarily mean that a writer becomes complicit with the values and ideologies that drive these businesses to a degree that makes any resistance and alternative vision impossible. Neither does it mean that the reader consuming a book from such a source will not be affected and stirred into action by its potentially resistant, thought-provoking content.

Describing his relationship with the corporate media to Joe Lockhart, Michael Moore noted that

there’s some weird sleeping with the enemy going on here and the irony of it is never lost on me and I know why they’re doing it and I know why I’m doing it. They’re doing it because they’re in the business of making money and I make them money...And I’m doing it because through these large media entities, I’m hoping to reach as many people as possible...What has always kind of bothered me about this equation, this setup between the corporate masters that put my work out there...is that...they’re so convinced that they’ve done such a good job of dumbing down and numbing the minds of the American public, that the public who may watch...*Bowling for Columbine* will laugh and cry and then...switch to “Help me, I’m a Celebrity.” (“Michael Moore Interviewed”)¹⁷

Moore’s attitude is comparable to the manner in which Rohinton Mistry accepted the Oprah label on his novel *A Fine Balance* (see chapter two) in that it signifies that alternatives to dominant culture start with “the double-stake...the double movement of containment and resistance” (Hall, “Notes” 228). Like *A Fine Balance* and *Bowling for Columbine*, “Borders,” *The Heart Does not Bend*, *No Logo*, and *Concrete Forest* are simultaneously alternative narratives and international market commodities. They are consumed in many different ways, for many different reasons, and with many different outcomes. As Niedzwiecki puts it in *We Want Some Too: Underground Desire and the Reinvention of Mass Culture*:

I’ve published *Broken Pencil* all this time because the world of mass culture is our world; we belong to it and it belongs to us. I’ve written

for the mainstream press to convey the same message....even writing a column on zines for the *National Post*, flagship vehicle of Conrad Black's right-wing newspaper monopoly. The experience taught me that you can present a meaningful discussion about independent culture both within the confines of the mainstream press and outside of it. (324, 322)

Small-scale, independent publishing: The interviews

The following discussion of the interviews with the small- and micro-sized publishers Kecedonce Press, Turnstone Press, Insomniac Press, and Arsenal Pulp Press shows that this ambivalence between alternative potential and containment is also at work in the workings of independent local publishers, especially in their interactions with government funding. The different strategies the presses employ to deal with the current neoliberal climate make obvious the often tactical contradictoriness of local publishing efforts. When I started the interview project, I contacted a wide range of small, independent publishers that are situated in both the publishing "centers" Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal and the "peripheries" of publishing in Canada. The four interviews to which I refer in this chapter were made possible by the generosity of the interviewees Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm (owner and managing editor of the Aboriginal publisher Kecedonce Press), Todd Besant (managing editor of Turnstone Press in Winnipeg), Richard Almonte (until recently editor and marketing coordinator of the Toronto-based Insomniac Press), and Blaine Kylo (marketing director of Vancouver's Arsenal Pulp Press). Moreover, I also conducted an interview with Bryan Prince, owner and founder of Bryan Prince Bookseller in Hamilton, which not only broadened my perspective on this (part of the) chapter but, more generally, gave me a more concrete understanding of the workings of Canada's book industry. The interview dialogues with the four publishers took place by email between June and October 2003, and the one with Prince at his bookstore in December 2003 and January 2004. Apart from the latter, the interviews can be found, together with a short introduction, in the appendices to this project. In the following, I will address the key themes that came up in the interviews.

One theme is that of Canada's nation-state ideology. The interviews show, each one in its own particular way and context, that to be situated within the Canadian state structure does not necessarily mean to be interpellated by (all of) its ideological practices, which naturalize a Eurocentric and cultural nationalist reality and history. Hall makes clear in "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'" that the ideological practices which naturalize a particular social formation (such as the Canadian nation-state) are never ubiquitous and all-powerful but marked by contradictions and concrete historical struggles, i.e. by sites at which counter-

ideologies and alternatives can develop. As the cases of Silvera, King, Klein, Niedzwiecki, and Moore illustrate, to publish with a multinational or dominant national house does not imply the impossibility of resistance and alternative vision. The same can be said about the relationship between the above publishers and government funding. Akiwenzie-Damm's approach towards the dominant cultural policy framework clearly shows this. Asked whether the participation of Aboriginal publishers in this framework can be made relevant and fair to Aboriginal needs, she replied that "we can use the system for funding and other forms of support when it doesn't compromise what we are trying to do. We just do what we do and sometimes they come around to our way of thinking. If they don't, it doesn't stop us or silence us....The thing is, we have choice." As already noted in chapter four, Akiwenzie-Damm sees Aboriginal literature written and produced in Canada as

equal, or at the same level as Canadian literature not beneath or part of or overwhelmed by or whatever....I think that what we do is important to this country. I don't think of our literatures as part of Canadian literature so much as we're the basis upon which all other newcomer literatures have to be placed. (Interview)

Hence, Aboriginal literature should not be treated, as it currently is, as a subcategory of "Canadian literature" in processes of funding. Neither does it make sense that government support for publishers is framed in a way that tries to make Aboriginal publishers "fit the same mould as other publishers," instead of laying the groundwork for an independent Aboriginal publishing industry.

Like those of Akiwenzie-Damm, Besant's responses show an emphasis on strategic choice, though from a very different perspective – namely from that of a small, for-profit EuroCanadian prairie publisher. Besant notes that the cultural nationalist argument has served Turnstone Press as a tactics, as "one of the clubs in the bag I'm willing to use" (Besant) to get the press's books published. This argument has been employed with a view of the press's literary goals and concomitant practical-material necessities; i.e. it is not that Besant or Turnstone unwittingly subscribe to its rhetoric and are unaware of its neoliberal, hegemonic currents. Likewise, Turnstone does not see the regional marker or mandate as a cultural nationalist marker or mandate, which is what Henighan or Ralston Saul would claim it to be. Rather, it "helps us [the Turnstone staff] to focus our list and reflects our roots and our interests." Comparable to Kecedonce's operations, those of Turnstone function in strategically contradictory terms, i.e. inside the dominant neoliberal and cultural nationalist policy and industry framework in a way that makes use of the latter's resources but does not (necessarily) recognize or comply with its ideologies and values. Besant further emphasizes that even though literary publishing is a "type of publishing [that] is difficult to do well without grants....no amount of government funding covers the whole cost of any book." Turnstone's business plan

uses a variety of revenue streams. Thus, when government funding drops, as it did most drastically in 1995, “you adjust your business plan.” For Insomniac Press and Arsenal Pulp Press, this adjustment has meant a movement toward a more diversified and commercialized publishing program focussing on non-fiction titles (business books, travel books, current events books, books by celebrities, political titles, cultural, gender, multicultural, gay and lesbian studies, etc.). This allows the presses “to continue regardless of what happen[s] with the constantly changing funding opportunities” (Kyllo). Almonte emphasizes that one commercial, non-fictional “‘big’ book per season or per year can...give us the stability we need to keep doing what we do.”

This raises another theme that came up in the interviews: literary commodification. What is significant about the interviewees’ responses in the context of contemporary cultural policy-making and binarist appeals such as Redhill and Spalding’s to “Buy Canadian This Holiday Season,” is that they specify the issue of literary commodification as a domestic issue of governmental involvement and “values.” Akiwenzie-Damm and Almonte are most straightforward about this point. The former observes that, “ironically enough, the Heritage Canada vision of literature isn’t from a ‘heritage’ or ‘culture’ perspective – it sees literature and publishing in terms of an industry.” And the latter notes that for Insomniac Press, it is a matter of “doing more commercial non-fiction titles...to get more funding from DCH [the Department of Canadian Heritage].” As I have demonstrated in previous chapters, many literary critics and policy-makers tend to interpret processes of literary commodification through either elitist manifestations of immaterial “world literature” or nightmarish visions of Americanized mass-commodified literature. They often miss to recognize what the four interviews confirm – the neoliberal undercurrents in contemporary cultural policy-making in Canada that expose the government as an “enabler” of literary commodification. For instance, Heritage Canada’s Book Publishing Industry Development Plan (BPIDP) does not support not-for-profit publishers such as Kegedonce that do not contribute to the international competitiveness of Canada’s book industry. Of concern for eligible for-profit publishers such as Insomniac and Arsenal Pulp is the fact that the “BPIDP rewards profitability, while the Canada Council penalizes it. The CC [Canada Council] has what is called a ‘clawback’ to its funding, so that if a company is getting too much money from other sources, a portion of what they normally would be awarded by the CC is subtracted” (Kyllo).¹⁸ Besides, “the different levels of government [federal and provincial] are trying to use each other to diminish the amount of support for publishers” (Almonte). Ontario, for example, is trying to “clawback” tax credits it gave to publishers such as Insomniac on investments in new Canadian-authored titles, on the grounds that they receive grants from the federal government.¹⁹

As small for-profit publishers, Turnstone and Insomniac/Arsenal Pulp have chosen different business strategies to deal with the commodifying emphasis in the Heritage Canada funding they receive. While Turnstone has attempted to become more market-savvy without compromising its commitment to publish fiction and creative non-fiction only, Insomniac and Arsenal Pulp have increasingly focused on commercial non-fiction as the key genre “that makes publishing viable” (Almonte). The perspectives and experiences conveyed in the interviews with Almonte and Kylo manifest the seeming contradictions between Heritage Canada’s cultural nationalist rhetoric and commercially-oriented funding practice as in fact the normal neoliberal outlook adopted by the department and the federal government more generally. Asked whether it is a contradiction that Insomniac considers itself a national and a continental press, Almonte replied that “[t]here is absolutely no contradiction, especially in this era of North American free trade. The narrow definition of cultural nationalism your question implies has not really been at work in government funding for a while. Today, publishing is seen as one of the ‘cultural industries.’” The “national” Canadian publisher, i.e. the one who deserves BPIDP support, is one that promotes the competitiveness and marketability of the Canadian book and its industry, at home and abroad (especially in the U.S.). This cultural nationalist practice is market-oriented, continental in outlook, specifically Canadian-neoliberal. It is, for instance, in the service of the “nation” and “national literature” for a Canadian publisher receiving BPIDP support to publish a certain number of American authors (as Insomniac does) as long as the capital proceeds remain in Canada. It is likewise serviceable that Canadian publishers attempt to reach the, compared to Canada, vast U.S. consumer market for books. In the cases of both Insomniac and Arsenal Pulp international sales approach 50 per cent. MacSkimming puts it this way: small independent publishers in Canada “aren’t necessarily above greed, given a choice. But their all-out pursuit of American readers has more to do with basic survival – and with a drastically altered market back home” (360). In this climate, being a micro-sized, not-for-profit publisher trying to develop the country’s Aboriginal publishing industry is not important for “Canada,” i.e. not BPIDP funded. As Akiwenzie-Damm notes, “Kegedonce is really frustrated and disturbed by the lack of response [and exclusion] from Heritage Canada,” whose support for Aboriginal publishing does not extend beyond “the PARTIAL funding of 2 catalogues, and the one time purchase of a banner.”²⁰

According to Almonte and Besant, the workings of the so-called “national media” in Canada constitute another significant contradiction in the dominant ideology of “national culture.” Both emphasize that the Canadian presence of foreign-owned multinational publishers and their concentration in Toronto is not the key issue and challenge their presses face. Multinationals certainly are very powerful players in the book industry that need to be reckoned with. However, for the most

part, they operate on vastly different business tactics, values, and goals and frequently address different audiences, themes, and authors. What Besant and Almonte consider a major issue is the attitude of the Toronto-based national media (*The Globe and Mail*, CBC, *The National Post*, CTV, *The Toronto Star*), which display a close, cliquish relationship with the big branch plant presses and national publishers in Toronto. Almonte complains that the major national media are “convinced that the only interesting, worthwhile and sexy books come from the big publishers.” Canadian literature actually tends to take the guise of “TorLit” in the book segments of these major media, whose “Canadian” allotment is dominated by titles published by the large, foreign- and Canadian-owned presses in Toronto. So, while Toronto itself has a wide variety of media outlets and is residence for numerous independent publishers and booksellers that publicize a diverse range of Toronto and non-Toronto writers, the way the Toronto-based national media operate homogenizes and brands what titles and authors gets “air time” in Canada. As Besant puts it, “Toronto isn’t the issue – *The Globe and Mail*, CBC, *The National Post*, etc., etc., etc., are the issue.” For a small house such as Turnstone, Insomniac, Kecedonce, and Arsenal Pulp that largely publishes authors from Canada, to get some attention in the national media – to convince them “that our books are just as worthy as those of the ‘big’ houses” (Almonte) – means to invest large sums of a very tight budget in advertising and relationship building or to have a book nominated for a national or international award. Kylo notes that “Arsenal has pretty good relationships with the national book media, because we expend time, effort, and resources to do so.”

All in all, Insomniac, Turnstone, and Arsenal Pulp for the most part build on localized book promotion approaches that are affordable and that consist of doing “lots of small events across the country to build an author’s profile” (Almonte). This includes author tours in local and regional settings (e.g. Winnipeg, Calgary, Victoria, Vancouver), authors doing their own marketing, getting reviews in smaller (local, regional, specialty) magazines and newspapers, developing “more personal relationships with booksellers” (Besant), and so on. Kecedonce, on the other hand, takes an international orientation, collaborating in particular with Aboriginal publishers, writers, storytellers, audiences, and media in Australia and Aotearoa. For Akiwenzie-Damm, “focusing only on trying to make a mark in Canada” does not work for contemporary Aboriginal writers and publishers in Canada, “because that...places us as a subset of Canadian literature and we’re not.” A factor that has significantly contributed to the “more personal relationships” between local booksellers and publishers such as Turnstone, Insomniac, and Arsenal Pulp is the quasi-monopoly of Indigo-Chapters. As Besant puts it, unlike the big multinational publishers, “we can’t afford to buy co-op in the one large chain (and even when it’s offered as a ‘deal’ we have no way to enforce or ensure we are getting what we pay for), therefore we work the niches.” Insomniac and Arsenal Pulp have both hired

their own marketing staff to coordinate media and publicity in Canada and the United States. Their promotional activities include Toronto and its national media, though they sometimes hire a Toronto-based media agency to handle media contacts for a book that has broad appeal and thus will profit from coverage by the vast variety of dominant, non-dominant, and specialty media outlets in Toronto. Kylo remarks that a media agency “can devote time to the one broad appeal book, where our marketing department (made up of one person [i.e. Kylo]) has up to fifteen books they are generating interest in.” It should also be emphasized that Toronto is the only city for which either Arsenal Pulp, Insomniac, or Turnstone from time to time hire a marketing agency. What makes Toronto different from any other city in Canada is that “it is bigger in every sense, but most importantly [that] there are more people living in metro Toronto than anywhere else in Canada. So Toronto has more media outlets (particularly specialty media like ethnic radio stations, television networks, and newspapers)” (Kylo).

According to Kylo, the actual cause for the misconception that books published by “brand-name” publishers are better than those published by independents “is more general, pervasive, and problematic than the multinationals being pals with the media.” It is a misconception that pervades booksellers, local/regional/national media outlets, and the Canadian public more generally. Kylo here points to the close interrelatedness of literary production, media coverage, distribution, and consumption (on both the local and national levels) as well as to the historical tension between dominant and independent book trade venues. This broader perspective is important in that it emphasizes the agency of multiple parties – namely consumers, literary media critics, booksellers, publishers, editors, advertisers, writers, agents, and so on – and thus de-emphasizes that of the multinationals and the national media. It, for instance, takes into account that specific consumer choices and tastes have always had a considerable impact on publishing decisions and media coverage as well as on what booksellers stock and advertisers spotlight. Talking about his experience as a bookseller, Prince emphasizes that readers are discriminating consumers and not just blind followers of trends set by bestseller lists, book reviews in major newspapers and magazines, and the book awards business. It is oversimplifying to assume that the choices of book buyers are decided by publicity budgets and the book celebrity business. This observation by Prince not only highlights the unpredictability of the book business but also raises the question as to what extent the reading habits and choices of book consumers are in fact decided by publicity in the major national media. What about other influences? What about the often excellent customer service of local booksellers, the internet, the sale of books by big discount retailers (e.g. Costco, Wal-Mart, Price Club, Sears), localist/regionalist sentiments, and the community networks in which many local booksellers, media, and publishers participate?

A broader perspective hence stresses that it might, overall, be more rewarding for independent publishers to establish close relationships with local/regional and niche booksellers and media than to “convince” their national counterparts. As Prince points out, many independent booksellers set their own trends and, unlike the big chain stores, do not just follow trends set by “national” awards, mass marketing, and reviews. He concurs with MacSkimming that sales representatives of the Literary Press Group have worked “particularly well with independent bookstores committed to carrying small-press titles” (MacSkimming 270). Seen in this light, the “national” appeal or character of a book is determined on many levels and differs in different contexts. Prince makes another thought-provoking observation regarding the workings of Canada’s book business. While critical of what he calls the “Canadian mass-marketing book circus” (which includes literary awards, bestseller lists, the CBC’s “Canada Reads” project, Indigo-Chapters and other large-scale retail forces, and multinational publishers), he nonetheless insists that this “circus” is an important component of Canada’s book industry as it exists in its present form. Creating a generic interest in books, which do not hold a strong place among contemporary cultural consumers and in the media, the “book circus” generates much-needed attention and capital for small literary presses and booksellers. It is in this sense, Prince notes, that “Indigo-Chapters is important to our business.” According to Prince, there would be no independent publishing and, consequently, bookselling in Canada without the success of these dominant book industry players. What seems like a contradiction in terms, independent and big book business, is a dynamic, albeit uneven playing field. It is in this playing field that alternative literary spaces forge their ways.

Concluding remarks

The perspectives and experiences conveyed in the interviews with Akiwenzie-Damm, Kylo, Besant, Almonte, and Prince underscore that literary production in Canada is about a complex multitude of literary and non-literary issues: about cultural diversity, the state in its public functions, the state of Aboriginal publishing and literature, the workings of Heritage Canada and the Canada Council as federal public spheres in which cultural decisions are made, the spending of Canadian tax dollars, the confrontation of dominant values, the circulation of “Canadian” cultural content in the so-called “national media,” ideological struggles, the notion of “Canadian national literature,” and so on. I would argue that they highlight the need to rethink present governmental support rationales regarding literary and more generally cultural production (a theme discussed in chapter three). It might be true that, as the *Activity Report* states, Canadian-owned publishers receiving support from the BPIDP “contribute largely to the diversity of genres as opposed to foreign publishers.” However, one also needs to reckon that the BPIDP, just like the Block Grant

Program (see chapter three), is an exclusive program set up by the cultural and political establishment, which marginalizes all those publishers, i.e. emerging publishers, micro-sized publishers, or publishers of both written and spoken texts, that do not fulfil a certain sales and profitability requirement. Funding is limited to presses who have published “in print form a minimum of 15 Canadian-authored trade titles, of which at least four were published in each of the three preceding financial years; or 10 Canadian-authored educational or scholarly titles, of which at least two were published in each of the three preceding financial years” (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, *The Challenge of Change* 84).²¹ In 1998-99, 426 of 627 Canadian-owned and -controlled publishers did *not* receive BPIDP support (*Activity Report*).

This chapter, then, confirms an argument made in chapter three: the argument for increased government support to local, independent publishers that counter the current bestselling trend, which reduces literature written in Canada to the literature of selected, internationally marketable stars who are predominantly published by multinational corporations and national presses that are linked to them (e.g. McClelland & Stewart). In the words of Kylo, “government support is there to enable publishers to produce books that NEED to be published, because they are important in one way or another, but which may not sell sufficient copies to cover costs.” Together, the interviews, the *Activity Report* data, and the publishing histories of Silvera, Klein, and Niedzwiecki call attention to the fact that independent local publishers and booksellers are indispensable for maintaining literary diversity in Canada and creating more pluralized, localized, and hence accessible public spheres of literary-cultural decision-making and belonging. As already argued in chapter three, for the flourishing of small, local publishers to be more than just a phase that started with the Massey Commission and, like Keynesianism, is presently coming to a close, the government needs to take seriously the potential of non-nationalist and pluralized alternatives of cultural policy-making and funding. And as intimated in chapter four, it needs to Indigenize (i.e. decolonize, rewrite and re-right) its cultural funding and policy rationales. In the case of publishing this would mean, as Akiwenzie-Damm indicates, that Heritage Canada should support the development of an Aboriginal infrastructure: from Aboriginal writers to editors, designers, distributors, publishers, marketing coordinators, readers, and so on. Heritage Canada “could at the very least begin by hiring at least one Aboriginal officer...to work with the Aboriginal book publishers of Canada” (Akiwenzie-Damm).

Finally, it should be repeated that government support for Canada’s book industry is also important, because “there are not enough people in Canada to truly support an indigenous publishing industry” (Kylo) and “because publishing has, is and will always be precarious economically” (Almonte). The latter is true not only for publishing in Canada and for small-scale local publishing. As Besant notes, “most

discussions on profitability in publishing (excluding educational) are somewhat tail-chasing. It's simply not that profitable as a business, not even for the ultras [multinational publishers]." This statement is particularly accurate in the contemporary age of multimedia entertainment in which it is by far more popular to watch a television show, rent a movie, or choose some other form of electronic entertainment, than to read a book. Gauging Canada's book industry against this background, Prince comes to the conclusion that small, independent publishers and booksellers need "big business" branch plants and agencies, as well as the high-publicity award, bestseller, and advertisement business in order to generate interest in and demand for books. Moreover, the publishing histories of Silvera, King, Klein, and Niedzwiecki (and one could refer to many more Canadian authors here) illustrate that the workings of Canadian branches of multinational publishers have created the potential for alternative and resistance from within corporate confines. Obviously, things are not, as frequently assumed in cultural nationalist discourse, black and white when it comes to Canadian-owned and foreign-owned publishing in Canada.

Seen from the perspective of this chapter, Redhill and Spalding's cultural nationalist call to "buy Canadian" by buying from a Canadian-owned publisher is flimsy, since it tends to binarize what is not binarist – the national and the neoliberal – and equate what cannot necessarily be put on par – Canadian-owned publishing and Canadian national literature. As demonstrated in the section on multinational publishers in Canada, it does not make sense to allege that it is "Canadian" to buy Silvera's *Sister Vision* titles and "unCanadian" or "less Canadian" to buy her first novel, *The Heart Does not Bend*, which was launched by the multinational publisher and corporate Bertelsmann sister Random House. It is equally insufficient and misleading to proceed on, as Henighan, Wyle et al., and Ralston Saul tend to do, a binary opposition of the "truly" national literary region and the neoliberal, market-driven literary center Toronto. As I have shown from different perspectives in the preceding chapters, it is only with consideration of the political and social values and power structures behind the "Canadian" or "national" that an analysis of Canada's literary conditions under neoliberal globalization can provide concrete meaning. I see this consideration missing in the above discourses of regionalism and Canadian-owned national publishing. These discourses lack questions that are crucial when it comes to exploring alternatives to the neoliberal trend in Canada, questions such as: On what kinds of publics does the literary region build? Where and how does decision-making take place? Do the current publishing policies reflect the discursive claims of regionalism/Canadian ownership? Where does the literary region/Canadian-owned publishing leave Aboriginal literatures and publishers? As I have indicated in the last part of this chapter, to become aware of and address these and other questions means that we (as literary critics) must hear and learn directly from independent publishers in our study of the effects of contemporary

globalization on Canada's book trade. It necessitates the direct encounter and exchange not only between independent publishers and literary critics, but also between them and independent booksellers, writers, literary agents and organizations, and people involved in international trade and cultural exchange on a policy level.

¹ The process of "global localism" has also been labeled "globloc" by critics such as Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, Roland Robertson, and Mike Featherstone. The latter notes that "the term is modeled on the Japanese *dochaku*, which derives from the agricultural principle of adapting one's farming techniques to local conditions and was taken up by Japanese business interests in the 1980s" (64).

² According to Henighan, Vancouver/British Columbia takes an "in-between" position between Toronto and the "region." It "shares aspects of both the regional presses and the Toronto ones...through a combination of the growth in population and prosperity of its own region and the connections Raincoast, which has emerged as the region's largest publishing conglomerate, has established with U.S. West Coast markets" (159).

³ For a detailed historical overview of literary regionalism in Canada, see Lisa Chalykoff's essay "Overcoming the Two Solitudes of Canadian Literary Regionalism."

⁴ The canon debate between Frank Davey and Robert Lecker displays a similar nationalist dynamic. Davey attacks Lecker's assertion of a singular, federalist, Ontario-centered canon of Canadian literature, which he counters with an anti-federalist, regionalist, pluralized, and yet nationalist approach. It is not that Davey questions Lecker's construction of a literary canon and the notion of a unified national literature *per se*. He rather disapproves of the latter's move towards this "end result."

⁵ *Insomniac's* editor and marketing coordinator Richard Almonte emphasized in his interview conversation with me that *Insomniac* publishes not only Toronto-based writers but also regional authors living in places like Alberta and Saskatchewan (see Appendix B).

⁶ For a detailed account of the different phases of "National Policy" in Canada, see Janine Brodie's *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism*.

⁷ In addition to George Parker's extensive work on book publishing in Canada, R.A. Shields's "Imperial Policy and the Canadian Copyright Act of 1889," Carole Gerson's "The Question of a National Publishing System in English-speaking Canada," and Pearson Gundy's "The Development of Trade Book Publishing in Canada" provide comprehensive insight in the development of Canada's publishing industry and its fight for independent copyright law in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

⁸ Moreover, the "makers" of the 1900 Copyright Act were confronted with the challenge of resolving the dilemma Canadian publishers faced with the passing of the 1891 U.S. Copyright Act and concomitant U.S.-British copyright agreement. The former contained the manufacturing clause and the latter guaranteed American publishers seeking copyright in Britain that right throughout the British possessions under the British statute of 1847. Between 1790 and 1891, U.S. copyright law did not offer any protection to works by foreign authors.

⁹ In her account of the Hugh Eayrs and John Gray years at Macmillan Canada, Ruth Panofsky notes that Eayrs, who was the publisher's president from 1921 to 1940, "transformed the firm from a branch-plant operation to an important Canadian publishing house" (99).

¹⁰ As MacSkimming notes, this is a development in which the Literary Press Group as the marketing association for small-scale Canadian-owned publishers of primarily literary works played a major role.

¹¹ This also applies to the major Canadian-owned agency publishing and distribution companies, Thomas Allen & Son Ltd., H.B. Fenn and Company Ltd., and Raincoast Books. While they all do some publishing of their own, their major revenues come from the exclusive distribution and sale in Canada of works published by foreign firms. Hushion House Publishing is the only major

Canadian-owned agency publishing and distribution company that does not do any original publishing.

¹² As already indicated in previous chapters, many critics have argued that the U.S.-Canadian Free Trade Agreement signaled the return “to Canada’s historical open-door policy” and thus the end of “most of the mild economic-nationalist policies, begun in the 1960s, that had started to reverse, to a small degree, the overwhelming extent of foreign ownership and control of Canada’s [economic] sectors” (Laxer, *Open for Business* 4).

¹³ The *Report* “generally uses the number of publishers with [total] revenues over \$50,000” but is planning to drop this cutoff in future statistics.

¹⁴ To clarify: In practice, the “published in Canada” label does not mean that all activities constituting the publication of a title (i.e. editorial, design, copyright, promotion, printing, sales, distribution, accounting, and warehousing) are necessarily accomplished within Canada. As MacSkimming explained to me in a private email exchange, “the minimum requirement for a title to be published (as opposed to merely distributed) in Canada...is that the publisher has licensed the Canadian publishing rights from the author AND has printed [not necessarily in Canada] a separate edition for Canada, bearing the publisher’s own imprint. The publisher has, in other words, invested in a Canadian edition and assumed all the financial risk for it.” For instance, while Thomas King’s books are edited, designed, and sold in Canada, they may or may not be printed in Canada. “Printing and reprinting can take place anywhere in the world depending on cost and timing. There are several different ways of handling all of these stages and no single common way” (Iris Tupholme, vice president, publisher, and editor in chief at HarperCollins Canada, in a private email exchange).

¹⁵ This phrase is taken from Robert Entman’s *Democracy without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics*.

¹⁶ This binary of local resistance and global complicity has been variously complicated by cultural critics. Slavoj Žižek, for instance, argues in “Against the Double Blackmail” that local resistances, “from Milošević to Le Pen” (22), are symptoms of the very forces they seek to resist. For Žižek, “[t]he way to fight the capitalist New World Order is...by focusing on the only serious question today: how to build *transnational* political movements and institutions strong enough to constrain seriously the unlimited rule of capital” (22).

¹⁷ *Bowling for Columbine* is broadcast by MGM and United Artists, and Moore’s recent bestsellers, *Stupid White Men* and *Dude, Where’s My Country?*, are published by the HarperCollins imprint Regan Books and by the Time Warner Book Group’s Warner Books, respectively.

¹⁸ MacSkimming concurs that the BPIDP “was intended to strengthen the publishing business industrially by rewarding success in the marketplace (as opposed to the Canada Council’s emphasis on cultural output)” (216). In 1998-99, “74% of publishers receiving support from the Canada Council for the Arts also received support through the BPIDP” (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, *The Challenge of Change* 17).

¹⁹ This tax credit provision is currently in place in Ontario and British Columbia only.

²⁰ As already noted in chapter three, Akiwenzie-Damm emphasizes that, by contrast, the relationship to the Canada Council, an arm’s-length agency comprised in the Heritage Canada portfolio, “is actually quite good...[T]here are Aboriginal staff, an Aboriginal CC advisory committee, CC board members (at least one), and Aboriginal participation in juries. There are Aboriginal specific grant programs in place, run by Aboriginal staff.”

²¹ Other requirements are that the publisher’s “principal activity must be book publishing” (Standing Committee, *The Challenge of Change* 83); that the press can “demonstrate the ability to edit, design, produce and distribute the books that it publishes” (83); that it is controlled and owned by Canadians to at least 75 per cent as well as headquartered and to at least 75 per cent operating in Canada (84); that it has completed “at least 36 months of operation as a business

whose principal activity is book publishing” (84); that it has attained “a minimum level of net eligible sales of \$200,000 (or \$130,000 for official language minority publishers and Aboriginal publishers)” (Heritage, *Final Report*).

Conclusion – Chapter 6

Written Within the Neoliberal University

I want to suggest that if we are to take seriously our responsibilities as critics and educators, especially at a moment in our cultural history where the academy is increasingly subject to a process of delegitimation and where our very frames of reference are massively determined by corporate political interests, then we need to raise some hard pedagogical and methodological issues. What *is* the function of Canadian criticism at the present time? (Heble, “New Contexts” 84)

Directing this question by Ajay Heble to the field of Canadian literary studies, I have argued in this dissertation that we need to do more than open our study and the literary canon(s) to more texts, that we should take a radically different view of texts in relation to their social and cultural functions. In the previous chapters I have tested and sought to give validity to my claim that we should not, at this point, study (and teach) Canadian literature in order to reproduce a national tradition, but in order to approach the question of globalization and the issue of neoliberalism from alternative perspectives. The national marker is too narrow a choice when we are deciding about the eligibility of literary works for the contemporary university curriculum, classroom, academic journal, and government funding. As the four chapters have demonstrated, Canadian literature is a “literature of globalization” and needs to be studied and taught as such. Not only is it the literature of a society born in modernity as a result of the isochronic project of European colonialist globalization, but its contemporary conditions require an understanding of neoliberal globalization as the context within which all literary production and consumption (including literary study) take place. I have demonstrated in chapter two that, built upon the premise of postmodern liberalism, North American discourses that constitute the trend toward literary analyses of globalization – i.e. the often overlapping discourses of world literature, global literary study, postcolonialism, and multiculturalism – have tended to read globalization in purely textual and historical terms that emphasize transnational and transcultural ideas and experiences. Albeit directed against the totalizing implications of the term globalization (e.g. those of the single world-system, Americanization, or “Jihad vs. McWorld”), these approaches have run the risk of excluding the material realities of literary globalization from their inventory of study objects and materialist analyses of the intersections of the literary and the neoliberal from their critical methodology. With their focus on the historical dimensions of globalization and postmodernist tropes of difference and plurality, they have (perhaps unwittingly) consolidated the flexible and diversity-embracing cultural logic of neoliberal capitalism.

In Canada, critical discussions of multicultural and cosmopolitan national literature have reinforced the myths that distort Canada's subscription to neoliberal globalization and reduce the latter to American neo-imperialism, to the nightmare of a globally commodified, Americanized culture that threatens Canada's cultural-national sovereignty. Proceeding from an idealized notion of cultural pluralism, they have tended to obscure the very real asymmetries in access to places of power inside Canada, as well as the commercial character of the sanitized image of multicultural, cosmopolitan Canadianness. Accordingly, this dissertation project has been guided by three interrelated objectives: the first one being to refocus scrutiny on literary and non-literary matters that have been rendered marginal in more traditional Canadian literary studies; the second to query literary concepts and cultural policy-making in Canada, which have drawn on EuroCanadian experiences, norms, and dominance; and the third to explore alternatives to neoliberal globalization and to emphasize that they indeed exist, notwithstanding assurances of the historical inevitability of the global spread of neoliberal capitalism. I have argued that for Canadian literary critics to be committed to the notion of a literature written and produced in Canada that is not completely reduced to the logic of the market means to be committed to literary approaches that are materialist, non-nationalist, and interdisciplining. A practice of literary studies along these lines is concerned with the larger cultural, social, economic, and political issues that influence the production of literature in Canada – including the issue of what constitutes a public of literary opinion- and decision-making. In the previous chapters, I have illustrated and probed this practice of materialist literary criticism through analyses of Rohinton Mistry's appearance on The Oprah Winfrey Book Club, Pico Iyer's apotheosis of multicultural Canadian literature, and the *PMLA*'s special issue on "Globalizing Literary Studies" (chapter two); Canadian cultural policy-making (chapter three); isochronic and allochronic globalization scripts and literary criticism (chapter four); and publishing in Canada (chapter five). Combining theoretical reflection, materialist analysis, specialist knowledge, and interviews with editors and booksellers, the four chapters have emphasized what is often neglected and dismissed in traditional literary studies: the importance of reading (extensively) in other disciplines, research outside of the academic institution, and the study and teaching not just of literary texts but also of their conditions of production, availability, and selection.

In addition to reassessing the key themes and arguments tackled in the different chapters of this dissertation, this conclusion also aims at relating them to the institution of the university and, in particular, to McMaster University where the dissertation itself has been written. A meditation on the university (both in more general terms and as McMaster University) at this point of conclusion is important, since it reveals critical ironies and contradictions underlying this project. To put it in Michael Moore's words, "there's some weird sleeping with the enemy going on here

and the irony of it better not be lost on me.” I am aware, for example, that this dissertation, a materialist analysis of the literary conditions in Canada under neoliberal globalization, has been written within the neoliberal Canadian university and thus within the very structures it critiques. It has depended on university and government funding that increasingly focuses on serving the needs of the neoliberal domestic and global marketplace. While theorizing and probing the notion of a “Canadian literature” that is not completely reduced to the logic of the market, I went through processes of commodifying myself as a graduate student and materialist literary criticism as a critical approach. I have attended meetings set up by the English department’s Professionalization Committee, aimed at making its graduate students more competitive on the job market – a market which has increasingly come to offer the prospect of sessional and contract rather than fulltime academic labor. These part time positions pay little, give no benefits, and often begin in September and end in April. I have tried to become professionalized by getting my work published in established literary journals that do not really appreciate the kind of “amateur” work I do. And I have participated in the scholarship competition “business” of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Ontario Graduate Scholarship program (OGS), and the German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD). Actually, as I write this, I am in the process of applying for DAAD and SSHRC postdoctoral fellowships, knowing that the latter institution is in the process of transforming itself from a source of research grants to a “Knowledge Council” that focuses on knowledge production in the humanities and social sciences that is more in tune with the needs of the contemporary “knowledge economy” and the neoliberal agenda of the federal government (see SSHRC, *From Granting Council to Knowledge Council*).

These more recent developments at SSHRC emphasize the urgency of an argument variously made by critical educationalists and cultural critics such as Amitava Kumar, Masao Miyoshi, Peter Baker, Cary Nelson, Timothy Clark, and Henry Giroux: to study literature and culture at the present moment means to reflect on the relations between universities, corporations, and governments. Since the late 1980s, there has been an upsurge of critical writing on the growing commercialization and privatization of higher education,¹ as it has come to play a significant role in governmental strategies for securing competitiveness in and larger shares of global markets. Clark argues in “Literature and the Crisis in the Concept of the University” that in this neoliberal climate, the notion of liberal education “has lost its *raison d’être*” (235) as a nation-building constituent.² So has “the idea of culture as both the origin and the *telos* of the human sciences” (235), since culture and education are now commonly reduced to their commodity aspects. Looking back at the previous chapters and, in particular, at the many instances I point out in which cultural nationalism and neoliberalism work together in cultural policy and how they

even accommodate literary criticism, I would argue that Clark's argument is not completely accurate in the Canadian context. It is not so much that liberal education has been deprived of its national-cultural mission but that this mission has been rearticulated in a way that is congruent with the needs of the neoliberal marketplace. Like the government, the Canadian university system seems to increasingly play the role of the "enabler," providing a flexible framework within which global capitalist activity can take place. The function of liberal education seems to have shifted from providing "the skilled manpower to manage and direct private corporations" (Axelrod, *Scholars and Dollars* 5) towards creating spaces and conditions in which private corporations directly manage the activities of students and faculty (see Axelrod, Newson and Buchbinder, Calvert and Kuehn, Carroll and Beaton, Findlay, and Sears).

As Len Findlay puts it in "Runes of Marx and *The University in Ruins*," which was written for the *University of Toronto Quarterly's* special issue on Bill Readings' *The University in Ruins*, we need to be suspicious of the belief that the university in Canada is willing to play an important role in rethinking national priorities at a time of shrinking state power and advancing market power. We need to be suspicious of the belief that liberal education is still meant to be a "public good," a term that refers to services which "governments choose to supply from public funds...national defence, public security, education, health services, telecommunication networks, road, rail...the preservation of national monuments, water supply, national radio and television services" (Gordon Marshall 430). Findlay gives a counter-response to what many of his co-contributors to the special issue on *The University in Ruins* decry as the end of the university as public sphere and public good. He argues that the Canadian university has not ceased to be a public sphere but rather has been transformed into a public sphere dominated by private market interests.³ As the SSHRC case demonstrates, government support for higher education is not being erased; rather it is shifting from a balance of support for universities, research, and students toward a focus on immediately applicable knowledge production, research-corporate linkages, and competitiveness in the global economy. The discussion in chapter three makes clear that this process of reconstruction is part of a larger neoliberal conversion of Canada's cultural and social public spheres. What we are experiencing, today, is the large-scale commercialization and privatization of Canadian educational, cultural, and social values, policies, and publics.

John Calvert and Larry Kuehn's claim, made in *Pandora's Box: Corporate Power, Free Trade and Canadian Education*, that NAFTA "is the driving force behind the fundamental restructuring of Canada's universities" (104) has to be seen in light of the current transformations *inside* Canadian society and policy-making. Calvert and Kuehn run the risk of one-sidedly ascribing the commercializing and privatizing shift in Canadian educational approaches to the *outside* pressures of U.S. imperialism

(continentalization).⁴ Emphasizing the exodus of Canadian researchers to better-paying American universities and the concomitant Americanization of Canada's system of higher education (160), they tend to reduce the neoliberal Canadian university to the Americanized university. Such an approach masks the Canadian government's and Canadian universities' voluntary, deliberate subscription to neoliberal values and practices. While it is important to examine the effects economic convergence has on Canada's system of (higher) education,⁵ we also and simultaneously need to analyze how the abandonment of Canada's national economic policy reflects on and is reflected in the area of national educational policy. This brings up a key argument of this dissertation, namely that what is at stake right now is the rethinking of dominant "values" – of how we define and understand education (or literary publishing, or cultural production, or literary criticism) to work in this time and for what reasons – and not the reinvigoration of a notion of national sovereignty that has been reduced to the issue of international competitiveness.

The latter seems to be the path taken by Canada's government and by many universities at the moment. J. R. S. Prichard remarked in his 2000 Killam Lecture, entitled "Federal Support for Higher Education and Research in Canada: The New Paradigm," that the 1994 *Green Paper on Higher Education* moved Canada's competitiveness in the global economy center stage in Canadian educational policy. The *Green Paper* drew attention to "Canada's disappointing record of productivity growth compared to the United States, Canada's relative under-investment in research and development, the loss of highly skilled personnel to the United States, the growing importance of intellectual capital and intellectual property, and the growing pressures of the knowledge economy" (Prichard 20; see Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education). Prichard argues that the new (corporate, neoliberal) educational policy framework, which developed out of studies such as the *Green Paper*, will allow Canada's leading research universities "to aspire to full membership in the ranks of the leading public research universities of the world" (44). This statement reveals an isochronic desire I have discussed in chapter four in the context of current cultural policy-making and literary criticism in Canada. It is the dual, historical and (neo)liberal desire of making Canada – be it its higher education, literature, or culture – catch up with the global vanguards of knowledge, culturedness, and market economics. According to Prichard, investment in a strong national educational framework must work on the basis of economic performance, not equity. Canada must build up its research-intensive universities in order to become globally competitive. He argues that "[f]or too long Canada, in the name of equal opportunity, has had policies unduly favouring homogeneity, not differentiation" (33), with the result of achieving the mediocrity of all instead of promoting the few to become "competitive with the best in the world" (33).⁶

Mired in isochronic vanguardism, the educational framework promoted by Prichard and increasingly by contemporary federal and provincial governments does not take into consideration the positive potential of alternative, allochronic Canadian approaches. Like in the cases of A.J.M. Smith, Northrop Frye, and Di Brandt, the latter's anxieties about Canada's belatedness and catching-up to vanguardist standards ignore the possibility of an alternative (non-Eurocentric, non-isochronic) Canadian modernity and university; i.e. the usefulness of retaining a positive notion of Canada's belatedness. This framework thus also negates what has been explored in chapter four through analyses of Nega Mezlekia's autobiographical account of Ethiopia's more recent history and Thomas King and Taiaiake Alfred's expositions of Aboriginal life in Canada: the reality of multiple modernities and globalization scripts that coexist and compete with the isochronic Western model, albeit in highly asymmetrical ways. Steeped in the isochronic model, Canadian university education has taken a course of intense professionalization. Donald Goellnicht notes in his essay "From Novitiate Culture to Market Economy: The Professionalization of Graduate Students" that the period since the 1980s "has witnessed a shift in the way we train graduate students, from...a traditional novitiate culture to a competitive market economy" (475). It was in the 1980s, a time of resurgent capitalist conservatism in the West (477), that programs for the professional training of graduate students came into being in the English department at McMaster University.

Under the managerial, budget-driven Mulroney and Chrétien governments, university funding and, in particular, funding for the humanities has continually decreased and forced faculties "to compete more and more avidly for a smaller and smaller financial pie, to become lean and mean" (Goellnicht 477). Today, faculty members are encouraged to see themselves "as entrepreneurs, competing for an increased share of the intellectual market, in which publications and awards constitute capital" (477). It does not matter anymore *what* they teach and research but that they do so *profitably*. Borrowing Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, Goellnicht observes that "[t]he primary thing administrators are interested in is how much capital faculty members – or even graduate students winning external scholarships – can amass and reinvest to create more capital" (478). Capital is measured "by the size and number of external grants won, the number of citations of one's work, and one's 'profile' outside the university that accompanies such 'success.'" These are the things that bring results in our economy, that get us hired, tenured, and promoted" (478). Specialized research and applied production with a quick payoff have become the way to make an academic career. Faculty members have come to function as specialists compensating the needs of particular market niches,⁷ and one might argue that SSHRC's planned transformation is designed so to make the humanities and social sciences "catch up" with the natural, health, and engineering

sciences in fulfilling this function. At the same time, academic labor has become restructured in a way that reflects the more general economic trend to reorganize workforces in terms of high flexibility and minimal permanent employment (Sears 146-47).⁸ Departments at McMaster University and many other universities in Canada are constituted by “increasing numbers of sessional and part-time employees, most of whom may never be tenured” (Goellnicht 481).

The *Mission and Vision* statement of McMaster University announces that “[t]he university is not a business corporation, but we are being forced to think about ways of commercializing some of our activities and broadening our resource base...Today we are told that we must not only continue our research and educate our students, but we must...pay closer attention to financial opportunities, cultivate our supporters more vigorously.” Standing the test of commercialization, McMaster University today boasts itself as one of Canada’s most innovative research universities, with “faculty who are committed to turning their innovations into inventions, and to moving their technology into the marketplace” (*Research@McMaster*). Its president and vice-chancellor Peter George points out in his preamble to the 2000-2001 *Annual Report* that the University has seen “a dramatic jump in sponsored research funding over the last five years, due in part to the major funding initiatives introduced by both the federal and provincial governments.” He refers to two government initiatives in particular: the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST)⁹ and of individual grants for market-oriented research projects (fostered by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, the Networks of Centers of Excellence, the Canada Research Chairs program, and the Ontario Centers of Excellence).¹⁰

The Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI; a semi-autonomous federal granting agency that was established in 1997) bases its funding on the condition that applicants are able to secure private sponsorship for at least 60 per cent of the project.¹¹ Similarly, the Networks of Centers of Excellence (established in 1989 after the Ontario Centers of Excellence program) join Canadian researchers in defined areas of research, “chosen on the basis of research excellence and the importance and promise of the field including the...potential commercialization of the results of the research” (Prichard 21). Another federal program, the Canada Research Chairs program (CRC), was established in 2000 as a one-time, individual grants based funding initiative that stretches over several years and intends to encourage private sector Research Chairs. Only a small minority of scholars from the humanities and social sciences are CRC and CFI holders. As Paul Axelrod points out, the CRC “assigned only 20 per cent of the faculty positions to the social sciences and humanities, despite the fact that more than 40 per cent of full-time faculty in Canada were working in these areas” (*Values in Conflict* 94).¹² It is this gap that SSHRC wants to close by launching initiatives such as “knowledge mobilization units” geared

towards better commercializing the results of human sciences research (15), “a human sciences foundation” as a link between research and “governments, businesses, voluntary sector agencies, media and the general public” (16), and “web-facilitated communities of practice” modeled after those at the World Bank (15).

Many critics in the field of educational research have deplored the ambivalence of the reactions from within the humanities to these challenges. Miyoshi, for instance, decries in “The University and the ‘Global’ Economy: The Cases of the United States and Japan” that while the humanities are being dismantled, those in the humanities seem to be mired in forms of scholarship that are “oblivious to the real crisis of the humanities in the university” (676) and the larger implications this crisis signifies. Goellnicht agrees. He acknowledges that “[i]n our blind rush to professionalization, we [literary scholars] participate, however unwillingly or unconsciously, in the commodification of our discipline, not to say of our students, thus robbing them of much of their potential to change society” (480). According to Goellnicht, it is an “ironic contradiction” that

in our programs of professional training we supply graduate students with the strategies to become competitive individuals in a market economy at the same time as we bombard them in our courses with theories whose ostensible aims are to produce a more egalitarian and equitable society, to combat racism and sexism...[C]ritical theory, even in its most radical guises, has thus far proven remarkably assimilable to the structure of the [neoliberal] university. (479)

Our theories may be radical, but they remain without consequence. They express challenges and make claims, but we do not act upon them. They separate themselves from academic reality and the institutional parameters that shape this reality, while serving as a means of personal advancement and careerism. Taking up the Lacanian formula “do not give way on your desire,” Slavoj Žižek goes so far as to claim that many so-called progressive critics actually count “on the fact that their demands will not be met – in this way they can hypocritically retain their radically clear conscience while continuing to enjoy their privileged position” (*Welcome to the Desert of the Real* 60).

Discussing this ironic or, as Žižek would call it, hypocritical contradiction between radical theory and institutional containment and disinterestedness, Findlay argues in “Speaking Truth to Power?” that “[i]nstead of blaming theory for our current woes, I am prepared rather to claim that training in the practice *and theory* of literary studies makes possible effective critique” (285). To blame theory would be a way of promoting “the dangerous fictions of a harmonious, ‘theory-free’ past or future for English studies, and of a historically apolitical discipline, cherished by society and funding sources for its cultivated neutrality” (285). In “Runes of Marx,” Findlay refers to Marx’s 11th Thesis on Feuerbach – “The philosophers have merely

interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it” (Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach” 145) – to support his exhortation for literary critics to be(come) active intellectuals by which he means intellectuals of thought and interpretation as well as direct action and social engagement. The 11th Thesis was Marx’s response to the depoliticizing effects of the “academic division of labour and emergence of ever narrower specialization under the new economic regime of industrial capitalism” (Findlay, “Academic Freedom” 226). According to Findlay, it also needs to be our response to the academic division of labor and the very narrow specialization of knowledge in the current “economic regime” of global, neoliberal capitalism.¹³

Findlay hence calls for a politicized reinterpretation of the prevalent model of the modern, liberal humanist university, which was first spelled out in Kant’s seminal *The Conflict of the Faculties* and taken up in many different contexts since then. He considers Readings’ *The University in Ruins* an important book in that it highlights the need to put to scrutiny the values underlying the core aspects of liberal education: the beliefs these values teach, the power structures they support and by which they are supported, and the interpellations and historical contexts that have shaped them. However, for Findlay the major shortcoming of *The University in Ruins* is its deconstructive call to dwell in the ruins of the modern university by making these ruins a locus of “dissensus” – a locus where teaching becomes decentered, transgressive, and free from liberal education’s means-end legitimations and redemptive promises of individual enlightenment, social progress, and economic utility. In other words, Findlay insists that academic intellectuals need to politicize the university instead of following Readings’ notion of “dwelling” in beliefs of its anti-instrumental, apolitical, and disinterested nature. Faculty and students need to be more than anti-normative, non-interfering witnesses or commentators. They need to become agents of dissent, intervention, and change. Findlay concurs with critics such as Henry Giroux, Edward Said, Pierre Bourdieu, Masao Miyoshi, and Cary Nelson that the university needs to uphold a guiding vision of its social service and function. These scholars insist that higher education “represents the possibility of retaining one important democratic public sphere that offers the conditions for resisting the increasing depoliticization of the citizenry [and] provides a language to challenge the politics of accommodation that connects education to the logic of privatization” (Giroux 10).

The above critics neither disclaim the Kantian blueprint of the modern university as a site of individual development nor the Marxian notion of social progress through higher education,¹⁴ in spite of the many ways in which these two metanarratives have proven to be complicitous with neoliberalism. Instead, they make use of some of the key values of liberal education (e.g. academic freedom and uninhibited expression of knowledge) and their narratives of enlightenment and

social progress (e.g. social justice and responsibility and uninhibited access to knowledge) and, in the process of making use of them, employ them against their own universalistic, apolitical illusions. Rejecting postmodernist assertions of the death of the intellectual as the bearer and purveyor of the grand narratives of the Enlightenment, Said maintains liberal humanist ideals as the worldly critic's toolkit and burden.¹⁵ It is this reconstitution of critical theory as a practice that merges the political and the academic, however, that Michael Warner denounces in *Publics and Counterpublics*. He calls it an attempt by the university left, "most from within the jeopardized disciplines of the humanities" (149), to validate its place and function in the university. According to Warner, this tactics of "public intellectualism" has become a marketable careerism, "a quasi-journalistic pundit with a mass following" (143). I would argue that Warner's harsh critique, no matter how disputable it may be,¹⁶ is important insofar as it calls on those academics who see themselves as public intellectuals to critically probe their notions of political activism and efficacy. What does it mean for critical theory to be politically engaged and engaging? What forms can and should politically engaged scholarship and teaching take?

It clearly does not suffice today to reclaim the university as a public sphere of responsible leadership. It is insufficient and incorrect to argue, as Heather MacIvor does in "Castles on the Cortex; or, Medieval Scholasticism Revisited," that as academic intellectuals "we have deliberately...abandoned our responsibility to lead and shape public debate. We speak in tongues, deliberately making ourselves incomprehensible to anyone without a PH D – or, indeed, to anyone with a PH D from another discipline. We have squandered our social mission" (601-02). Not only is MacIvor's assumption that the gulf between the Canadian university and society once was much narrower doubtful and nostalgic-sounding, it also falls short of recognizing that we need to scrutinize the very notion of the modern academic subject's "social mission" in a state structure of elite-representative democracy. We need to radicalize this very understanding of social agency and reconfigure the latter as an issue of access and participation in particular sites of activity and power. MacIvor's argument is also problematic in that it lends itself to SSHRC's neoliberal rhetoric of breaking down the "Ivory Tower" and placing Canadian universities "at the heart" of their communities and the knowledge economy (SSHRC 8). In the SSHRC proposal *From Granting Council to Research Council*, the danger of international collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and public interfacing "becom[ing] just the latest form of complicity with transnational [neoliberal] capitalism" (Findlay, "Interdisciplining" 9) is pronounced.¹⁷ The renewed "social mission" of the scholar in the humanities and social sciences becomes a depoliticized, neoliberal-isochronic mission.

Seen from this perspective, one needs to make an addition to the argument, variously made by Said, Findlay, Nelson, Giroux, and others, that it is in Kantian

efforts to dissociate the political world from the university and public issues from professional intellectuals that the real risk to the contemporary university lies. The SSHRC document shows that it is not just crucial *that* the political and the academic, the public and the professional are associated but *how* they are associated. Questions such as these are key to rethinking our taken-for-granted notions of the “public,” of what it means to have access to and to participate in public spheres of social, cultural, and educational decision-making. In other words, they emphasize that what is at stake today is not so much to create “a greater public presence for human sciences researchers and scholars” (SSHRC 21), but “the recovery of our sense of the public, which decades of neoliberalism has dissolved” (Szeman, “The Rhetoric of Culture” 226). Admittedly, public or worldly academic intellectuals cannot do without at least to some extent complying with the isochronic, neoliberal programs of professionalization and knowledge production. Like Mistry’s *A Fine Balance*, this dissertation is written against neoliberal globalization while being contained within it, especially on the institutional level. According to Žižek, even if contemporary academics follow Marx’s 11th Thesis, they do so “within the hegemonic ideological coordinates” (“Hardt and Negri” 190), depriving the Thesis of its “proper political sting” (194).¹⁸ While it is important to be aware of the pitfalls of our compromised intellectual positions, it seems at least as important to recognize that these very positions also create contexts within which the contradictions of professional training and critical theory become dynamic sites of alternatives and resistance. This dissertation project has sought to explore such sites of alternatives and resistance by using critical theory and literary-cultural scholarship as tools to query the role of the scholar and of literature in Canada vis-à-vis broader public issues that arise under the current logics and structures of global power.¹⁹

Fredric Jameson remarks in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* that a “fundamental level on which political struggle is waged [and, I would add, alternatives become alive] is that of the struggle over the legitimacy of concepts and ideologies” (263). This dissertation has queried the concepts of “the public,” “national literature/culture,” “the modern, democratic nation-state,” and “globalization” as they presently find expression among Canadian policy-makers, scholars, and information providers in the media. It does not rule out that the modern nation-state, built on the notion of a sovereign democratic power constituted by and representing “the people,” may be, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue, ultimately insufficient as a site for efficient resistance against and alternative to neoliberal globalization. However, it also recognizes that currently the nation-state framework is still a major site in which economic, political, social, and cultural relationships are concretely lived. This implies that the struggle over state resources, policies, and the public sphere will continue to be a crucial factor. As Evans, McBride, and Shields argue, it is especially so now. The present movement

towards a flexible, neoliberal state structure in Canada needs the present state to be a strong state that is able “to effectively resist and counteract the ‘democratic pressures’ seeking to prevent...the neoliberal goal of market dominance” (94). The attempt to turn contemporary Canadian public (cultural) decision-making into a more pluralized and localized process becomes a vital one, seen from this perspective – a perspective that is very well aware that modern democracy and the modern nation-state are not the only possible politico-economic frameworks along which societies can be organized.

This attempt includes finding ways to exchange ideas with non-academic audiences in the project of understanding the contemporary logics and structures of power and the struggles around them.²⁰ For my postdoctoral work, I plan to continue working together closely with local publishers, booksellers, and other literary agents in Canada by expanding chapter five into a book of interviews that inquires into the concrete conditions of contemporary literary production in Canada under neoliberal globalization. I believe that these connections between the front lines and critical theories of cultural production are indispensable for developing viable non-neoliberal alternatives. And yet, they have not been given much attention in Canadian studies, especially in the literary field. What is significant about the interviewees’ responses I have so far collected in chapter five – and this highlights the importance of hearing directly from publishers, booksellers, and other literary agents in our literary study of neoliberalism and globalization – is that they draw attention to literary commercialization as an internal, Canadian issue of “values,” the public sphere, and government. Moreover, the operations and business strategies of the four interviewed presses make obvious that alternatives to dominant culture and its frameworks do not develop “outside” these hegemonic confines. They show that independent publishing in Canada frequently functions in strategically contradictory terms, i.e. inside the dominant neoliberal and cultural nationalist policy and industry framework in a way that makes use of the latter’s resources but does not recognize or comply with its ideologies and values. The interviews with Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Todd Besant, Blaine Kylo, Richard Almonte, and Bryan Prince call attention to the fact that independent, local publishers and booksellers are vital for maintaining literary diversity in Canada and creating more pluralized, localized, and hence accessible public spheres of literary and cultural decision-making and belonging. As I have argued in the previous chapters, it is in this respect, i.e. in the displacement of the current elitist-representative approach to cultural decision-making, that government support for these local circuits is indispensable.²¹

Within the context of the neoliberal university, this line of research brings up questions concerning the Canadian university as a leading market for Canadian books. As critics as diverse as Jennifer Andrews and John Ball, Lynette Hunter, Sarah Corse, Imre Szeman, Robert Lecker, and Roy MacSkimming have pointed out, what

we presently study and teach as “Canadian literature” has been crucially shaped by the collective nationalist enterprise (which got under way in the 1960s and 1970s) of Canadian publishers, literary scholars, writers, university presses, the Canada Council, and the federal government. Following the publication of the Massey report, the government established the National Library and started to directly fund literary projects such as the *Literary History of Canada* (1965), McClelland & Stewart’s New Canadian Library series (initiated in 1957),²² the Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel (1978),²³ McClelland & Stewart’s New Canadian Classics series that stemmed from this conference, and the Center for Editing Early Canadian Texts at Carleton University. While making Canadian literature more widely available to students, scholars, and the general public, these initiatives have also, as emphasized by many critics, marginalized and muted certain voices and images of Canada and its literature. Considering that these “canon-forming” initiatives still shape the field of Canadian literature today, i.e. our course syllabi and objects of study, an analysis of the university as a leading market for Canadian books becomes an indispensable object of Canadian literary study. With regard to the connections between the nationalist “CanLit” project and neoliberal cultural practices, this involves questions such as: What does the Canadian university as publishers’ market presently “market” as important objects of Canadian literary study, and why? Which contemporary publishers have a stronghold in the university’s market in Canadian literature and criticism? And, in terms of the publishing history of Canadian literature and criticism, “[w]hat images of Early Canadian culture are emphasized or muted by the various institutions that reproduce ‘Early Canada’ (from Ryerson Press’s series of literary biographies and various Victorian-era little magazines and lending library institutions, to the Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts, Tecumseh Press’s Early Canadian Women Writers series, the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions, and Early Canadiana Online)?” (“Re-calling Early Canada,” call for papers).

A second course of postdoctoral research is that of contemporary Canadian literature as global intellectual property – a theme that has not been tackled in this dissertation and that has rarely been approached by means of materialist criticism in Canadian literary studies. If it has been approached, then usually with the protectionist attitude that “the greatest threat to [Canadian] literary publishing is...the World Trade Organization...the huge pressures of the WTO to give up...all national cultural sanctions to the interest of big business” (Brandt 111; chapter two). Indeed, national legislatures and publishing industries worldwide are increasingly pressured by the World Bank and the WTO through the policy instruments of GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) and TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) “to conform to American-style principles of ownership...[and] intellectual property” (Irr, “World Bank Literature” 237). However, what needs to be stressed – and, as the four chapters of this project have highlighted,

frequently is not – is that the discourses of cultural protection/exemption, national value, and Americanization have elided the fact that GATS and TRIPS (and other international policy instruments) are symptoms of the complex, *decentered* system of neoliberalism.

There is a third venue of research that has been neglected in this project and will need more attention in the future: the theme of book consumption in the contemporary age of high-tech entertainment. Only chapter five touches upon this theme in general terms of people reading and buying books. I refer to Redhill and Spalding's ad campaign "Buy Canadian This Holiday Season" in order to point to the shortcomings of the claim that resistance to the neoliberal market model comes from a strong national literature and culture, which in turn depends on Canadians buying books from Canadian-owned publishers. In *Hip and Trivial: Youth Culture, Book Publishing and the Greying of Canadian Nationalism*, Robert Wright notes that "evidence suggests rather starkly that what has changed in the last thirty years [since the formation of "CanLit"] is not so much that Canadian youth read less, or less voraciously, but that they are far less nationalistic (at least in English Canada) and, hence, that they utterly lack the conviction that the act of reading literature...is somehow integral to national identity formation or, above all, to citizenship" (10). It would be interesting to follow up on what this evidence suggests about book buying attitudes: namely that Canadian youth lack the conviction that the act of buying books is somehow integral to the preservation of Canadian culture and sovereignty. Just as flimsy as the supposition that young (or even adult) Canadians buy and read books with a national consciousness is the assumption that the choices of book consumers are decided by publicity budgets and the national media. As bookseller Bryan Prince emphasized in his interview conversation with me, readers are discriminating consumers and not just blind followers of trends set by corporate stratagem, bestseller lists, book reviews in the major national media, and the book awards business.

It is as part of future projects such as these that the materialist literary study of the contemporary literary conditions in Canada that I have undertaken in this dissertation will be further developed and probed in constructive ways. Albeit dealing with the nexuses of literature and neoliberal globalization in Canada, the questions raised in the preceding chapters are by no means limited to the Canadian context.²⁴ They are rather devoted to the intellectual dialogue among a diverse community of scholars and nonacademic players on the most pressing cultural, social, and political issues at the present time of neoliberal globalization. I see this dissertation project as part of a collective effort to unsettle the neoliberal power structures and values that increasingly pervade universities and cultural policies and markets.

¹ It is not the aim of this chapter to provide a comprehensive overview or discussion of titles and arguments on this topic. Also, most of the works to which I refer focus on Canadian and, to a lesser extent, North American contexts.

² Bill Readings makes a similar argument in *The University in Ruins*, a book that has triggered many and diverse responses within the North American academic community.

³ Giroux makes a similar argument from a U.S. perspective. In "Critical Education or Training," he notes that in the market- and profit-driven university of today, "the notion of the social and the public are not being erased as much as they are being reconstructed" (7-8).

⁴ For a similar argument, see *Hitting the Books* (ed. Terry Wotherspoon), especially chapter three, "Education and the Free Trade Agreement," by Harold Bronson.

⁵ See, for instance, Scott Davies and Neil Guppy, Sheila Slaughter, the World Bank (*Higher Education*), and the OECD (*Education at a Glance*).

⁶ Prichard, for instance, suggests that Canada should adopt the U.S. system of paying faculty salaries over the nine months of the school year only and thus providing the "motivation" for faculty to seek "summer supplements" in the form of research-intense collaboration with private investors (49). He sees this as a way to increase "outstanding performance," to make Canadian faculty more "competitive...active and successful researchers" (49).

⁷ "[N]othing in the university is of interest to the specialist – neither the work of other parts of the university, nor the university as a whole," decries Edward Shils in "The Modern University" (283). What counts for the specialist is "[o]nly his own department or his own research project...Indifference to what is happening in one's own university is a companion to indifference to what is happening in one's own society" (283). Edward Said makes a similar argument in "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community" (8).

⁸ At McMaster's 2003 World Congress on Intellectual Capital, Innovation and E-Business, Hubert Saint-Onge, the University of Waterloo's then-executive-in-residence, argued that "[u]nlike the old employment contract in which a person traded labour and loyalty to an organization for a form of security, the future will require people to ensure their security and success by continually upgrading their skills and applying them to organizations... 'The people who place themselves at the edge of their abilities all the time will be the ones who develop the most'" (cited in Arnold). The SSHRC document proclaims that "[h]uman sciences knowledge is fundamental...to developing the skills of the next generation of Canadians...as people who...have the flexibility and leadership to adapt to change and implement new ideas" (2).

⁹ The CHST (introduced in 1995) is a federal support structure that combines spending on health, social services, and postsecondary education under a single agenda. A combination of Established Programs Financing (EPF) and the Canada Assistance Plan, it transfers money and tax points to the provinces, which then, without being made accountable to the federal government, decide on how to allocate these funds. Like its predecessor (EPF), the CHST has been criticized for allowing federal funds targeted for education to be diverted elsewhere by the provinces.

¹⁰ These programs are geared towards research in such marketable areas as biotechnology, electronics, engineering, informatics, pharmaceuticals, and laser technology (see Epstein, Davies and Guppy).

¹¹ Unlike non-profit research grants, which are "free of any obligations with respect to the conduct of the work supported and the utilisation of the results" (McMaster University, *Contract Research Policy*) and which involve "small groups of students, postdoctoral assistants and/or research support staff," industrial research contracts are carried out "under terms of a formalized agreement in response to specific needs or requirements of an external party." The external party holds patent or copyright and pays honoraria to the faculty in charge of the project. Research contracts involve little or no student participation (see Carroll and Beaton).

¹² I have held two research assistantships sponsored by CRC funding.

¹³ For instance, in "Speaking Truth to Power?," Findlay discusses the role a theoretically politicized practice of literary studies can play in the formation of public policy, an area in which

he himself has been active as a literary scholar (e.g. as a senior analyst in the Universities Branch of Saskatchewan's Department of Postsecondary Education and Skills Training).

¹⁴ "On the one side there is the high Romantic argument, with its roots in Kant's theory of enlightenment, that each individual has an innate potential and that university education should enable individuals to reach that potential. On the other side, there is what we might call the social progress argument, associated with Hegel and later with Marx, that democratic access to education helps eliminate local prejudices and ignorance as a key element in promoting the progress of society as a whole" (Peter Baker 58).

¹⁵ John Michael characterizes this duality as a double bind of appeal and resistance in *Anxious Intellectuals*. He argues that the critical politics of progressive intellectuals such as Edward Said, Bruce Robbins, and Cary Nelson show that "[g]rand narratives continue to emplot the intellectual's relation to the world while intellectuals have come to doubt the validity of such constructions" (15).

¹⁶ Obviously, Warner has a very specific image of the public intellectual in mind: namely the tenured celebrity masking as guardian of the public good. Apart from the fact that this image comes across as somewhat stereotyped and distorted, Warner does not mention that only a small number of academics who would call themselves public intellectuals are actually tenured and become known beyond their disciplinary or academic environment. (And even if this is the case, they do not necessarily fit the image painted by Warner.) Moreover, it needs to be taken into consideration that many public intellectuals are not academics; a popular Canadian example being Naomi Klein.

¹⁷ The SSHRC proposal bristles with corporate talk of "maximum knowledge impact," "research entrepreneurship," and "knowledge brokering."

¹⁸ The 11th Thesis has even "made it" into the SSHRC document: "The role of researchers is not only to develop knowledge...They must become much more proficient at moving the knowledge from research to action" (3).

¹⁹ In *Power/Knowledge*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari put forth an understanding of critical theory as a "toolkit...a logic of the specificity of power relations and the struggles around them" (145).

²⁰ Approaches of "reaching out to the public" have been frequently criticized as patronizing and presumptuous. I argue that they need not be so as long as they are self-reflective and two-directional. Besides, such criticisms signify a yielding to the very real challenge of addressing more popular forums, and not just the habitual academic journals and conferences. Obviously, the approach of connecting with non-academic audiences that I suggest here radically differs from the one SSHRC intimates for the "transformed" literary scholar.

²¹ One might argue that this approach of "displacement" is also necessary in the arena of educational policy-making, that it applies to the Block Grant Program and BPIDP (see chapters three and five) as much as to the SSHRC transformation program.

²² Initiated by University of Toronto professor Malcolm Ross, the New Canadian Library series focused on the republication of out-of-print, "important" Canadian titles. It now has over one hundred titles. As MacSkimming notes, "[a] title's inclusion in the series came to confer quasi-canonical status...No longer an esoteric pursuit, Canadian literature parachuted into the academic marketplace on McClelland's leap of faith" (128-29). Other publishers, among them Macmillan Canada, Clarke Irwin, and the University of Toronto Press, followed suit and started their own paperback series.

²³ "The conference organizers surveyed potential attendees by mail prior to the conference, asking them to choose '1) the most important one hundred works of fiction...2) the most important ten novels...and 3) the most important ten works of various genres'" (Corse 53). The conference, not unsurprisingly, provoked a heated debate about Canadian canon formation.

²⁴ I would hope, for instance, that this thesis project has a cross-disciplinary scope, which is beneficial to the study of (the relationship) of literary and cultural practices and globalization in other national contexts.

Appendix A

An Interview with Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm of Kagedonce Press

Kagedonce Press is a not-for-profit publisher. It is located at Neyaashiinigiimig, Cape Croker Reserve on the Saugeen Peninsula in southwestern Ontario. I conducted the following interview by email with Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, an Anishnaabe writer and publisher from the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, who initiated Kagedonce in 1993 with the publication of *my heart is a stray bullet*. Akiwenzie-Damm currently is the owner and managing editor of the press. Kagedonce “is strongly committed to promoting and publishing Indigenous literature internationally...[Its] long-term goal is to build and maintain a strong network of Indigenous publishers internationally” (Kagedonce, *Role in Aboriginal Publishing*). The press networks especially closely with Aboriginal publishers in Aotearoa and Australia (e.g. Jukurrpa Books and Huia Publishers). Titles that have resulted from these collaborations are *skins: Contemporary Indigenous Writing* and *Without Reservation: Indigenous erotica*. The interview took place in June and July 2003.

Sabine Milz: Many publishers are concerned these days about the government’s increasing run-for-profit attitude and funding cuts. Would you like to comment on how these concerns affect Kagedonce Press?

Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm: It’s a disturbing trend. We are a small, in fact, micro-sized publisher and as an Indigenous publisher we’re working in a still new area with a developing market. We do not have the infrastructure around us that other small publishers do. So it is virtually impossible for those of us who want to publish trade books (rather than cultural market types of books) to do so at a profit. At the same time that we are publishing books we are doing a lot of developmental types of activities in all spheres of our operations; not only for our own individual companies but to establish a strong Aboriginal publishing industry in Canada.

SM: Can you describe the infrastructure that would be necessary for Kagedonce to become a for-profit Aboriginal publisher?

KAD: Only generally. We need to develop everything from the writers (in terms of assisting them in preparing their manuscripts, etc.) to production (we need to develop a pool of Aboriginal editors, designers, production assistants, etc.) to distribution to marketing. A lot of work needs to be done to develop the audience/readership for Aboriginal writing. For many people, Indigenous literatures are virtually unknown. The publishers themselves, including Kagedonce, operate on the brink – there’s tremendous instability and we have to spend a lot of time, energy, and resources on development that other publishers do not have to do. It’s basically a huge amount of unacknowledged work that is not really given consideration by funders who sometimes see us, I suspect, as inefficient, slow, or not productive enough.

SM: Is the for-profit option actually an option? In other words, for Kecedonce, to build on the economic profitability of Aboriginal literature would that mean to build on contemporary Western values and attitudes about culture/literature as commodity?

KAD: I believe it is an option. If we can develop the audiences for our work, we should be able to run at a profit someday. However, I think it will take time. It's not going to happen overnight. Kecedonce is actually only one part of a web of activities that I'm doing to move things forward. Honouring Words (see www.honouringwords.com), the networking I do internationally, the advocacy with festivals and so on are all part of an effort to get our writers and our literary works out on the global stage.

Yes, the commodification of culture is definitely something I am aware of and that I see as dangerous and harmful to Indigenous cultures. But I think what we are doing as publishers and as writers is quite different than, say, the Honolulu Hilton running fake "luaus" that twist and degrade Hawaiian and other Polynesian cultural practices and beliefs for the amusement of tourists. Or, for example, the selling of plastic and turkey-feather headdresses made in Taiwan or dream-catchers that are mass produced as ornaments or decorations.

In Indigenous cultures, certainly in Anishnaabe culture, there was a high regard for storytellers and other performers and keepers of knowledge and this was expressed in many ways – but certainly this sort of vocation was valued as much as others and the people who did it shared in the resources of the community. Today we continue that by providing for these people so that they can continue to share their talents. In today's reality this often means money. The buying and selling of literary books in and of itself isn't what I see as the commodification of culture. Not if it is done respectfully and thoughtfully. But taking a story from the culture and selling it to others who would degrade it purely for entertainment value would be, in my opinion. Kecedonce treats our authors and their words with respect. I don't think that it necessarily is a sell-out if things are done with integrity, honesty, and in keeping with basic beliefs and values around ownership/copyright and so on. The way I see it, we have to exist in this world and it means that to some extent, as in the past, we have to adapt to survive. It doesn't have to mean we sell our souls.

SM: What kinds of governmental funding does the press you represent receive? Is that funding constant, secure, reliable?

KAD: We receive various types of funding from the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council. None of it is secure or reliable but we've been fortunate in that it has been constant. If it wasn't we'd probably cease to exist at this point. Or at least it would change drastically. It would revert back to me working alone to publish a book every few years when I am able to scrape together the money from my own sources and sales. I don't think that Kecedonce is something I will give up anytime soon –

although it may have to mutate and transform in response to the changing environment around us. At worst Kegedonce will slow down drastically but I'm sure there will always be manuscripts around that will motivate me to continue publishing in some form or other, whenever and however I can.

SM: How would you describe Kegedonce's membership with the national Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP) and the Literary Press Group (LPG)? Does Kegedonce, like many members of these two associations, consider itself a Canadian publisher in the sense of being a "national" publisher that contributes to the creation of "national" Canadian literature and cultural identity?

KAD: I think that what we do is important to this country. I don't think of our literatures as part of Canadian literature so much as we're the basis upon which all other newcomer literatures have to be placed, or the centre around which they have to be placed. Recognized or not, this is our homeland and all of the old stories and the creation stories of this place come from us. The oldest stories of the land speak through our songs and stories. Literature didn't arrive with the colonizers – we had our own traditions long before they got here. Can this country pretend to exist without us? That's been the illusion – that the history of this place began with "discovery" and settlement. But we all know that's a sleight of hand. We all know that there were people here before Columbus arrived (there were even other visitors who came here long before Columbus did) and that the people who were here had nations, languages, cultures, songs, stories.... To build a national identity upon such an outright lie seems ridiculous to me. So why the pretense? Because the truth would require dramatic change. So, can there be a Canadian literature that continues to exclude Aboriginal literature or, at best, marginalize Aboriginal literatures? To me, that's also a falsehood. How can we be excluded from our own homeland? We can't. Others can only pretend we are or pretend they don't see us or hear us. They can try to silence us, to marginalize us. But it's just another form of attack – of disempowering Aboriginal peoples and our cultures.

Having said this, I also have to say that we are happy to be part of the ACP and LPG. We don't see it in the same way other publishers might, but for us it is helpful and we've not faced a problem yet with regards to how we see ourselves in terms of the context of Canadian publishing. I can't imagine that it will become an issue, but if it does we'll deal with it then. For now, we appreciate the support we're able to receive from these two groups and it will continue to be one aspect of what we're doing – without affecting what we do in terms of what or who we publish. We take what we can from it and leave the rest and simply go about doing what we do.

SM: Taiaiake Alfred maintains in *Peace, Power, Righteousness* that to argue on behalf of Aboriginal self-determination within the dominant Western paradigm is self-defeating, since the argument remains caught in the legal and structural confines of the still-colonial state structure of Canada. It co-opts and assimilates the Aboriginal

Voice. What do you think? Can the participation of Aboriginal publishers in the dominant policy and publishing framework be made relevant and fair to Aboriginal needs and demands for cultural and political self-determination?

KAD: I agree with him that at a larger level self-determination cannot be confined by Western thinking or fears – which become reflected in policy. The state structure will not allow true self-determination for First Nations. It will allow various forms of decision-making but not to the extent that other world nations are self-determining. There is too much fear and racism at this point.

In terms of publishing I think we can use the system for funding and other forms of support when it doesn't compromise what we are trying to do. So far, it really hasn't for us but if it did – for example, if we were committed to publishing a book by a writer from the U.S. and our funding didn't allow it – we would find other ways to support that project. We just do what we do and sometimes they come around to our way of thinking. If they don't, it doesn't stop us or silence us. It may slow us down, but it's not a race after all. When Kagedonce started I made some decisions about what we were going to do and why that had nothing to do with funding or policies within government funding agencies. We work at an international level because to me that is the only real way we can take our place in the world literary community. We can't do it by focusing only on trying to make a mark in Canada because that view places us as a subset of Canadian literature and we're not. I think other literature in this country is a subset of Aboriginal literature if anything!

SM: Can you describe in more detail what you mean by “world literary community”?

KAD: I mean that the literary world to me is a sort of community in that there are a lot of inter-relationships, connections, ways of doing things and so on. Maybe I should have used a different term – world literary scene for example. But I often think in terms of other Indigenous literatures and I see us as a kind of community. In any case, what I was getting at is that I don't place our literatures as subsets of the colonizing cultures. I don't see Aboriginal literature as a subset of Canadian literature or Maori literature as a subset of New Zealand literature. I see us as having connection to other Indigenous literatures and, of course, to Canadian literature. But I see us as equal, or at the same level as Canadian literature not beneath or part of or overwhelmed by or whatever. That's what I was getting at. Just as we need to re-establish ourselves as nations within the world community, we need to do it in terms of our literature. So that someday soon our Indigenous literatures will be regarded in that way. Alongside Irish literature, American literature, French literature, Canadian literature...

So far, we've had little response from Heritage Canada in terms of them broadening their policies to include us. They keep wanting us to fit their mould and we keep telling them and showing them that it's not really possible and that their policies are exclusionary. So far, they apparently don't see it that way. But, ironically

enough, the Heritage Canada vision of literature isn't from a "heritage" or "culture" perspective – it sees literature and publishing in terms of an industry.

Aboriginal literary/trade book publishing in Canada only goes back about 23 years with the start of Theytus Books. However, they want us to fit the same mould as other publishers. It makes no sense to me. They want to see us like Francophone publishers and use the same sorts of formulas they used to boost the Francophone publishing industry. But our situation is extremely different. They were willing to do something different for Francophone publishing but they won't use that same principle to do something different for us. What worked for Francophone publishers won't work for us. So it seems like they basically throw up their hands and say, "Well then, there's not much we can do!" But why should we have to fit the alternate stream they created for Francophone publishers? If they could create change for them, that suited and assisted them, why do they refuse to do so for us? All Kegedonce has ever gotten from our many discussions with them, both independently and as part of the Aboriginal Book Publishers of Canada (ABPC), is inclusion in an ABPC joint catalogue partially (not even fully!) funded by Heritage Canada. An ABPC banner was also produced but the stand was rented and we can't afford to rent the stand every time we want to use it; so we really haven't found it accessible or useful to us. Other than that, all we've gotten out of Heritage Canada is a lot of wasted time and energy that could have been better spent elsewhere. To be honest, Kegedonce is really frustrated and disturbed by the lack of response from Heritage Canada. This sort of exclusion shouldn't be allowed to continue once there is an awareness of it. However, it does. Aboriginal publishers only receive about \$40,000 out of the total BPIDP (Book Publishing Industry Development Plan) budget. That, the PARTIAL funding of 2 catalogues and the one time purchase of a banner is the extent of funding that Heritage Canada is willing to provide for Aboriginal publishing in Canada. It's a travesty! To me, it's a form of institutionalized racism through exclusion.

SM: Does that include the work of the Canada Council as an arm's-length cultural agency comprised in the Heritage Canada portfolio?

KAD: No. Our relationship with the Canada Council is actually quite good. But the Canada Council has Aboriginal staff and Aboriginal programs and recognizes some of the basic inequities that can exclude, and in the past have excluded, Aboriginal people from accessing and benefiting from their programs. If that same approach existed in Heritage Canada publishing programs there would be some innovative thinking about how to increase access and to assist in developing an Aboriginal publishing industry in Canada – not only through access to increased funding for Aboriginal publishers but also through other programs and projects to address the barriers and difficulties faced by Aboriginal publishers.

SM: Would you say that Aboriginal perspectives, writers, and publishers are given adequate participation in the Canada Council's decision-making bodies, juries, advisory committees, and staff?

KAD: I believe that for writers and publishers it is an opportune time – there are Aboriginal staff, an Aboriginal CC advisory committee, CC board members (at least one), and Aboriginal participation in juries. There are Aboriginal specific grant programs in place, run by Aboriginal staff, and that has made a tremendous difference. I honestly can't complain much about the Canada Council. They've supported Kegedonce, some of our writers and projects such as Honouring Words. Paul Seesequasis and Louise Profeit-Leblanc have been incredibly open and capable of making appropriate changes at the Council in consultation with Aboriginal artists. There is always room for improvement, of course, but the difference at the Canada Council is that they are willing to listen, to discuss, to consider alternatives and, finally, and most importantly, to take appropriate action as a result. It isn't perfect or sufficient but it continues to evolve and over the past few years there have been new initiatives and improvements in many areas.

SM: The way you describe the relationship between Kegedonce's activities and cultural funding/policy, it seems that the situatedness of Aboriginal publishers in the dominant EuroCanadian policy framework holds a promise (of establishing a strong Aboriginal publishing industry in Canada) and a predicament (of participating in a still-colonial framework) at the same time? Does it hold the promise of eventually decolonizing existing publishing policy?

KAD: All I know is that we do what is needed to survive with our integrity intact. If the system will bend and move to encompass what we're doing, great, if not then we'll continue to operate outside of it. The thing is, we have choice. If I can accomplish something through the system, I will. I use what I can and let the rest go. If I can't, I look for other ways. Or if I have another way, I use it. I don't relinquish my power to anyone in the process.

Is it a colonial framework? In Canada, yes, of course. This is a colonial state. But I don't situate myself or Kegedonce within that. I see us as part of a global Indigenous community and this is our homeland and we're surrounded by a system imposed by the colonizers. We are in it, but don't have to be of it. Nor are we completely independent of it, no more than other nations in the world are completely independent of the nations that surround them, geographically, politically and so on. But it doesn't mean that we automatically assimilate or lose ourselves or cease to exist in some sort of "authentic" way. We participate in different frameworks – in my mind we aren't stuck solely participating in a colonial framework. It's a reality in our world, of course, but it hasn't totally disempowered me or my thinking. I will say, however, that I strongly believe that Heritage Canada ought to be supporting the development of Aboriginal Publishing – that to not

support us is contrary to what it is intended to do. To me, it goes counter to its very purpose for existing.

SM: What would it mean for Aboriginal publishers to have adequate access to and participation in decision-making about publishing and other literary activities in Canada?

KAD: It would mean that we have a greater amount of choice. That's the short answer. In terms of publishing I believe Heritage Canada could at the very least begin by hiring at least one Aboriginal officer. It would be great if there was actually an Aboriginal officer to work with the Aboriginal book publishers of Canada. There is no one inside, from my experience, who has a real interest in or understanding of what we're on about. I haven't felt that there is anyone there who is committed to investigating and moving forward a specific, consultative form of change to increase access to funding and resources by Aboriginal publishers for the purpose of establishing a long term Aboriginal publishing "industry" in this country. This is a huge barrier in my opinion. I don't expect to see much progress until that happens.

SM: On your website I read that Kegedonce Press was founded in 1993 and has, since then, become the leading Aboriginal publisher committed to promoting Aboriginal literatures on an international scale. International collaborations have become "a cornerstone" of the company. Do you tie these international publishing collaborations to the international struggles of Aboriginal peoples? Does the international marketing of Aboriginal literature serve as an instrument for these struggles? Is it a decolonizing market?

KAD: I believe that having our voices, our stories heard outside of our own homelands (where the colonizing government and many of the people are not interested or refuse to listen) is a positive thing and that it does serve our "struggles" in a positive way. For example, the erotica anthology [*Without Reservations: Indigenous erotica*] has a political side to it that addresses the stereotyping and so on of Indigenous men and women and our relationships. It's not an overt part of the manuscript but to me it was a major reason for initiating and working on this project for so many years. And I did want to work with other Indigenous publishers to get it published outside of Canada. So I'm very happy that Huia is releasing it in Aotearoa. I think there is great strength to be gained from Indigenous publishers working together. But I would also like to see that particular anthology released in other parts of the world – the U.S. especially and Europe as well as Australia and I would not limit it to Indigenous publishers only. In the U.S. I am looking for the best possible publishing arrangement – so that the work is respected, the writers and I get the best possible compensation both in terms of fees and exposure, and the work is distributed as widely as possible and reaches the largest possible audience. I think this anthology can help to change people's thinking in a much more subtle but effective

way than, for example, a series of lectures about stereotyping or whatever. So, yes, beyond its value as art, it can serve other, political purposes.

I don't know if it is a decolonizing market. I think that it will take us beyond the market here, which is systemically racist and tends to undervalue our work. I see it as an empowering move. If the market here doesn't support and value our work, my approach is that we'll find the markets that do.

SM: In your search for the best possible publishing arrangement in the U.S. for the erotica anthology, do you address both large-scale and small-scale, mainstream and specialized U.S. publishers?

KAD: This is something I'm still working on. So all I can say is that I wouldn't rule out much at this point. I have to see who's interested and what they can offer. I would prefer a large-scale mainstream publisher because I believe the authors and their work deserve the biggest possible audience and compensation and the big publishers are the ones who can offer that. But if they didn't respect the book and the authors and me, all the big bucks in the world wouldn't entice me! There has to be some balance. If a smaller publisher demonstrated that respect and was enthusiastic and so on but couldn't offer the same marketing machine, I'd be happier with them than struggling with a larger publisher who could but was difficult or apathetic or disrespectful.

Appendix B

An Interview with Richard Almonte of Insomniac Press

The Toronto-based publisher Insomniac Press is currently owned by publisher Mike O'Connor who founded the company in 1992 and, after it was incorporated in 1995, became its main shareholder. The press operates on a profit basis. Richard Almonte with whom I conducted the interview by email in August 2003 was then one of the two editors and marketing coordinators at Insomniac. Since its inception eleven years ago, Insomniac has developed into a house that publishes titles on a broad range of issues and from a variety of genres for a diverse, both Canadian and increasingly international audience. Its authors are not just from the Toronto area but also from places such as Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the United States. Some more recent titles are Canadian celebrity musician, actor, and artist Jann Arden's selected journals, Ontario New Democratic Party leader Howard Hampton's *Public Power*, Anthony Bidulka's *Amuse Bouche: A Russel Quant Mystery*, and *Black Like Who? Writing Black Canada* by literary and cultural critic Rinaldo Walcott.

Sabine Milz: Many publishers are concerned these days about the government's increasing run-for-profit attitude and funding cuts. Would you like to comment on how these concerns affect Insomniac Press?

Richard Almonte: The current problem with government aid in the publishing industry is that the different levels of government are trying to use each other to diminish the amount of support for publishers. For example, the provincial government in Ontario is trying to claw back the tax credits we receive upon publication of our books, arguing that because we are getting grants from the federal government, we don't need the same level of tax credits. Of course the two are unrelated – tax credits and grants – but the provincial government chooses not to see it this way. Otherwise, Insomniac has been successful in the past few years in modestly raising the amount of support it receives from the various funding agencies: Canada Council, Department of Canadian Heritage, and Ontario Arts Council.

These are relatively stable and secure sources of funding, but they are tied to a number of criteria. For example, Canada Council funding is dependent on the kinds of books we publish (for instance they don't fund graphic novels), and the quality of those books. DCH funding is to some degree dependent on the level of sales. You can see that these two criteria begin to impinge on each other very quickly. To get more funding from DCH, we are doing more commercial non-fiction titles. But to retain our CC funding, we have to also try to continue to do literary fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction. It is often hard to juggle, i.e. hard to find all the right manuscripts to publish to fulfill these criteria.

SM: Does the market (money, profit, the pressures of big multinational publishers) rule independent, Canadian-owned publishing more so today than it did 10 years ago? What are Insomniac Press's experiences?

RA: Yes, I would agree with this statement. In my time at Insomniac Press (3 1/2 years), I have seen the press begin to publish many more commercial books. This does not mean the books are not of a high quality, only that the genres in which we publish have broadened. We still publish novels, short stories, poetry and creative non-fiction, but we increasingly publish business books, current events books, travel books, and political titles. We also publish books by celebrities such as the singers Jann Arden and Matthew Good. Like government funding, we are finding that one "big" book per season or per year can also give us the stability we need to keep doing what we do.

SM: How would you describe your closeness in location to the major multinational, foreign-owned publishers in Canada (Random House, HarperCollins, Penguin, etc.)? Is this closeness a disadvantage in terms of market pressures compared to independent presses in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, the Atlantic region, or northern Ontario?

RA: This closeness is only a disadvantage in the perception of the country's readers and media. Especially the latter. The Canadian literary media is convinced that the only interesting, worthwhile and sexy books come from the big publishers you mention. This is frustrating for us as we attempt to show, season after season, that our books are just as worthy as those of the "big" houses. I have become philosophical about this, and just stopped caring. At some point, one has to have faith in one's own work, even if the media sometimes doesn't. That being said, Insomniac has done very well over the past years in terms of media coverage, reviews, etc. In terms of comparing ourselves to independent/small presses outside of Toronto, I'd have to say we're at an advantage. We are close to the main media. Because of this, Insomniac Press is well known. Media expect our books to be interesting and provocative. A similar press to Insomniac, Arsenal Pulp Press of Vancouver, has, in my opinion, to put more effort and expense into making sure the "national" media in Toronto hear about its books.

I handle Toronto publicity two ways. If the book is by a very well known author (rare) I hire a publicist who has a proven track record with the media. If the author is a regular author (most usual), I do the media myself. The Toronto media is the hardest to line-up because it has the most people begging it to do something. Law of supply and demand. There is also a sense in Toronto that producers want "national" stories because the CBC is national in scope. Often, small presses like Insomniac have trouble interesting the Toronto media. That said, we also had a lot of success over the years.

SM: Which alternative media sources have small, independent presses and booksellers in and beyond Toronto created or reverted to in order to advertise and promote their books? Is there something like a wide, well-organized alternative media network?

RA: In Canada the line between mainstream and alternative is not very wide. Magazines like *Elm Street* and *Saturday Night* are considered mainstream. They have reviewed our books. Magazines like *Geist* or *Subterrain* (both excellent and located in Vancouver) also cover our books. Admittedly, it is easier to “get” reviewed in smaller, alternative magazines, but that does not mean we see these venues as somehow less than or less important than the big mainstream outlets. Of course, getting a review in *The Globe and Mail* makes our authors happy, but getting a review anywhere usually has the same effect. Promoting books on a small budget generally entails less advertising and more events. This is probably the main difference between an independent press the size of Insomniac and a multi-national branch plant like Random House. The former has to do lots of small events across the country to build an author’s profile, while the latter can take out large advertisements in the major newspapers to push an author. In the big scheme of things, it’s often more satisfying for an author to build a grassroots reputation, than to be thrust into the spotlight and often not be able to fulfill that position after the second or third book...

SM: Does Insomniac consider itself a Canadian publisher in the sense of being a “national” publisher that contributes to the creation of “national” Canadian literature and cultural identity?

RA: Insomniac is definitely a Canadian publisher. We often score our greatest successes with authors who are not from Toronto. For instance, our literary travel book, *Harmattan*, just won the Alberta Book Award for best first book. We had a collection of short stories, *Habits and Love*, nominated at the same time for best book of fiction. Both authors are from Alberta. I am currently working with authors from Alberta and Saskatchewan. Our biggest seller for the upcoming fall season will be a book by Canadian-born country music star Terri Clark, who lives in Nashville. Our sales in the U.S. will be much bigger on this book than in Canada. We are a national publisher, as well as a North American publisher at this point.

SM: What role does the international and especially the U.S. marketplace play in Insomniac’s operations?

RA: As mentioned above, the U.S. market is increasingly important to Insomniac. The publisher at Insomniac is predicting that within five years, the U.S. will surpass Canada in terms of sales. We have attended Book Expo America for four years in a row, making sure that our press gets attention in the U.S. We are publishing some American authors. We employ publicists in the U.S. We have recently joined a large U.S. sales and distribution company.

We have limited but effective distribution in the U.K. and Europe. This is an area Insomniac will be working on in the future. Another area we are expanding in is foreign rights sales. I recently sold the rights to two of our business titles to a Russian publisher. I've been in talks with American and U.K. publishers also. Over its history, Insomniac has sold rights to about six of its titles in the Netherlands, France, Russia, China and the U.S..

SM: Would you describe Insomniac as a local, regional, national, or international press?

RA: I would describe it as a national and continental press. Insomniac will always be a Canadian press because it is staffed by Canadians in Canada and publishes mostly Canadian writers. The truth is that our Canadian books can also find a market in the U.S. We are increasingly exploiting this self-evident truth.

SM: To be a both national and continental press, isn't that a contradiction in itself? I am thinking here of the fact that governmental funding since the 1960s has been based on cultural nationalist assumptions of "national literature" and "national culture" that form a sharp opposition to any continentalist, Americanizing move.

RA: There is absolutely no contradiction, especially in this era of North American free trade. The narrow definition of cultural nationalism your question implies has not really been at work in government funding for a while. Today, publishing is seen as one of the "cultural industries." As a cultural industry that employs significant amounts of people in Canada, the government has decided to help fund our activities. The reason for the funding is not just because without Canadian publishing our culture would become diluted by American culture, but because publishing has, is and will always be precarious economically. Furthermore, the assumption in your question is that only Americans can be continentalist (which seems to be a synonym for imperialistic). I'd say that if you look at the areas of music and film, Canada has proved that it has "product" that the Americans (and the rest of the world) like just as much as anything else. Insomniac is trying to follow this model of Canadian success in the cultural industries, by publishing books that have interest beyond our own borders.

SM: On your website, you state that Insomniac is "now actively seeking commercial and creative non-fiction on a wide range of subjects such as business/personal finance; gay and lesbian studies; black Canadian studies among others." What does that mean, "commercial" non-fiction? Profitable? Marketable? Market-oriented? With bestselling potential?

RA: It means all those things. For example, a book like Howard Hampton's *Public Power*, while it is incredibly well written, and can stand up to any treatise out there, is also profitable and market-oriented because its author is the leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party. We made a strategic choice to publish Howard's book in 2003 because we were pretty sure there would be a provincial election held sometime

this year. Commercial non-fiction is increasingly the genre that makes publishing viable for companies like Insomniac Press. We don't have the fiction stars (Atwood, Martel, etc.) that the "big" houses do, so we have to find other ways to make money.

SM: In *Hip and Trivial* (CSP 2001), Robert Wright notes that Insomniac is a "trendy" publisher, which "consciously attempts to publish hip books by young writers for a hip [urban, young] audience." Would you agree with this statement?

RA: Wright has oversimplified, though I can see how he came to that conclusion. In its early years (up to about 1997), Insomniac, through its interesting cover design, and its new young writers, did appear to be making a conscious choice. I'd say that Wright's statement no longer holds. While Insomniac is still a "hip" press by Canadian standards, we are certainly much broader than just hipness. Our authors and audience are urban and rural. Some of our most highly regarded books have nothing to do with urban angst. Much of what we publish is not "hip" at all. There is traditional memoir, travel writing, business writing, etc...

Appendix C

An Interview with Todd Besant of Turnstone Press

Turnstone Press was “[c]onceived in 1975 in a Winnipeg pub by four original board members” (Turnstone, *About Turnstone Press*) who have been owners of the press since then: the writers David Arnason, Dennis Cooley, Wayne Tefs, and Robert Enright. The publisher is located in “the middle of the Canadian prairie” (*About Turnstone*), Winnipeg, and operates on a profit basis. I conducted the interview by email with Todd Besant who is currently managing editor at Turnstone. As the website announces, Turnstone is “committed to pursuing and promoting new, thought-provoking books...on taking chances with new writers [especially Manitobans] and experimental work that no one else might consider.” The backlist consists of titles such as *Touch the Dragon: A Thai Journal* (Karen Connelly) and *Kabloona in the Yellow Kayak* (Victoria Jason). The interview took place in July 2003.

Sabine Milz: Many publishers are concerned these days about the government’s increasing run-for-profit attitude and funding cuts. Would you like to comment on how these concerns affect Turnstone Press?

Todd Besant: First thing to remember is that Turnstone is in what is considered a “have” province in terms of cultural funding. Therefore the recent federal cuts did effect us less. At the same time, the federal cuts happened and long term planning by both the publishers and the provincial government saw new revenue come on stream. The general effect that granting cuts have are the same as would be for any revenue stream – one adjusts marketing/promotion budgets, delays staff hiring or salary increases, publishes fewer books, tries to increase other revenue streams, conserves cash and so on. More specifically, Turnstone is a company created and mandated as a literary publisher. This type of publishing is difficult to do well without grants. So cuts in grants do put literary publishers in a precarious position. There is a reliance on the grant stream. This is neither “good” nor “bad.” It is our cultural model, one I believe is rational considering the free flow of American media into our airwaves and on to our bookshelves and movie screens.

Reliance on grants goes for American literary presses as well. I feel this issue needs to be addressed. I have come across the attitude that American small and literary presses are self-reliant and don’t rely on grants. This is simply not true – grants are provided through private foundations. The model is the same, only the mechanism is different. I think, perhaps I’m wrong, that underlying the funding issue is some kind of assumption that many publishers publish books that might not get published but to keep the grant levels up. This is wrong, and frankly silly, as no matter how one views it, no amount of government funding covers the whole cost of any book. Government funding is a revenue stream – we earn it in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. When it drops, you adjust your business plan.

SM: Does the market (money, profit, the pressures of big multinational publishers such as HarperCollins, Random House, Penguin) rule independent, Canadian-owned publishing more so today than it did 10 or 15 years ago? What are Turnstone Press's experiences?

TB: I don't think that the market "rules" how Turnstone conducts its business or publishing program any more now than 10/15 years ago. We were founded as a literary house and remain so. Of course our publishing program has evolved during that time, but that is as much driven by the interests of the owners and the staff of Turnstone as it is by market forces – perhaps more so. The profit margins are so tight that it is important that we have personal motivations for doing what we do.

Of course there is no denying that the ultranational publishers (I believe the word "multinational" actually plays down their size) have a pretty firm grip on the market. The influence of the ultras changes the way we market our books – we can't afford to buy co-op in the one large chain (and even when it's offered as a "deal" we have no way to enforce or ensure we are getting what we pay for), therefore we work the niches, build more personal relationships with booksellers, certainly rely on authors to do more marketing, etc. We simply have to be smarter about where we put our money. On the up side, I think book publishers have become much more savvy and professional about marketing in the last 15 to 20 years. It's also a lot of fun thinking of cheap or unusual or fun ways to market our books.

More recently, the Canadian offices of the ultras have been publishing more first books by new writers. This was traditionally part of the role of smaller presses – Louise Denny [at Knopf Canada] has called our role the "seed bed" of new writing. (Not sure I agree with this.) However, we can't really know how or if this trend is causing us to not get manuscripts we might have usually received. Besides, many of the manuscripts we ultimately publish are solicited by us in some way – we are not without connections in the writing community. And we certainly haven't seen a decrease in the number of manuscripts we receive over the transom.

There is also the issue of a writer publishing a first book with a small press and then moving to a larger house. This has happened to Turnstone on a number of occasions – David Bergen, Lawrence Hill, Michelle Berry, Margaret Sweatman, Miriam Toews, Jake MacDonald... Instead of whining on about this we use this to our advantage – we can often piggy-back our backlist on newer books. (We have a saying here – "Once a Turnstone author, always a Turnstone author.")

Concerning profitability in publishing (excluding educational) – I think most discussions on this are somewhat tail-chasing. It's simply not that profitable as a business, not even for the ultras. As you no doubt know, Rupert Murdoch gutted the HarperCollins's mid-list in a desire to make it profitable enough to attract a buyer. Didn't work. I'd like to know how much internal subsidization of publishing from parent companies goes on in the ultras. (As for the Canadian branch plants, I've

heard that the parent companies can be very generous in terms of not having overhead assigned to Canadian subs. That can make you pretty profitable.)

SM: What kinds of governmental funding does the press you represent receive? Is that funding constant, secure, reliable?

TB: We receive funding from a variety of federal and provincial funding programs – operating grants, marketing grants, special project grants. As for constant, secure, reliable – well, so far. But one can't be complacent about it. Funding goes up and down – so I try to focus this kind of question on whether the programs that provide the funding are stable, not the actual amount Turnstone receives. I'm as wary about the grant amounts as I am of sales levels. They both require work to keep them flowing. Again, they are earned in a different way. In term of constant, secure, reliable programs, well, one has to be aware of the political climates and personalities involved, provincially, nationally and internationally. The best way of coping with this in terms of grants is to design rational, effective, transparent programs.

SM: Do you see Turnstone operating as part of a regional literature? And if you do, how would you describe the region?

TB: Well, we can't deny, nor would we want to, that we are part of regional literature. Turnstone, NeWest Press, and Coteau Books were all founded on the prairies at about the same time and have been very important to the development of Canadian prairie writing. It is reflected in our mandate – we try to, and want to, publish 50 per cent Manitoba writers or Manitoba content each year.

SM: Do you see Turnstone predominantly as a regional, national, international, or local press?

TB: We see ourselves as a book publisher. We are a significant regional publisher, which is reflected in our list, which we wouldn't deny. And we do market our writers nationally and sell rights internationally. The general perception is that we are a regional press – prairie or western Canadian – take your pick. It doesn't change how we think of ourselves. I suppose if I had to pick, I'd pick Canadian publisher, as we only publish Canadians or landed immigrants. The regional mandate helps us focus our list and reflects our roots and our interests. There are certain projects – particularly in critical non-fiction – that come to us because we are a prairie press. But in terms of other books, we get manuscripts from all over the world.

SM: How would you describe Turnstone's membership with the national Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP) and the Literary Press Group (LPG)? Does Turnstone, like many members of these two associations, consider itself a Canadian publisher in the sense of being a "national" publisher that contributes to the creation of "national" Canadian literature and cultural identity?

TB: Turnstone has been involved with the ACP and LPG in different ways at different times. My predecessor was the Chair of the LPG and was on the ACP

Council. I am on the LPG board. We believe – that includes Turnstone’s founders – that participation in the larger publishing community is important.

As for the “national” issue – we want to publish books that we are passionate about. We want to offer the opportunity for new and established writers to have their stories heard. A good portion are Manitobans who we introduce to a wider audience. This comes first. I suppose that makes us part of a “national” Canadian literature and culture, but it seems to me that it is a bit by default. I think this is where the earning of the grants comes in. Governments like to point to their artists as proof of a country’s value, so they need to have something to point at: Canadian literature and cultural identity become their mantra and rationale for supplying grants. I think the question somehow conflates literary mandates and political reality.

SM: The way I was asking the question, I wanted to find out whether Turnstone subscribes to the government’s cultural nationalist discourse; perhaps through a rhetoric of regionalist nationalism (obviously you don’t).

TB: Perhaps I’m over-thinking this, but this question is always a difficult one for me. I was the executive director of the Association of Manitoba Book Publishers, so I have made arguments to government promoting cultural nationalism/regionalism. But is this nationalism/regionalism argument a means or an end and do I subscribe to it?

Countries have cultures that should be reflected, in some way, on their bookshelves, movie screens, and radio. So I don’t think the “free market” can or should decide what cultural “products” live or die. Nor, in reality, does it decide this in any industry in any country. The influence of government in the marketplace is everywhere – regulations, tax credits, grants of various kinds (not only cultural), etc., etc., etc. – and I believe this is how it should be. The “government hand” as the leveler/influencer rather than the “invisible hand” of the market, which makes it sound a little like a poltergeist is in charge.

So back to the question, as to whether I subscribe to the cultural regional/nationalist goals of government. What I try to bear in mind is the context. In our day-to-day work, we think of producing books we are interested in, based on our mandate. In the global context, a rationale is required to defend the support of Canadian culture with tax dollars. So when it comes time to defend publishing programs, and cultural programs in general, (and the aerospace industry, the farmers, and those guys on the west coast making hydrogen fuel cells, etc., etc., etc.) the cultural regional/nationalist argument is one of the clubs in the bag I’m willing to use as a means to get to cultural independence (or at least a meagre shot at it.)

SM: How would you describe Turnstone’s relationship to the Canadian publishing centers Toronto and Vancouver?

TB: In terms of media, it’s hard to get attention anywhere unless you have a lot of money to throw around. Small presses in Toronto have just as much difficulty in

getting coverage in Toronto as we do. When we have a Toronto or Vancouver writer, then we can get some coverage or at least have our calls returned.

I think the only reason Toronto is the issue is because the national media are located there. Getting attention in national media would be as difficult if they were located in Moose Jaw. Toronto isn't the issue – *The Globe and Mail*, CBC, *The National Post*, etc., etc., etc., are the issue. Unless you have a book nominated for a national award, money – to buy ads, take the right people out to lunch, what ever – is all that matters. Vancouver/Victoria is of particular interest to Turnstone right now. We have 5 books to promote there this year, as well as a number of backlist titles. We'll see how it goes.

SM: What role does the international and especially the U.S. marketplace play in Turnstone's operations? I am thinking here of your subdivision in Minneapolis and your sales force connections with Acacia House Publishing Services.

TB: The Minneapolis "subdivision" is a mailbox. It allows us to work via stealth and sell some books we may not normally sell. In the U.S. we mostly try to sell rights through Acacia unless we have a book that will work the niches well – *Rollercoaster: A Cancer Journey*, for example. The U.S. market is difficult to crack. We've had some decent sales into the U.S. market this year, but we still haven't been paid. Other than selling sub-rights, we have had some success with select titles on Amazon.com. And they pay on time.

Appendix D

An Interview with Blaine Kylo of Arsenal Pulp Press

The Vancouver-based publisher Arsenal Pulp Press began life in 1971 as Pulp Press Book Publishers, “founded by a collective of university students and associates” (Arsenal Pulp Press, *Who We Are*). After selling off its typesetting and printing operations, the co-operative, in 1982, became Arsenal Pulp Press, which is currently co-owned by publisher Brian Lam and silent partner Stephen Osborne, publisher of *Geist* magazine. Arsenal Pulp operates on a profit basis. Blaine Kylo with whom I conducted the interview by email in October 2003 is one of its two marketing directors. The press publishes titles on a broad range of issues and from a variety of genres for a diverse, both Canadian and increasingly international audience. Over the years, it has become especially interested in literary non-fiction, in the areas of cultural, gender, multicultural, and gay and lesbian studies, erotica, books on the visual arts, cookbooks, and books about British Columbia. Among its authors/titles are Daniel Francis’ *The Imaginary Indian* and *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*, Ashok Mathur’s *Once Upon an Elephant*, Michael Turner’s *American Whiskey Bar* and *Carnal Nation*, and Joey Keithley’s recollection of a life in punk, *I, Shithead*.

Sabine Milz: Many publishers are concerned these days about the government’s increasing run-for-profit, neoliberal attitude and funding cuts. Would you like to comment on whether and how these concerns affect Arsenal Pulp Press as a for-profit Canadian press?

Blaine Kylo: Canadian literary publishing would not exist without government support. Multinational companies see the funding support that Canadian publishers receive and do whatever they can to access the same funding.

In Canada we face what amounts to a demographic issue: there are not enough people in Canada to truly support an indigenous publishing industry. One of the reasons the American and European industries fare much better at home than we can in Canada is because they have large numbers of people in a relatively small area. That is especially true of European countries that have populations much greater than Canada in a country smaller than the size of Ontario.

Arsenal is committed to working to achieve an increasingly profitable position. We don’t have a problem with the idea of diversifying our publishing program to help us achieve this. And we don’t, in principle, have a problem with some funding being tied to financial success. The biggest problem we have is that there are government funding programs that seem to have differing agendas: BPIDP (the Book Publishing Industry Development Plan) rewards profitability, while the Canada Council penalizes it. The CC (Canada Council) has what is called a “clawback” to its funding, so that if a company is getting too much money from

other sources, a portion of what they normally would be awarded by the CC is subtracted. It was a strategy originally designed to balance the amounts of money large (McClelland & Stewart) and smaller (Anvil) publishers were getting, but it now amounts to a penalty on publishers who work hard to develop a profitable list.

SM: What kinds of governmental funding does Arsenal Pulp receive? Is that funding constant, secure, stable?

BK: Nationally, we receive Canada Council and Canadian Heritage funding that is relatively constant, although timelines on receiving funds change regularly, which makes it difficult to manage cash flow at times. Provincially, we get funding from the BC Arts Council, and this year were overjoyed when the new Liberal government announced a provincial tax credit for BC publishers. That's money that will be happily received.

But government funding is only as secure and stable as the promises made by governments themselves, and the abilities of those governments to keep their promises. When the Canada Council received a cut to their funding nearly ten years ago, it was not predicted by anyone.

SM: Does the market (money, profit, the pressures of big multinational publishers) rule independent, Canadian-owned publishing more so today than it did 10 or 20 years ago? What are Arsenal Pulp's experiences?

BK: I'm not qualified to answer this question, as I've only been in the industry for coming on eight years, and had no sense of the publishing industry before then. My sense is that, as is the case with the entire global economy, we're simply seeing the same thing happen: merging of companies to form larger conglomerates. All the better to make money. The problem with that is that books become reduced to "widgets" when in fact they are a cultural product that should be elevated above and beyond a typical consumer product.

Books, ultimately, lose out in the entertainment industry (and ultimately, as cultural as books are, that's how they are defined these days) primarily because it takes so long to consume a book. You can see a movie in under two hours. You can listen to a CD over and over again in your car. But most people require a month to read a book. Therefore, they are buying fewer books than they are CDs or seeing movies. That's why books will, since the establishment of other entertainment media, be on the short end.

SM: What role does the international and especially the U.S. marketplace play in your operations?

BK: More and more all the time. Right now international sales approach 50% of our total revenue. This is tied to the demographic issue I raised above. If Arsenal is going to continue to grow, we need to find markets for our books. It just makes sense for us to expand beyond our borders. And because Arsenal's publishing program tends

to publish books that cater to niche populations (vegan cookbooks, gay and lesbians), our books will sell wherever people with those interests live.

SM: Would you describe Arsenal Pulp as a local, regional, national, or international press? Why so?

BK: Certainly an international press, for the same reasons I outlined above. We publish books that are of interest to the local population, we publish books that are of interest to Canadians, but we also publish books that appeal to people anywhere in the world. It's that simple.

SM: Isn't there a contradiction in the fact that Arsenal Pulp sees itself as an international press and, at the same time, is a press staffed by Canadians only, publishing mostly Canadian authors, and receiving government funding for this promotion of Canadian literature?

BK: Not at all. The determining factor, as far as I'm concerned, is WHO buys and reads the books. We may be staffed by Canadians, mostly publish Canadians, and live in Vancouver, but our books appeal to audiences internationally. Where we live and who we publish is irrelevant trivia.

Well, we certainly believe that we are contributing to the Canadian cultural industry, and helping to establish a Canadian cultural identity. That's one of the reasons we publish some of the books we do. But that doesn't mean that those books don't appeal to people outside of Canada. And it doesn't mean that every book we publish has the same cultural value. Our vegan cookbooks, for example, can't really be classified as cultural products, but they are written by Canadian authors, published in Canada, and in some way contribute to Canada. But they also appeal to the vegan community worldwide. Our gay and lesbian books also appeal to a worldwide audience, but they are written by Canadians, and certainly contribute to Canadian culture.

SM: On your website, you state that Arsenal Pulp is increasingly interested in literary non-fiction, in the areas of cultural, gender, multicultural, and gay and lesbian studies, erotica, books on the visual arts, cookbooks, and so on. Why this movement toward non-fiction?

BK: This is all a part of the diversification of the publishing program. We wanted to create an environment at Arsenal that would allow us to continue regardless of what happened with the constantly changing funding opportunities. The issue we had to address was how to publish books that would appeal to a broader market while still maintaining a) our personal interest in what we were publishing and b) what we perceived to be the integrity of our publishing program. By this I mean that we wanted to publish books on culture and pop culture, so we're publishing books like *One Thousand Beards and Spree*, and not unauthorized celebrity biographies. We are trying to publish cultural books that are fun and easy to read, but also have critical rigor.

SM: Is the ultimate goal to become independent from government support?

BK: I'd be reluctant to say that, because all industries get government support in one way or another, be it government contracts, tax breaks, what have you. I think we'd like to be less reliant on government support. But the government support is there to enable publishers to produce books that NEED to be published, because they are important in one way or another, but which may not sell sufficient copies to cover costs. A typical poetry book, for example, will sell about 500 copies in Canada. Government support enables publishers to continue publishing poetry, something we believe is important to Canada's culture, even though selling 500 copies of a book does not cover the costs of editing and production on that book.

SM: In conversation with one of Goose Lane Editions' authors I learned that Goose Lane hires a media agency to set up the media contacts for its titles/authors in Toronto, while in each other Canadian city it handles them directly. How does Arsenal Pulp Press handle its media contacts in Canada and specifically in Toronto? What makes Toronto different, say, from Canada's western publishing center, Vancouver?

BK: Toronto is different from any other city in Canada because it is bigger in every sense, but most importantly because there are more people living in metro Toronto than anywhere else in Canada. So Toronto has more media outlets (particularly specialty media like ethnic radio stations, television networks, and newspapers). But Toronto is also very much a kind of place where people are more responsive if you are also in Toronto. There seems to be a sense that if you aren't in Toronto, you just don't get what Toronto and Torontonians need.

The only city for which we would hire an outside marketing/pr firm is Toronto, and we do this only for books that we believe will garner attention, and will benefit from the connections a Toronto-based firm would have. When I was hired, nearly 8 years ago now, I was hired to coordinate media and publicity. We knew that having a dedicated person to take care of that was, for an independent press, unique. It was also essential. If we were going to, essentially, compete with the larger publishers, we had to start doing what they do. That meant having someone "lobby" the media. Now we have two people doing that job for Canada and the United States. We don't make more use of publicity firms because our experience has shown that we can do, in house, nearly as well as they can. And it doesn't cost us anything.

SM: When Arsenal Pulp decides to hire a Toronto media agency to promote one of its titles, does that imply that it wants to get media contacts with the big "national" media only or with all kinds of media outlets in Toronto?

BK: We'd contract a Toronto media/promotional company to work Toronto on our behalf for a book that has broad appeal, as opposed to niche appeal. This is because there are more media outlets (local and national) in Toronto, and a local media/promotional company can devote time to the one broad appeal book, where

our marketing department (made up of one person) has up to fifteen books they are generating interest in.

So I guess the answer to your question is that we hire a Toronto-based promotional company when we want “all” Toronto media to book something, Toronto-based nationals included.

That said, Toronto media/promotion companies do have a better connection with media based in Toronto (whether national or not) because: a) they exist in the same time zone and b) there are more opportunities to meet face-to-face, which leads to better relationships. But Arsenal has pretty good relationships with the national book media, because we expend time, effort, and resources to do so. Our marketing manager is in Toronto two or three times a year to meet with national and major Toronto media, to have those all-important face-to-faces.

SM: What are Arsenal Pulp’s experiences with these big “national media” (the CBC, *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post*), which are predominantly located in Toronto? It seems that their cliquish relationship with the big multinational houses (Random House, HarperCollins, Penguin, etc.) and national publishers (McClelland & Stewart, etc.) largely excludes coverage of titles from smaller publishers.

BK: There are a number of things going on that make it difficult for independent publishers to get attention. The more I see, the more I think the actual cause is more general, pervasive, and problematic than the multinationals being pals with the media. I believe that there exists a misconception, generally, that books published by large multinationals are “better” than those published by independents. The fact that the media in Toronto devote more time to the multinationals is, to me, a symptom of the bigger issue.

The only true way that independent publishers are going to solve this problem is by finding a way to convince the general public, and therefore the media, the booksellers, and others, that independent books are AS GOOD OR BETTER than those being published by the multinationals. This is a pervasive problem that persists. “Why would an author publish with Arsenal or Goose Lane if they could publish with Random House? They must not be very good.”

Certainly, for those who know the industry – the publishers, the writers – this misconception doesn’t exist. But for publishers like Penguin and Random House, even McClelland & Stewart in Canada, because the publishers have been around for an eternity, they have had the time required to truly brand themselves. And because they are multinationals, they have more money to throw around. The misconception against independence isn’t unique to books. It’s also true in music and movies, although the recent trend to “indie” products has made music and movie independents less subject to the negative effects.

The media also have bottom lines they need to consider, and whether the editors at the *Globe* would ever admit to it or not, they undoubtedly pay more

attention to multinational books because there is advertising money coming from those companies.

And now that I think about it, there is a simple numbers game happening here, too. I suspect that, were some simple statistical analyses run, you'd find that independent publishers probably get the same, or even more, attention for their books than the multinationals, if you consider the number of mentions in the media against the total number of books being published. One of the reasons that multinationals get more coverage is because they are publishing hundreds of books a season, where independents are publishing only twenty. So per total numbers of books being published, the independents might actually be getting more coverage. This is a suspicion only, however; I hate to come across as making excuses for the media.

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