

Writers Without Borders

The Global Framework of Canada's Early Literary History¹

In “Publishing Abroad,” a significant contribution to volume 2 of *History of the Book in Canada*, Gwendolyn Davies offers a lively account of the international publishing experiences of several major and minor nineteenth-century Canadian writers from the Maritimes. Included are the story of New Brunswicker Douglas Huyghue, who contributed to *Bentley's Miscellany* in 1849-50 and published a three-volume novel in London before finding his way to Australia; details of May Agnes Fleming's legendary success in the 1860s and 1870s with the American market for popular romance; James de Mille's specific financial arrangements with Harper's, his New York publisher; the astuteness of Marshall Saunders' London publisher (Jarrold's) in issuing her 1894 novel, *Beautiful Joe*, as a companion piece to Anna Sewell's already classic *Black Beauty*; and a summary of Charles G.D. Roberts' complex transatlantic career as he marketed his work simultaneously in three English-speaking jurisdictions: Canada, Britain, and the US. Davies' examples support the larger argument of the present essay: that the interplay of two recent phenomena—the globalization of culture and the rise of book history as a scholarly field—inspires new perspectives on Canada's literary history and challenges previous assumptions about the careers of English-Canadian literary authors of the nineteenth century. As well, the recent international success of a number of Canadian novelists has resurrected the old question regarding what constitutes a “Canadian” book. Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* received the 2002 Man Booker Prize only because it was nominated by its small Scottish publisher (Cannongate), not by its original Canadian publisher (Knopf Canada) who had issued it a year earlier. Like Martel, several other authors who carry Canadian citizenship, such as

Rohinton Mistry, Michael Ondaatje, and Rawi Hage, have received international acclaim for books that are only incidentally Canadian in content, if Canada is mentioned at all.

Such events invite us to reassess the received narrative of Canadian literary history. Traditionally shaped as a saga of beleaguered survival on the margins of imperial centres, the story of our literary past can now be recast as the harbinger of a global print culture: Canadian writers, particularly those working in English, have always operated in an international context with regard to the content of their texts, the location of their publishers, their desire for audience, and their own travels and domiciles. Although Canada scarcely figures in Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters*, our literary history provides illuminating examples of the "international literary space" (xii) that has largely been ignored by the prevailing nationalistic structures of literary study that arose with "the appropriation of literatures and literary histories by political nations during the nineteenth century" (xi).²

When we look back on the second half of the twentieth century, it now seems that the notion of an autonomous, self-supporting Canadian literary culture was an anomaly of the 1960s and 70s. Those glorious decades were marked by a fresh phase of nationalism that coalesced around the exuberant celebration of Canada's centennial in 1967 and nurtured a new generation of writers. Crucial were the efforts of nationalist trade publishers led by Jack McClelland of McClelland and Stewart, in company with John Morgan Gray at Macmillan and William Toye at Oxford University Press, as well as the birth of scores of small literary presses and periodicals, most of which were sustained by the Canada Council for the Arts. Their markets were substantially enhanced by the consolidation of Canadian Literature and Canadian Studies as scholarly and pedagogical fields, which in turn led to a huge surge of literary anthologies (evidenced in Lecker's bibliography, 157-204), a genre that provides cultural infrastructure as well as significant income for writers and publishers. These developments supported the traditional project of Canadian literary criticism, inherited from the late nineteenth century, which was to highlight the specific aspects of authors' lives and works that could be interpreted as contributing to a progressive national narrative.

However, when we look beyond the national to consider the larger historical context, we find that Canadian writers, whatever their patriotic inclinations, have consistently operated in a trans-national framework: triangulated with Britain and the US in the case of anglophone writers, while francophones have negotiated their position in relation to France and, more

recently, *la francophonie*. Viewing our literary history through this historical perspective shows that Canadian participation in the international culture of best sellers and blockbusters is less an innovation of the late twentieth century³ than a continuous feature of our national cultural experience.

The biographies of two of Canada's best-known early authors provide illuminating markers for this discussion: the immigration of Susanna Strickland Moodie from England to Upper Canada in 1832, and the emigration of Sara Jeannette Duncan from Ontario to India and England at the end of the century. These transitions in their domiciles characterize the instability of English-Canadian writers' lives in general, due in large part to the configuration of the literary marketplace. Whereas the travels of the great Victorian writers of England and the United States were mostly motivated by a desire for recreation and inspiration (with some exceptions, such as the emigration of Henry James), writers from Canada often relocated in order to pursue their careers—or, in the case of Moodie, pursued their careers despite relocation. At one level, demographics account for the internationalism of Canadian authors of both official languages. UNESCO has estimated that “there must be at least 10 million people to make national literatures viable and to guarantee the survival of an indigenous book market without government support” (Tremblay, n. pag.). Canada's total population didn't reach the requisite threshold until 1930, and our English-speaking population didn't pass the 10 million mark until the 1950s. (French Canada has yet to reach it.) While the distinction of a unique national language such as Danish or Dutch might protect the book culture of a smaller population, Canada's sharing of two world languages and our geographical proximity to the US has created a particularly complex scenario; during the second half of the twentieth century, inconsistent government support for authors, publishers, and booksellers created further major complications, as outlined in Roy MacSkimming's important account of English-Canadian literary publishing.

Critic Hugh Kenner devised the term “Elsewhere Community,” the title of his Massey Lectures which aired on CBC radio in November 1997, to describe the historic internationalism of European writers. In pursuit of their art, Romantic and modernist authors travelled in quest of identity and kindred spirits because “Great writers have always needed an Elsewhere Community” (103) to distance themselves from their mundane origins. Kenner defined his notion loosely in order to indulge in anecdotes of literary writers' itineracy, showing how their affinities and collaborations ignored the conventional political and geographical boundaries of nation-states. Although he makes

no reference to Canadian writers, he coined a phrase that nicely suits the Canadian context, where the notion of an “elsewhere community” becomes particularly concrete. With few exceptions, serious English-Canadian writers have inevitably found themselves engaging with the elsewheres of the international English-language literary market, centred in London and New York.⁴ The following discussion offers a critical account of both the magnitude and the consistency of the situation, a topic which the nationalist project of Canadian Literature has tended to elide.

The first English-language writings about Canada were necessarily “elsewhere” texts, composed by visitors to describe their adventures to readers back home. These accounts were shaped by European cultural ideologies about the New World and its inhabitants and by prevailing literary conventions, as in the Newfoundland verses in Robert Hayman’s *Quodlibets* of 1628, which present one of the first literary idealizations of terrain that would eventually become Canada. Written in the style of their era, these poems’ gentlemanly wit and recourse to pastoral convention prevail over reference to the hardship of surviving in a bleak environment. Ian MacLaren’s research demonstrates that the great exploration narratives—once regarded as unvarnished historical documents—were tailored to entertain European readers. Sensational incidents in the published journals of Samuel Hearne (the massacre of the Inuit) and Captain James Cook (cannibalism at Nootka Sound) are more accurately understood as the result of editors seeking to meet readers’ desire for the gothic shudder than as historical truth. Similarly, it is important to regard the first novel set in Canada, Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769), as the product of a seasoned London author who cannily exploited the exotic setting she encountered when she accompanied her husband to British North America for part of his term as chaplain to the British troops in Quebec; considerable ingenuity was required to adapt the conventions of the epistolary sentimental novel to the realities of a trans-Atlantic postal system that was paralyzed for many months by the freezing of the St. Lawrence River. Seven decades later, similar travel due to a spousal colonial appointment led to another landmark book by a professional English writer, Anna Jameson’s *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (1838). Her three volumes address a sophisticated European audience presumed to be as interested in the author’s reflections on Goethe and Schiller as in “scenes and regions hitherto undescribed by any traveller . . . and [in] relations with the Indian tribes such as few European women of refined and civilised habits have ever risked, and none

have recorded” (vi). All the titles I have just cited have been incorporated into “Canadian Literature” as it has long been constructed and taught, although none of their authors wrote as, or for, Canadians.

Writers born in the colonies that later became Canada found their efforts to establish local literary cultures steeped in trans-Atlantic tensions. One of the first to document this experience was New Brunswick-born Oliver Goldsmith, great-nephew and namesake of the Irish author, who responded to his uncle’s *The Deserted Village* with his own narrative poem, *The Rising Village*, published in London in 1825. He claimed that his work, later canonized as “the first book-length poem published by a native English Canadian and the first book-length publication in England by a Canadian poet” (Lynch xi), was “torn to Shreds . . . Because I did not produce a poem like the great Oliver;” a reception that caused him to “abandon the Muses”(43). Upper Canadian-born John Richardson proved more persistent. A career military officer who resided in Europe for about twenty years, Richardson produced five identified titles in London, including his best-known work, the novel *Wacousta; or, The Prophecy* (1832), its internationalism evident in its indebtedness to fictional models from both sides of the Atlantic—the Scottish romances of Sir Walter Scott and the American frontier adventures of James Fenimore Cooper. Unable to maintain himself as a professional author upon his return to Canada in 1838, Richardson angrily claimed that his books might as well have been published “in Kamtschatka”(587) for all the attention they received, and stormed off to New York, where he fared no better and soon died in poverty.

The middle decades of the nineteenth century present numerous configurations of Canadian authors’ confrontations with elsewhere. Kenner’s lectures open with a discussion of the European Grand Tour as intrinsic to English literary sensibility in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This adventure was a luxury that few Canadians could afford. One writer who made the journey and fully exploited the experience was New Brunswick-born James De Mille; in 1850-51, at the age of seventeen, he and his elder brother visited England, Scotland, Wales, France, and Italy. When financial need later inspired him to apply his considerable erudition and wit to popular fiction, De Mille drew freely upon sites and anecdotes from his youthful European adventures. Published in New York and Boston during the 1860s and 1870s, his potboilers (as he called them) triangulate their European setting with the Canadian identity of their author and the American site of their production and consumption.

For the pre-Confederation era, the English publisher Richard Bentley, who was a substantial agent in the trans-Atlantic book trade, provides an important lens through which to examine the contrasting international careers of his two major Canadian authors: immigrant Susanna Strickland Moodie and emigrant Thomas Chandler Haliburton. Quick to exploit the international appeal of American writers, Bentley became the British publisher of Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Herman Melville, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Francis Parkman, his list of American names totaling more than fifty by 1857 (Gettmann 25). Bentley's titles on North America showed a predilection for travel and exploration, settlers' narratives, and fiction. During each decade of the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, he published at least a dozen titles of sufficient relevance to Canada to be included in the microfiche set of early Canadiana issued by CIHM (Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproduction, now Canadiana.org).⁵ Hence his involvement with two of Canada's best-known authors of the early Victorian era was hardly a coincidence.

Bentley's acquaintance with the Moodies began with his publication of John Moodie's *Ten Years in South Africa* (1835), and resumed in 1851 when he received Susanna's manuscript, which became *Roughing It in the Bush*. Although Susanna never met her English publisher in person, they developed a warm epistolary friendship as he issued seven of her books from 1852 through 1868, most of them novels with little reference to Canada. Moodie's relationship with Bentley was inflected by members of her family who remained in England, notably her elder sister Agnes Strickland, who developed a prominent profile as an author of royal biographies. Tension arose when Bentley also published the only book to appear under the name of Susanna's brother, Samuel Strickland's *Twenty-Seven Years in Canada West* (1853). Instigated and edited by Agnes in order to restore her family's dignity which she felt had been affronted by the coarseness of *Roughing It*, Sam's book was worse written and better paid (Gray, *Sisters* 214-17). The success of *Roughing It*, quickly followed by Susanna's *Life in the Clearings*, restored the Moodie-Bentley relationship; upon his death in 1871, Moodie sadly recorded that "a kind friend of mine has come to his reward, Richard Bentley, the great London Publisher" (*Letters* 299).⁶

The Bentley connection enabled Susanna Moodie to cultivate a double audience. In her new home of Upper Canada she wrote for Canadians in her extensive contributions to the local periodical press, while her books were all published in England and addressed a British audience. The scholarly edition of *Roughing It*, prepared by Carl Ballstadt for the Centre for Editing

Early Canadian Texts, documents many of the changes that were made when her sketches of local life were gentrified for European readers. Whether the modifications were made by Moodie herself or by an English editor, they dramatized her text by using dialect to reinforce class distinctions and by adding exotic details and exclamation marks. For example, a simple opening question to readers of the *Literary Garland*, premised on familiarity—“READER, have you ever heard of a place called Dummer?” (“Canadian Sketches” 101)—acquired gothic overtones when revamped to stress strangeness: “Reader! have you ever heard of a place situated in the forest-depths of this far western wilderness, called Dummer?” (*Roughing It* 463).

Without a British publisher, Susanna Moodie’s book production would have vastly diminished. Americans were more interested in pirating her work than in paying for it, and throughout the nineteenth century Canadian book publication was, in George Parker’s words, “almost an act of faith” (67). Subscription publishing was the norm and rarely yielded the envisioned profits, as learned by Catharine Parr Traill. Her first Canadian venture, *The Female Emigrant’s Guide* (1855), was issued by subscription in Toronto and probably brought her no income at all (24-25). She achieved greater success when her *Studies of Plant Life in Canada* (1885), published in Ottawa, earned her “about \$200” (289), but despite the declared success of many of her books, notably *Canadian Wildflowers*, published in Montreal in 1867, Traill owed the comfort of her final decades to gifts and inheritances (138).

Susanna Moodie’s relationship with Bentley might not have been quite as sanguine if she had known of his financial arrangements with Thomas Chandler Haliburton, which rendered Haliburton “undoubtedly the best-paid author in nineteenth-century Canada” according to George Parker (65). Whereas Moodie’s earnings for her seven Bentley books seem to have totalled somewhat above £350 (Gerson, *Canada’s* 23), Haliburton received £300 for the single volume that comprised the second series of *The Clockmaker* (1838) (86) and he requested £500 for the third (1840) (109). Haliburton’s reverse migration to London provides the ultimate example of a Canadian-born writer finding validation in England, an outcome initially prompted by Bentley’s pirating of *The Clockmaker* shortly after its first publication in Halifax in 1836. Pleased by Bentley’s interest and superior material production, Haliburton sailed to London and arranged for Bentley to issue the second series of Sam Slick’s “Sayings and Doings.” During this sojourn, Haliburton made significant literary and social contacts that led to English publication of all his subsequent books, a move that justifiably angered his

original Nova Scotian publisher, Joseph Howe. Haliburton's increasing anglo-phililia culminated in permanent relocation to London in 1856, marriage to a wealthy Englishwoman, and acquisition of a seat as Member of Parliament for the rotten borough of Launceston in North Cornwall in 1859.

As the nineteenth century unfolded, demographic patterns of Canadian authorship shifted, with fewer adult immigrant writers like the Stricklands, and many more literary emigrants. Most of the researchable English-Canadian authors of the post-Confederation era were either born in territories that would become part of Canada or were brought to the region as small children. But towards the end of the nineteenth century, writers realized that literary fortunes were to be made elsewhere—mostly in the burgeoning literary networks and publishing industries of the United States, centred in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Sara Jeannette Duncan's shrewd 1887 remark that “the market for Canadian literary wares of all sorts is self-evidently New York” (“American” 518) was earlier demonstrated by New Brunswick-born May Agnes Fleming, who moved to New York around 1870 and countered John Richardson's previous example of failure by reputedly earning \$15,000 a year for her copious output of romantic fiction.⁷

While riches could be made by publishing in the US, the production saga endured by William Kirby's *The Golden Dog* has attained legendary status as a cautionary tale about the vulnerability of Canadian literary ventures before the international copyright regulations of 1901 brought the United States into the Berne Convention. Completed in 1873, Kirby's manuscript was rejected by several American and English houses before it was finally accepted by Montrealer John Lovell. In 1871, Lovell had cleverly circumvented the prevailing copyright complexities by setting up a printing plant across the border at Rouses Point in New York State. Producing books in the US enabled the New York firm of Lovell, Adam and Wesson to register American and British copyright simultaneously, if procedures were correctly followed. However, in 1877, the New York operation collapsed without proper registration of Kirby's title. As a result, the best-known Canadian novel of the nineteenth century circulated widely in American editions that brought virtually no payment to its author. In 1897, it fell under the control of Boston publisher L.C. Page, who forced Kirby to issue a drastically abridged text as the “Authorized Version,” for which he received only \$100 (Parker 190-92).⁸ An economic failure for its author, *The Golden Dog* nonetheless earned him substantial cultural capital, including admiration by Queen Victoria (Pierce 266) and charter membership in the Royal Society of Canada.

Despite the example of *The Golden Dog*, late nineteenth-century writers attempting to live by their pens while domiciled in Canada, such as Isabella Valancy Crawford and L.M. Montgomery, sent most of their work to American publishers and periodicals in order to enter the dominant North American print market. As Agnes Maule Machar explained to an acquaintance from whom she sought assistance in placing her work with English publishers, “we Canadian authors have to choose between trying the United States or Britain, and the *first* is more accessible” (Davies 145). American production often required compromise, as in Beautiful Joe’s change of citizenship because the publisher of Marshall Saunders’ subsequently enduring novel believed that Americans would not care to read the heart-warming story of a Canadian dog. Sometimes changes were made to titles as well as contents in order to avoid copyright infringement (Davies 145-6).⁹ Robert Barr summarized the amenability of Canadian authors in rather concrete terms: “an author must live if he is to write, and he must eat if he is to live, and he must have money if he is to eat”(4).

According to Eli MacLaren, Ralph Connor (Charles W. Gordon) was the exception that proves the rule that literary authorship was not viable for writers who stayed home in Canada. While Connor’s success has usually been attributed to the appeal of his stories of western Christian adventure to the dominant social ethos of turn-of-the-century North America, MacLaren demonstrates that Connor’s astounding sales figures were generated by the way “the physical form of his ideas intersected with the continental fault lines between North American copyright regimes” (510). His first book, *Black Rock*, secured his reputation because lack of proper copyright registration in the US enabled massive pirating which built the readership for his subsequent novels. Hence from 1898 to 1906 the worldwide sales of Connor’s first five novels reputedly exceeded two million copies, “a figure reached by L.M. Montgomery’s twelve most popular books only at the end of her life” (508).

While bibliographies of professional writers such as L.M. Montgomery reveal the extent of their reliance on American magazines and serials,¹⁰ the full picture of Canadian contributions to American periodicals has yet to be assembled. For example, R.G. Moyles has identified over five-hundred pieces by Canadians that were published between 1870 and 1918 in the *Youth’s Companion* (Boston), a major weekly magazine that paid good rates for stories and poems. About half of these appeared between 1891 and 1901 during the editorship of E.W. Thomson, who encouraged his fellow Canadians. Canadian poets who desired to see their verse appear in finer editions

likewise looked south. In the 1890s, the small Boston firm of Copeland and Day became “a haven for Canadian authors who were anxious to be published in the United States but found it difficult to gain acceptance by the established firms” (Kraus 35). It issued several volumes by the Ottawa poets, Archibald Lampman and Duncan Campbell Scott, as well as titles by Maritimers Bliss Carman and Francis Sherman. Mobile, unmarried young Canadian women were especially attracted to literary employment opportunities in the United States, where the percentage of women involved in journalism and publishing was twice that in Canada (Mount, *When* 37-39).¹¹ Thus the pull of the United States accounts for Canadian authors’ third pattern of movement: in addition to traversing the Atlantic—in both directions—many flooded across the American border, the majority to remain in the US.

Angela Woollacott has recently shown that between 1870 and 1940, the vogue of attempting “to try her fortune in London” attracted “tens of thousands” of Australian women to the Imperial centre, many of whom had literary ambitions (3). This trend was followed by far fewer Canadians, due to the proximity and prosperity of the US. Emblematic of the contest between London and New York was young Ernest Thompson Seton’s abortive attempt to study art in London. Born in England and raised in Ontario, he initially identified with the land of his ancestors. In 1881, at the age of twenty, he recorded his intention to “make a comfortable fortune by my pen and pencil” and crown his success with “a small estate in Devonshire and a house in London” (Keller 89). Instead, his tremendously successful career as a writer of animal stories enabled him to end his days as a wealthy American citizen, living on a 25,000 acre ranch in New Mexico.

The attraction of New York was wittily expressed in Charles G.D. Roberts’ 1884 squib, “The Poet is Bidden to Manhattan Island,” which advises:

O hither haste, and here devise
 Divine *ballades* before unuttered.
 Your poet’s eyes *must* recognize
 The side on which your bread is buttered!
 . . .
 You’ve piped at home where none could pay,
 Till now, I trust, your wits are riper.
 Make no delay, but come this way,
 And pipe for them that pay the piper! (81-2)

Documentation of this situation is now available in Nick Mount’s exhaustive analysis, which shows that Sara Jeannette Duncan was not the only Canadian literary leaf to be “blown far,” to cite the words on her tombstone. In the

dissertation research that led to his book, *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York*, Mount tracked 112 Canadian literary expatriates who were active in New York between 1880 and 1914. While many were publishers, illustrators, or journalists rather than literary authors, their formal congregation in the Canadian Club of New York, and informal meetings in bars and tea-shops, consolidated a critical mass that facilitated publication for Canadian prose writers and poets in the burgeoning American periodical and book market. Only nineteen of those on Mount's list are known to have returned to Canada, including eleven of the thirty-one women (diss. Appendix A).

Despite the massive appeal of the US, a cluster of literary Canadians did find their way to Britain around the turn of the nineteenth century. After a few years of journalism in Australia, Ontario-born Gilbert Parker followed Haliburton's example of incorporation into the British power structure, not only serving as an English MP, but also acquiring a knighthood for his writing and a rumoured annual income of £7,000 in royalties (Gerson, "Gilbert Parker" 265). England also attracted restless Canadians who had tired of the US, such as Charles G.D. Roberts. As well, London became the home of several less illustrious Canadian-raised career authors—notably Robert Barr and Grant Allen. Unlike Parker (and Haliburton before him), these two men wrote little about Canada. The prolific, polymathic Allen produced everything from lighter fiction to serious "socialist, nonconformist, naturalist philosophy" and scientific analysis (St. Pierre 9) as well as the notorious 1895 novel, *The Woman Who Did*. Barr was involved with *The Idler* and was an associate of Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, and Jerome K. Jerome. Notwithstanding their extensive output, the two men are now viewed as minor authors by critics on both sides of the Atlantic and have received scant recognition in Canadian sites of consecration such as reference books and anthologies.

The Canadian literary women who went to England were less likely than the men to blend into the British cultural community. Indeed, in the misadventures of Sara Jeannette Duncan's *Daughter of Today* (1894) artist and writer Elfrida Bell can be read as a cautionary example to brash North American New Women who attempt to penetrate the frigidly hierarchical and class-conscious London literary network. Given her journalistic connections in Canada and the US, Duncan herself would likely have joined the Canadian expatriate community in New York or Boston had she not married an Anglo-Indian based in Calcutta. Her extended visits to England from 1892 until she retired to London in 1919 facilitated communication with her English publishers and her appearance in English periodicals. But the often

biting critiques of English society and literary culture that permeate her fiction (such as Deirdre Tring's parodic flirtation with playwriting in *Set in Authority*) suggest that she was not likely to replicate the integration enjoyed by Haliburton, Parker, Barr, and Allen. As she traversed the globe, Duncan took advantage of the opportunities for multiple international appearances (in periodicals as well as books) that were made increasingly accessible through the evolution of the new figure of the professional literary agent, as documented in Misao Dean's account of Duncan's relationship with the American firm of A.P. Watt. Duncan's extensive literary geography—involving Canada, the US, England, and India—identifies her as Canada's most prominent early participant in the global literary field.¹²

British family roots and the desire to enhance their profiles in Canada account for the English sojourns of two other Canadian women writers of Duncan's generation (born in the 1860s), E. Pauline Johnson and Joanna E. Wood. Johnson's claim that she needed to visit London in 1894 in order to publish her first book belies the pattern of her contemporaries (Carman, Lampman, Roberts, Scott) who issued most of their early volumes of poetry in the US. The homeland of Johnson's mother, England likely beckoned due to Johnson's Imperialist sentiments and to its hospitable reception of attractive mixed-race colonials like herself, in contrast to the discomfort she felt in the US.¹³ The press-clipping plaudits that Johnson collected during this visit provided cultural capital that would enrich her publicity materials for the next decade. Joanna Wood, whose London visit in 1900-01 included acquaintance with Charles Swinburne and presentation at court, similarly exploited the cachet of her British experiences upon her return, issuing fulsome accounts in the *Canadian Magazine*.

From the elevated aura of London to the bread-and-butter reality of New York, what do we make of all the travelling, relocation, and foreign publication that comprised the global context of the writers of Victorian Canada? The nationalist ideology underpinning Canadian literary history has long regarded the enduring need to publish abroad as a sign of failure—of the local industry, of local audiences, of the national spirit, of government policy, of international copyright, etc. This view results in part from tension between the intensifying political nationalism of the late nineteenth century and the expanding internationalism of English-language print culture. Before she fully understood the workings of the international literary realm, Duncan bluntly denounced Canadians as “an eminently unliterary people” and the province of Ontario as “one great camp of the Philistines”

(“Saunterings” 707-08). Robert Barr’s 1899 rant that Canadians would rather spend their money “on whiskey than on books” (5) later muted to E.K. Brown’s more thoughtful analysis of “The Problem of a Canadian Literature” (1943) in relation to the country’s colonial mentality and frontier culture. But from the point of view of Canadian authors and their books, the international English-language marketplace has always been the most significant context of production and reception. The multiple piracies of popular novels like *The Golden Dog* and *Beautiful Joe* mark these titles as winners in terms of audience and authorial fame, even though their authors felt cheated financially. This pattern has recently recurred in the academic marketplace with the appearance of Norton Critical Editions of *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* in 2006 and *Roughing It in the Bush* and *Anne of Green Gables* in 2007, all edited by senior Canadian scholars. These American products now compete with existing Canadian critical editions intended for university classrooms, issued by smaller publishers such as Broadview Press and Tecumseh Press, who stand to lose financially if the Norton editions are widely adopted in Canada. Yet on another level, Canadian literary studies can only benefit from the broadened teaching of these canonical titles which will be enabled by Norton’s international reach.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, interest in many Canadian writers was enhanced by the European and Asian excitement about Canada that was fostered by Canadian government support for international associations for Canadian Studies. Scores of conferences yielded collections of scholarly essays on Canadian literature published around the world, from India to Scandinavia. German interest proved particularly intense and led to an intriguing opportunity to return a foundational text when Hartmut Lutz, chair of American and Canadian Studies at the University of Greifswald, arranged for the publication of Canada’s first Inuit autobiography. In 1880, Moravian missionaries took eight Inuit from Labrador to Hamburg as anthropological specimens; within four months, all had died of smallpox. Abraham Ulrikab’s account of his journey, originally written in Inuktitut, was preserved in its German translation in a handwritten notebook retained in the Moravian archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Translated into English by Lutz and his students, Ulrikab’s words finally returned to Canada more than a century later in *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab: Text and Context*, a richly annotated and illustrated volume issued by the University of Ottawa Press in 2005.

The global outlook of book history, which examines cycles of production and reception from the perspective of the book itself, tells a different story

from literary history written according to Canada's national imaginary. It also requires rethinking of canonicity. The answer to the old question of "Who reads a Canadian book," posed by Thomas D'Arcy McGee in 1867 (85), is—anyone, and perhaps almost everyone, if we consider the international readership enjoyed by William Kirby, Ralph Connor, and Marshall Saunders in the past, L.M. Montgomery over a full century,¹⁴ and Michael Ondaatje, Alistair MacLeod, Margaret Atwood, and Yann Martel today. We might also mention the ubiquity of John McCrae's "In Flanders' Fields," whose Canadian authorship is seldom recognized by the people in many countries who recite the poem in annual commemoration ceremonies. From Robert Barr's perspective as an expatriate who trained in New York and eventually settled in London, Canada may have appeared to be "about the poorest book market in the world outside of Senegambia" (4). In fact, the opposite has been true. Canadians may not have rushed to buy Barr's books (in 1900-02 Canadian-authored books comprised ten per cent of the titles on Toronto's best seller lists [Moffett 102-03], a figure that has scarcely changed today¹⁵), but the system of international book distribution that evolved through the nineteenth century and has since more or less remained in place has meant that more titles have been available in Canada, in more editions, than anywhere else in the world. Moreover, the very factors of language and demographic distribution that Barr saw as handicaps to his career in Canada also enabled him to prosper in the international English-language context. For Canadians of his era, as for Canadians of the twenty-first century, "elsewhere" could also be anywhere, and sometimes even everywhere.

The problem of multiple allegiances has always accompanied Canada's writers. Sandra Djwa framed the dilemma facing the modernists of the 1920s as a succinct question: "could one be modern *and* Canadian?" (206). The twenty-first-century version of this query is something like: how can one be global and Canadian? The answer, at the beginning of the new millennium, seems to be equivocal. In addition to the names already mentioned in this discussion, a writer such as Alberto Manguel pursues international careers from a home base in Canada, exemplifying Martel's problematic characterization of Canada as "the greatest hotel on earth" because "it welcomes people from everywhere" (65). Can the transiency of an international hotel foster a national identity? Not in the eyes of Stephen Henighan, who mourns the apparent loss of the intense engagement with local communities that characterized fiction of the 1960s and 1970s, when the goal of the major Canadian novelists seemed to be to tell our stories to ourselves. Yet his complaint that

“A desire to give voice to a nation’s humanity has declined to mere professionalism” (37) can be countered by many examples of writers for whom professionalism and national humanity have not been at odds. Alice Munro’s career took off when she began to sell her stories of Ontario and BC to *The New Yorker*, and Mordecai Richler spent many creative years in the elsewhere of London seeking an international readership for fiction inspired by feeling “forever rooted in Montreal’s St. Urbain Street. That was my time, my place, and I have elected myself to get it right” (19). Fiction rooted in Canada received international sanction when Carol Shields’ American birth qualified her for the Pulitzer Prize for *The Stone Diaries* (1993) and Alistair MacLeod’s *No Great Mischief* (1999) received the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.

As Smaro Kamboureli points out, “Culture has never been autonomous and self-regulating” (“National Pedagogy” 40). Those who normalize the fierce cultural nationalism of the 1960s and 1970s as their point of reference—a nationalism materially enabled by the Canada Council and various government support programs for writers and publishers¹⁶—tend to overlook the historical pattern of internationalism that I have just outlined. Alongside its shaping of enduring assumptions about cultural nationalism, the Centennial era implicitly proclaimed a break with Canada’s literary past, creating a fissure that continues to inform developing critical frameworks about the globalization of culture. Frank Davey has recently called attention to the presentism of much current Canadian literary criticism, “whose most outspoken scholars are now specialists in the contemporary” (95) and therefore tend to overlook much work from before 1970. Globalization of Canadian writing began centuries ago, with the tailoring of the first explorers’ and travellers’ tales for European readers. Many issues that are now regarded as contemporary have significant historical antecedents, knowledge of which is essential to an understanding of how patterns of cultural production and circulation continue to evolve.

NOTES

- 1 This article began as a conference presentation at SHARP in Lyon in July, 2004 and a keynote address to the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada at the University of Saskatchewan the following October. I’d like to thank my recent reviewers for their helpful suggestions that have contributed to its subsequent refinement.
- 2 See Christopher Prendergast’s problematization of many of Casanova’s terms and assumptions.
- 3 As presented, for example, in Danielle Fuller’s introduction to her excellent study.
- 4 Smaro Kamboureli uses “elsewhereness” quite differently in her discussion of the need

- to destabilize comfortable notions of “CanLit” in her preface to *Trans.Can.Lit* (x). The term also appealed to the organizers of a panel discussion titled “Elsewhere Literature: Canadian Fiction Goes International,” that occurred in 2006 in Vancouver (Burns, n. pag.)
- 5 Bentley’s “Canadian” novels included John Galt’s *Lawrie Todd* (1830) and *Bogle Corbet* (1831) and Douglas Huyghue’s *The Nomades of the West, or, Ellen Clayton* (1850); his editions of travel narratives ranged from accounts of Arctic explorations by Frederick Beechy (1831, 1843) and Thomas Simpson (1843, 1846) to Charles Lanman’s more touristic *Adventures of an Angler in Canada, Nova Scotia, and the United States* (1848). Susanna Moodie’s settlement sketches were preceded by A.W. Rose’s *The Emigrant Churchman in Canada* (1849), reissued in 1850 as *Pictures of Canadian Life, or, The Emigrant Churchman*.
 - 6 The Bentley firm maintained its relationship with the Moodie family with the 1880 publication of *A Trip to Manitoba, or Roughting It on the Line* by Susanna’s granddaughter, Mary Agnes Fitzgibbon.
 - 7 This figure comes from Lorraine McMullen (105); Parker cites \$10,000 (234).
 - 8 For a fuller discussion see Brady. L.C. Page later achieved notoriety as L.M. Montgomery’s exploitive American publisher.
 - 9 Royal Gettmann describes Bentley’s issuing of revised American texts, beginning in the 1830s, to avoid copyright difficulties (47-49).
 - 10 The important pioneering work of Russell, Russell, and Wilmshurst in identifying Montgomery’s publications in serials is now being updated in several on-line projects.
 - 11 See Gerson, “Canadian Women Writers and American Markets, 1880s-1940.”
 - 12 The only well-known Canadian woman writer to fully relocate in England, Montreal-born Lily Dougall, represents a very different stream of activity. An intellectual who disapproved of the “modern woman” (the subject of her 1896 novel, *The Madonna of a Day*), Dougall abandoned her native Montreal for health reasons. With an LLA (Lady Licentiate in Arts) degree from the universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews (1887), she moved in circles devoted to religious and philosophical discussion, especially during her final years when she lived near Oxford (1912-23).
 - 13 See Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag. London also seems to have been the residence of the young lover of her Brantford canoeing excursions: see Gray, *Flint and Feather* 98-103.
 - 14 *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) has been translated into Swedish (1909), Dutch (1910), Polish (1912), Danish (1918), Norwegian (1918), Finnish (1920), French (1925), Icelandic (1933), Spanish (1949), Hebrew (1951), Japanese (1952), Slovak (1959), Korean (1963), Portuguese (1972), Turkish (1979), Italian (1980), Czech (1982), German (1986), Chinese (1992), Hungarian (1993), Russian (1995), Serbian (1996), Bulgarian (1997), Croatian (1997), Latvian (1997), Arabic (1998), Slovenian (1998), Estonian (1999), Persian (1999), Romanian (2000), Greek (2001), and Lithuanian (2001).
 - 15 Current best seller lists in the *Globe & Mail* show a rate that hovers between ten and fifteen per cent.
 - 16 The effects of such programs have been vehemently contested in some quarters: see Lecker, “Would You Publish This Book?” and Metcalf.

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