

# Book Policies and Copyright in Canada and Quebec

## Defending National Cultures

**M**ost of the books that Canadians read are of foreign origin. Despite the existence of Canadian publishers, the book-publishing industry in Canada continues to consist overwhelmingly of importation, exclusive agency, and branch-plant publishing.<sup>1</sup> In 2006, imports, exclusive agencies, and branch-plant publications together accounted for approximately 78% (\$2.16 billion) of the total value of books sold in Canada (\$2.76 billion); Canadian publishers' own titles made up the remaining 22% (\$596 million) of domestic sales (see Table 1). These figures, compiled by Statistics Canada, represent the whole country; the view from the province of Quebec is somewhat different. There, imports and branch-plant publications accounted for approximately 55% (\$383 million) of the total value of books sold in 2006 (\$699 million), while Québécois publishers' own titles took the other 45% (\$317 million) (see Table 2). Statistics must be approached with caution, of course: book sales do not neatly equate with reading or cultural importance, the differentiation between "local" and "foreign" is complex, and the Quebec data, collected by the Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec (OCCQ), cannot simply be combined with those of Statistics Canada, because different principles underlie them—the OCCQ classifies books from other Canadian provinces as imports, for example. Nevertheless, it is safe to state short of evidence to the contrary that foreign books predominate in the Canadian market overall and enjoy a lesser but still major presence in Quebec in particular, where local publishing has achieved more marked results.

**Table 1. Book Sales in Canada in 2006**

	<i>Sales in Millions</i>	<i>Share of Can. Market</i>
<b>Books Published in Canada*</b>	<b>\$1,502</b>	<b>54%</b>
By Canadian Publishers	\$766	
Own Titles	\$596	22%
Educational	\$249	
Children's Books	\$52	
Other Trade, All Formats	\$202	
Scholarly, Reference, Professional, Technical	\$93	
Exclusive Agencies	\$170	6%
Educational	\$84	
Children's Books	\$30	
Other Trade, All Formats	\$46	
Scholarly, Reference, Professional, Technical	\$9	
By Foreign-Controlled Firms Operating in Canada	\$737	
Own Titles	\$348	13%
Educational	\$203	
Children's Books	x	
Other Trade, All Formats	\$84	
Scholarly, Reference, Professional, Technical	x	
Exclusive Agencies	\$389	14%
Educational	\$130	
Children's Books	\$92	
Other Trade, All Formats	\$144	
Scholarly, Reference, Professional, Technical	\$23	
<b>Books Imported into Canada</b>	<b>\$1,255</b>	<b>46%</b>
Printed books and similar printed matter n.e.s.	\$628	
Rack-size paperback books	\$165	
Hardbound books n.e.s.	\$167	
Art and pictorial books	\$14	
Technical, scientific, and professional books	\$221	
Liturgical books	\$22	
Children's picture books	\$31	
Children's drawing or colouring books	\$7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,757</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data represent all languages and all provinces (including Quebec). Figures may appear not to add up due to rounding.

\* Surveyed publishers, both French and English, representing 95% of industry revenues.

x Suppressed for reasons of confidentiality.

n.e.s.—not elsewhere specified

Sources: Statistics Canada, Service Industries Division, *Book Publishers, 2006*, catalogue no. 87F0004X (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2009), tables 2-2 (p. 11), 10-2 (p. 19), 11-2 (p. 20). Statistics Canada, Imports and Exports (International Trade Statistics), Canadian International Merchandise Trade database, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/trade-commerce/data-donnee-eng.htm> (accessed 29 April 2009).

**Table 2. Book Sales in Quebec in 2006**

	<i>Sales in Millions</i>	<i>Share of Qc. Market</i>
<b>Books Published in Quebec</b>	<b>\$401</b>	<b>57%</b>
By Québécois Publishers	\$317	45%
Educational	\$79	
Other	\$238	
By Foreign-Controlled Firms Operating in Quebec	\$84	12%
Educational	\$51	
Other	\$33	
<b>Books Imported into Quebec*</b>	<b>\$299</b>	<b>43%</b>
Educational	\$7	1%
Other	\$292	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$699</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data represent books in all languages. Figures may not add up due to rounding.

\* Including books from other Canadian provinces.

Source: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec, *Statistiques en bref* 33 (December 2007).

The primary sources of these foreign books in Canada are, as they always have been, the United States for books in English and France for books in French. From time to time, Canadians have viewed American and French books as vectors of acculturation, tools of imperialism, and dangerous threats to Canadian or Québécois national culture. Although the rhetoric of these views may sometimes swell toward excessive nationalism, they should not simply be dismissed: the economic ground that gives rise to them merits scrutiny. It is true that local trade-book publishing, in constant rivalry with foreign firms, has developed slowly on the Canadian terrain, achieving the characteristic autonomy of the specialist publisher only after 1920 in Quebec and after 1960 in Ontario and the other provinces. Assuredly, Canada's configuration as a massive importer and a small original producer of books has much to do with its colonial past, and one need only look to Australia for confirmation of the idea that a society of immigrant settlers tends to nourish itself first and foremost on literature from elsewhere. Like Canada, Australia continued to be deluged with books from abroad notwithstanding its evolution into a self-governing state: between the First and Second World Wars, for example, barely a tenth of all books sold in Australia were published there (Lyons 20). But to accept that a colonial history necessarily precludes originality in publishing would be to efface the actual operations of cultural and economic power, not to mention the telling differences among colonial

situations. Through the twentieth century, the overwhelming majority of Australia's imported books came from London, and the "mighty Paternoster Row Machine" grappled Australian bookselling to itself with hoops of steel (Nile and Walker 7). This was never the case for Canada, despite its subjection to the British crown. The question therefore merits closer scrutiny: why and how has Canada been such an importer of books?

In order to explain the foreign versus the domestic book in Canada, it is necessary to understand the forces that have structured the dynamics of the national book trade. The purpose of this paper is to describe the twentieth-century emergence of independent trade-book publishing in central Canada as a function of government policy, within an inherited culture and economy of importation. The *History of the Book in Canada / Histoire du livre et de l'imprimé au Canada (HBiC/HLIC)* has assembled a wealth of information on this topic; this paper will present an interpretive summary. The conditions that permitted the prevalence of the foreign book in English Canada and Quebec were different in each case. Whereas the United States dynamically exploited the law of copyright to protect its own industry and wrest the English-Canadian market away from Britain, cultural-linguistic affinities were sufficient for France to dominate Quebec as long as international copyright was not disturbed. Canadian governments at the federal and provincial levels eventually found means of intervening. Although their nationalist motivations were similar, their policies to nurture and protect English-Canadian publishing on the one hand and Québécois publishing on the other have been different. The two separate industries that have developed are now growing in some instances toward international influence of their own, but their survival depends upon the policies under which they have flourished.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Foreign Book in Canada**

The trend of printers and publishers in the United States supplying most of the books sold to the English-Canadian market began after the American Revolution and continued throughout the twentieth century. In 1927, despite the nationalism prompted by the First World War, Canada imported a total of \$14 million in books and printed matter; of this, \$12 million (85%) was from the United States. By contrast, Canadian exports in the same category totalled only \$1 million, less than a tenth of imports (Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics 91, 231). The situation was no different in the 1950s, when 10% of the English-language books sold in Canada were produced there

and 85% were imported from the United States (Wolfe 542). Canadian publishing increased noticeably in the 1960s: in 1969, 35% of all books sold in Canada were manufactured there, while 65% were imported from abroad. Nevertheless, foreign books continued to prevail (Ontario 123).<sup>3</sup>

Until about 1970, the dominant figure in the Canadian literary economy was not the specialist publisher but the *publisher-agent*, the local supplier of a foreign publisher's books. The Canadian publisher-agent was dependent on but not totally controlled by its foreign principals, dealing with several at once to sell one, some, or all of their books in Canada. From its beginnings until the 1960s, McClelland and Stewart was chiefly a publisher-agent. A *branch*, by contrast, was owned by and sold only the books of its parent company, as Macmillan of Canada did when it was founded in Toronto in 1905; with the passage of time, however, Macmillan of Canada began selling other foreign publishers' books too, thus adapting to the role of publisher-agent. Successful publisher-agents dabbled in original Canadian publishing on the side but confessed it to be unprofitable (Gray 58). It was a luxury, pursued for reasons of prestige and financed by success in other fields, such as textbooks: if Macmillan published original fiction by Morley Callaghan in the 1920s, for example, it was the sale of 100,000 copies of its Canadian Readers in the same decade that allowed it to do so (Parker, "Trade and Regional" 170; Clark, "Rise and Fall" 227). In general, the reign of the publisher-agent explains how it was that many hundreds of thousands of books could be bought by Canadian readers every year but original literary publishing remain rare: the heart of the *agency system* lay not in the investing in new writing by local authors but in the diffusion of foreign books to the Canadian market. The agency system took its immediate shape from the Canadian Copyright Act of 1900, which introduced the necessary measures for an English-Canadian firm to acquire and enforce a monopoly on the importation of a work (Parker, "Agency System" 163-64). The ultimate reason for the agency system and for the wider predominance of American books in modern Canada, however, was rooted in older conditions of the Canadian book trade.

Canada was caught in a disjunction between British and American policy on copyright, a disjunction that reached back to the American Revolution and persisted until the United States signed the Berne Convention in 1888. Whereas British copyright became increasingly universal in principle and international in scope, American copyright long held on to elements of national protectionism. As part of the British Empire but also the North American continent, and with a large anglophone population, Canada was

caught in the wake of both. If there is one instrument of the external policy of foreign states that has most affected trade and culture in English-Canadian books, it is surely the law of copyright.

Copyright law stunted the growth of Canadian publishing in three ways. First, British law prevented the Canadian industry from ever enjoying a period of unauthorized reprinting, the one exception being Québécois reprinting during the Nazi occupation of France. All parts of the American book trade flourished after the American Revolution, because local printers were liberated from the restrictions of British copyright (St. Clair 382-83). This liberty, in turn, fostered an accessible literary culture characterized by inexpensive books, widespread reading, decentralized publishing, and a practical mode of authorship that valued not only original creation but also emulation and adaptation (McGill 1-8, 149). These cheap books circulated in British North America. They largely satisfied the anglophone reading public, as books from France did the francophone; but in English Canada the reaction against imports came early. Almost from the beginning English-Canadian printers, prospering on government documents and newspapers, deplored Canada's captivity to the American book. When in 1867 Confederation ushered in a new sense of nationhood, they attempted to set up a local reprint industry. The Belford Brothers of Toronto were perhaps the boldest, notoriously reprinting Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* before the American edition had been released and selling their copies not only in Canada but also by mail across the United States. In 1876, however, the Scottish author Samuel Smiles, prompted by his American publisher, successfully sued the Belfords for piracy. The case of *Smiles v. Belford* established that Canadians could not reprint British copyright works without permission, even if the authors were American (MacLaren, "Copyright" 14-63).<sup>4</sup> French authors were also protected in Canada, by virtue of British treaties with France dating back to 1851. In 1886 Britain drew its empire into the Berne Convention, establishing the rule of international copyright in Canada, which continues to this day (Seville 51, 114-18).

Second, nineteenth-century British law explicitly allowed American "piracies" to be imported into Canada. Colonial authorities wanted the colonists to read British authors, but books published in London were expensive. Unauthorized American reprints of the works of British authors were far cheaper. When the British Copyright Act of 1842 explicitly banned these from the empire, colonies such as Nova Scotia protested that the effect would be to drive the colonists to read only American authors. The British

government responded with the Foreign Reprints Act of 1847, which lifted the ban. Under the 1847 Act, an import duty was to be levied on the imports for the benefit of the British copyright owner. Effective collection of this duty, however, proved difficult. The net result was a commercial pattern of Canadians importing the cheap American edition without hindrance. The Foreign Reprints Act lapsed in 1895, but the pattern had entrenched itself by then, and the upheavals suffered by the British book trade during the First World War only further enabled American publishers to lay claim to Canada.

Third, British and American law denied copyright to original Canadian editions. Thomas Chandler Haliburton's *The Clockmaker*, first published by Joseph Howe in Halifax in 1836, was reprinted without permission in London, Philadelphia, and Boston. The reprinting made the fame of the author, prompting comparisons to Charles Dickens, but it destroyed the investment of his Nova Scotian publisher. For his later works, the author dealt directly with foreign publishers, who commanded effective copyrights (Parker, *Clockmaker* xxviii-xxxii, xlvi-xlix, 777-82). William Kirby's *Le chien d'or / The Golden Dog: A Legend of Quebec* (1877) suffered a similar fate, bringing the Canadian author renown but little revenue (Cambron and Gerson 123-24). The vulnerability of Canadian editions to reprinting continued into the twentieth century, for although Britain extended copyright to Canadian editions in 1886, the American Copyright Act of 1891 did not. The latter granted copyright to foreign authors but included strict formalities: to be eligible for American copyright, a book had to be printed from type set in the United States and two copies had to be deposited at the Library of Congress on or before the date of first publication. Like Haliburton's *The Clockmaker*, Ralph Connor's *Black Rock*, first published in Toronto and London in 1898, failed to secure American copyright and was reprinted across the United States (MacLaren, "Magnification"). The lesson for Canadians was simple: do not publish books at home. Publication in Canada alone secured no copyright in the United States until 1962, when Canada signed the Universal Copyright Convention, and problems persisted until the United States finally entered the Berne Convention in 1988. L.M. Montgomery, Morley Callaghan, Sinclair Ross, and other Canadian writers of the earlier twentieth century could not advance their careers as authors without finding a publisher in the United States.

The profound affinity that English Canadians have to American culture stems partly from this lasting dependence on American books. Until the 1960s, distribution was the highest niche that a Canadian firm could

safely occupy in the hierarchy of the book trade, and the primary form of Canadian “publishing” of general literature was to import the American edition. Canadians were not unaware of the obstacles posed by copyright to domestic publishing (Nair), but they were unable to remove them, because these were the intended effects of American and British policies aimed at securing the largest possible markets for their own publishers.

In Quebec until the 1920s, it was the imported book from France in general, but also from Belgium in the category of religion, that dominated the market. Contrary to what one might assume, this domination was first and foremost the work of local tradespeople. In effect, it appears that French publishers were hardly interested in the Canadian book trade, contenting themselves with responding to booksellers’ orders without prospecting further.<sup>5</sup> It must be kept in mind that the market for French-language books was very small. Quebec numbered only 1,650,000 inhabitants in 1900, including thousands of anglophones. Moreover, despite the massive influx of Roman Catholic teaching orders in the nineteenth century, the francophone population showed a certain backwardness in its efforts at literacy.<sup>6</sup> The result of these particular sociodemographic conditions was that French firms generally neglected Quebec in favour of other export markets such as the Antilles or South America.

By contrast, Québécois tradespeople were anxious to import books from Europe in order to compensate for the insufficiency of local production. The immediate objective was to respond to the needs of institutions and, more broadly, to those of the whole population; the larger stakes were the preservation of French culture in America. This was the high task tackled by booksellers such as Édouard-Raymond Fabre, the great friend of Louis-Joseph Papineau, and Octave Crémazie, the celebrated author of “Le Drapeau de Carillon,” whose commerce was coupled with unequivocal patriotism. These booksellers did not hesitate to cross the Atlantic in order to conclude trade agreements: Fabre for example dealt with the Bossanges in Paris, and at the beginning of the twentieth century Joseph-Pierre Garneau visited the firms of Mame and Casterman. Thus bookselling, and by extension the whole book trade, formed around the imported book. Booksellers who also acted as suppliers enjoyed the greatest success. Selling not only to institutions and individuals for final consumption but also to retailers for resale, these *libraires-grossistes* (wholesalers) achieved significant control over local supply. They did not acquire exclusive agencies to the same extent



as their English-Canadian counterparts: the 1900 Act, designed to function in accord with British copyright, was of little relevance to French works (Michon, "Book Publishing" 199). Nevertheless, the biggest *libraires-gros-sistes*, such as Garneau (in Quebec City), Beauchemin, and Granger Frères (both in Montreal), positioned themselves as the main importers and were therefore the dominant players in the Quebec book trade from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s.

Local interests therefore, responding to economic and ideological pressures, were at the origin of the importation of French books into Quebec—the other factor, of course, being the paucity of local publishing. In the absence not only of sufficient readers but also (as the author Jean Narrache [pseudonym of Émile Coderre] would complain) of competent authors, publishing activity had great difficulty in establishing itself. Furthermore, writers, nourished on French culture, had the tendency to dismiss local production as the work of amateurs. It was this amateurism that the journalist Jules Fournier was still denouncing in 1905-06 when he debated the existence of a French-Canadian literature with the French critic, Charles ab der Halden (Beaudet 117-31). In short, unfavourable social and cultural conditions explain the feebleness of Québécois publishing in this period. The availability of the foreign book was perhaps no help, but this was not orchestrated by interests abroad as was the case in English Canada.

### **Political Intervention**

The situation in Quebec changed after the First World War. The population, from then on predominantly urban,<sup>7</sup> continued to grow and efforts at improving schooling rates began to bear fruit. A mass reading public emerged, as the growing success of novels and popular magazines at this time attests (Goulet and Landry). But it was above all the particular measures implemented by the provincial government of Quebec that permitted local publishing to take flight. True, the desire of the provincial government to support cultural initiatives may be traced to the beginning of the nineteenth century, when French-Canadian culture faced the threat of assimilation. In the realm of the book, this support manifested itself most notably from 1876, the year in which Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain launched the first series of school prize books written and autographed by French-Canadian authors (Robidoux 213-16). Casgrain was the government-appointed editor and published the series with funds allocated from the provincial secretary, while the Department of Public Instruction oversaw

the distribution of the books to schools. Through this series, authors such as Philippe Aubert de Gaspé and Patrice Lacombe became known to thousands of readers, the total number of books given out in the first decade reaching an estimated 175,000 (Landry 86).

Without losing sight of such cases, it is nevertheless clear that intervention by the provincial government intensified from 1920 on. The Liberal government of Louis-Alexandre Taschereau, prompted by French-Canadian nationalism, undertook to provide Quebec with an artistic and intellectual elite. The task of planning the envisioned cultural and educational development fell to Athanase David, the provincial secretary (Harvey). Authors were among the first to benefit from the generosity of the government, which took the form of literary prizes, subsidies to authors' associations, money for publicity, and above all book purchases (Vincent, "Book Policy" 46-48). In committing itself to buy part of the print run of certain titles (the authors were obliged to submit a request to the provincial secretary) in order then to distribute them to libraries, to institutions, and even to foreign countries, the Department of the Provincial Secretary freed authors from the financial risks inherent to publication. This system, which continued until the 1960s, benefitted the publisher as much as the author, allowing the former to cultivate an existence beyond the activity of printing or bookselling. Still, it would be criticized for operating selectively, at the entire discretion of the provincial secretary.

The Department of Public Instruction also put in place a measure that had a direct impact on the development of publishing. The Choquette Act of 1925 stipulated that half of the money allocated for the purchase of school prize books had to be spent on books published in Canada.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the act aimed to support local production by securing annual sales in the lucrative schoolbook market. This measure bore fruit. The many series of school prize books launched by the *libraires-grossistes* such as Beauchemin as well as by newcomers to the publishing game such as Albert Lévesque, who was one of the first specialist publishers in Quebec, are evidence of its success.

The first Québécois firms devoted to publishing appeared from the 1920s on. Right away, they adopted a nationalist discourse to promote their books. However, they did not strive so much to restrict the French book (as the clergy, who mistrusted it, may have desired) as to convince readers to support French-Canadian culture, threatened by assimilation. The relative tolerance with regard to imported books lasted until the 1960s.

**T**he Second World War reignited nationalist sentiment in English Canada. In response, both federal and provincial governments began to investigate ways to establish Canadian culture against the tide of Americanization. They were aided by a generally prosperous postwar economy. Led by Alberta in 1946, various provinces established their own arts boards. The greater financial power of the federal government was initially withheld from such initiatives, perhaps because the British North America Act made no mention of the arts as a federal responsibility and expressly gave all authority over matters of education to the provinces. But this changed with the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949-51), chaired by Vincent Massey. The commission was formed to address the specific issues of public policy in radio and television, but its report, published in 1951, made crucial recommendations for the whole sphere of Canadian culture (Litt 37-38). Indeed, English Canada traces much of its present cultural profile to the Massey Report's nationalist call for state sponsorship of the arts.

The Massey Report did not itself propose a book policy. Its recommendations did, however, expand the possibilities of Canadian print culture. It defended the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which commissioned original works for radio and later television. It proposed that the federal government expand Canadian universities and found a national library, recommendations that were soon followed. Most importantly, it demanded a federal body to nurture the arts, and this was born as the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957 (Litt 39; Latham). Once in place, the Council initiated many effective programs. It took over the administration of the Governor General's Literary Awards in 1959 and has since then steadily increased the categories of prizes and the amount of money attached to each (Luneau and Panofsky 118). The Writer-in-Residence program, created in 1965, has provided well-paid, temporary appointments for poets, novelists, and authors of non-fiction at universities and libraries across the country (Earle). Collectively, these consequences of the Massey Report substantially increased the economic opportunities for Canadians to write and work with books despite the continuing predominance of American editions.

Direct investment in book publishing became possible when American copyright law changed to extend national treatment to Canadian editions. This occurred in 1962, when Canada ratified the Universal Copyright Convention (UCC) (UNESCO, "Universal Copyright Convention"). The United States had adopted the UCC in 1954 as an alternative to the stricter

Berne Convention. Under the UCC, the United States dropped most of its formalities: independent Canadian editions now secured American copyright as if they had been published in the United States (except if the author was an American resident, in which case the formalities still applied) (Curry 145, 147). This greatly lightened the threat of American reprinting, largely securing the American market for books published in Canada alone. Serious investment in English-Canadian book publishing could at last begin.

The investment came first through private enterprise and then through public policy. Original English-Canadian publishing initially flourished in the form of the small press—the independent publisher of books or magazines containing experimental literature or representing marginalized social groups. Eight hundred small presses are known to have existed in Canada between 1918 and 1980, and almost all of them appeared after 1960. Generally they were founded for artistic or ideological motives, and many were short-lived. Some survived, however, maturing into commercially successful publishers, such as Coach House Press, House of Anansi Press, Tundra Books, and Talonbooks (McKnight 311). Government funding for publishers evolved after the small press had demonstrated that independent Canadian publishing was now practical.

In 1970, two well-known Toronto publisher-agents, Gage and Ryerson, were bought by American competitors. Ryerson had a prestigious record in original literary publishing and the sale raised a public outcry against the foreign control of Canadian culture. The Ontario government reacted by striking an inquiry, the Ontario Royal Commission on Book Publishing. Immediately another Toronto firm, McClelland and Stewart, which since 1963 had boldly shifted the balance of its operations away from exclusive agency toward original publishing, announced that it too was on the verge of bankruptcy. The insolvency of this firm raised particular alarm because of its accomplishment in publishing new Canadian writers, such as Leonard Cohen and Margaret Laurence (MacSkimming 129-39), and because of its unique series of quality paperbacks, the New Canadian Library. The New Canadian Library, which had been launched in 1958 in collaboration with Malcolm Ross, an English professor at Queen's University, was central to the teaching of Canadian literature: though not the first, it was the most successful venture to republish Canadian writing from the past, much of which had first appeared abroad and was long out of print. The New Canadian Library was the foundation upon which the teaching of Canadian literature at schools and universities was rising (Friskney 3-5, 65, 87). In order to save

McClelland and Stewart, the Ontario government followed the advice of the Royal Commission and in 1971 lent this company a million dollars on generous terms. This unprecedented public intervention marked a turning point for Canadian publishing: henceforth it would be regarded not as an individual luxury but as a cultural industry. Similar loans to other Canadian firms followed (Litt 41; MacSkimming 147-49).

Over the 1970s, Canadian book policy evolved from these emergency one-time loans into sophisticated granting programs. At the federal level, the Canada Council tried different forms of financial assistance beginning in 1972, including grants for specific publications, a book-purchase program inspired by that of Quebec, co-publishing ventures, publicity campaigns (such as National Book Week), translation funding, funding for children's literature, and a promotion and distribution program. The provinces instituted similar measures, such as British Columbia's book-purchase programs for libraries; apart from Quebec, however, the vast majority of provincial subsidies were offered by Ontario (Litt 43-44). Most of these initiatives operated on the concept of assessing and succouring cultural value without regard to the market; some commentators criticized them for keeping publishers alive but not making them more competitive. In response, the Canadian Book Publishing Development Program (CBPDP) of 1979 introduced funding strategies that were tied to financial performance, such as giving larger grants to companies with higher sales levels. In 1986, this program was reborn as the Book Publishing Industry Development Plan (BPIDP), which increased available funding for general operations but stiffened the financial criteria to be met by publishers applying for grants. In 1993, these criteria thickened to include a rising sales minimum, which a company had to exceed annually to be eligible for a BPIDP grant, and other numerical thresholds relating to unsold inventory, productivity, and debt (Lorimer 21-23). Then, in 1995, the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien abruptly reduced the budget of the BPIDP and accompanying subsidies for distribution and marketing by a stunning 55% (Lorimer 24), and in the wake of this cutback at least one publisher has decried the vestigial program as dysfunctional (Lecker). Thus, while government subsidization of Canadian-owned book publishers has proliferated, the cultural and industrial rationales now informing it exist in tension: the English-Canadian book is by no means secure from the powerful neo-liberal view that the best grant would be no grant at all.

What remains of the subsidization of English-Canadian publishing now occurs in the context of the global copyright regime. Canadian publishers

market and distribute their books internationally, but they also risk being swallowed up by foreign competitors. For example, May Cutler, the owner of Tundra Books, a Montreal children's publisher, attended European book fairs to arrange for the sale of her editions in foreign countries and established a branch office in New York in order to distribute them directly to the United States. In 1995, however, she sold her company to McClelland and Stewart, and in 2000 McClelland and Stewart was partly donated to the University of Toronto and partly sold off to the multinational publisher, Random House (in turn controlled by the German media conglomerate, Bertelsmann AG); Random House took over key aspects of the Canadian firm's operation (Macskimming, 276-79, 374-75; Pouliot, Saltman, and Edwards 224). Such a case suggests that Canada will continue to be a place where a national culture struggles to assert itself within a language community and a structure of trade that are fundamentally international.

In Quebec too, the Second World War ushered in major changes to the world of the book. The war interrupted publishing in France and prompted exceptional regulations in Canada, suddenly making Quebec the main supplier of French books for the world. Permitted by federal licence to reprint French copyright works, Québécois publishers experienced a meteoric rise (Michon, *Histoire de l'édition littéraire au Québec*, 2: 23-322). The resumption of publishing in post-war France, however, precipitated their rapid decline. A number of them attempted to convert themselves into distributors of French books, such as André Dussault, co-owner of Éditions Variétés during the war and founder of Librairies Dussault afterwards. But those who managed to survive were rare, especially since the small Québécois market soon saw the arrival of new competition. At the beginning of the 1950s, the French firms Flammarion and Hachette opened bookstores in Quebec with the goal of managing their own distribution (Brisson, "World of Bookselling" 397). Their presence had no immediate consequences, but by the end of the 1960s, when the distribution system had been irremediably compromised and when the development of education had substantially increased the demand for books, they were striving to occupy the market.

At the end of the 1950s, publishing and bookselling in Quebec were in crisis. The election of a new provincial government headed by Jean Lesage, however, aroused much hope. This Liberal government, which intended to take Quebec out of an era of socio-religious conservatism—"la grande

*noirceur*”—was the motor of the Quiet Revolution. From the outset, it announced that it would listen to the cultural sector: in 1961 the Department of Cultural Affairs was created to oversee, among other things, aid to publishing and writing. It launched a host of programs from 1962 on (now administered by the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles [SODEC]); these, combined with those of the Canada Council, allowed Québécois publishing to catch its breath and then to prosper (Faure). Whereas the Société des éditeurs canadiens du livre français included only 29 companies in 1959–60 (Vincent, “Professionnels” 331), there were 70 registered publishers in 1983, and 113 in 1998 (Ménard 139–40). Among the ones to leave their mark on the 1960s and 1970s were les Éditions du Jour, le CLF, Parti Pris, and l’Hexagone.

Booksellers, by contrast, continued to struggle to escape the slump. At the start of the 1960s, institutions such as libraries, schools, and colleges were still supplied by the *libraires-grossistes* if not directly by educational publishers. Deprived of these reliable sales, small booksellers had trouble staying afloat. Trade-book publishers feared that the weakness of the bookselling network would eventually compromise their existence. They denounced this situation in a memorandum presented to the provincial government in 1962, demanding better regulation of the book trade (Conseil supérieur du livre). The government’s response was disappointing: although it did pass an act in 1965 for the accreditation of bookstores, which broke the stranglehold of the *libraires-grossistes*, it did not prevent institutions from doing business directly with the publishers (Vincent, “Conseil supérieur”). This policy was subsequently revised many times, but in the absence of any real political will to intervene in commerce, the problem persisted until the passage of Bill 51 in 1979.

After the disappearance of the *libraires-grossistes* at the end of the 1960s, new commercial practices emerged. *Distribution exclusive*—exclusive distribution on the French model—imposed itself. A number of Québécois publishers attempted to form distribution companies, some successfully (such as Pierre L’Espérance’s Messageries ADP from 1961 on), others less so (Jacques Hébert’s Messageries du Jour, which had to close its doors in the 1970s). Some French publishers decided to do business with Québécois companies—Éditions Robert Laffont dealt with Messageries du Jour, for example, and Les Presses de la Cité and Librairie Larousse also entrusted their distribution to local firms—but many others preferred to open their own branches in Quebec. In 1968, Hachette announced the opening of a second bookstore in Montreal and broke off its contract with a local company in

order to distribute its works itself. Flammarion followed suit in 1970, founding the distributor, Socadis, which Gallimard joined in 1972. Quebeckers reacted with alarm. Intellectuals, artists, and book-trade professionals united to denounce this “cultural imperialism” (Pontaut, Bellefeuille, et al.), targeting especially the actions of “*la pieuvre verte*,” Hachette. The French book would henceforth be perceived as a threat—a veritable instrument of cultural assimilation.

Despite the outcry about the Hachette Affair, a strict regulation of book commerce did not occur until ten years had passed and a nationalist party, the Parti québécois, had come to power. Bill 51 saved the bookselling network. Passed in 1979, implemented in 1980, and still in force today, it obliges public libraries to buy from bookstores in their region. Consequently, the number of Quebec booksellers has grown since 1980 (Ménard 36), in stark contrast to English Canada, where the hegemony of one—Chapters-Indigo—is incontestable. The new law has checked the growth of foreign companies in Quebec’s bookselling sector by specifically denying them access to institutional sales. However, it has not prevented their continuing to control a large part of the total book distribution in Quebec, as the examples of Socadis and Dimédia make clear. In sum, the provincial government has long supported publishing, but only belatedly has it implemented effective measures to impose limits on the presence of foreign interests in the realm of the book. The necessity of this intervention has not been questioned since.

### **Conclusion**

Publishing and bookselling must be governed by intelligent policy if books are to be responsive to local experience. Books are international by default. Migration, curiosity, the quest for markets, and the rise and fall of empires generally make them so, and the recent emergence of a global copyright regime has increased the incentives for exportation and corporate takeovers. But the example of a mid-sized country such as Canada shows that state intervention is crucial to achieving a desirable equilibrium between exposure to the wealth of the world’s culture on the one hand and self-knowledge and sovereignty on the other. The imported book dominated nineteenth-century Canada: Quebec counted on the French book to ensure the survival of its language and culture in an increasingly anglophone federation, while English Canada opened itself to American books, including American editions of British authors. In the twentieth century, surges of nationalism against Americanization on the one hand and *canadianisation* followed by



*francisation* on the other have resulted in various forms of state intervention, which have had contrasting effects. In the long historical view, literary enterprise has developed and specialist publishing has undeniably increased in both cases. But a closer analysis of the contemporary moment points to stark differences. As Tables 1 and 2 show, Quebec has achieved near parity between the market share of regional and foreign publishers; English Canada has not. The decisive difference is Quebec's regulation of bookselling. English Canada has contented itself with granting programs that, although they support culturally autonomous expression in important ways, are being hollowed out by drastic budget cuts, despite not yet having produced balance between domestic and foreign control of the books that Canadians read. In Quebec broad stability exists for the spectrum of roles involved in the production of local literature; in English Canada, independent bookselling risks vanishing altogether. As this crucial link to Canadian readers deteriorates, local publishing will lose what little market share it now possesses and grow increasingly dependent on shrinking government grants. A decisive change of policy on the example of Quebec may be in order to defend the possibility of independent publishing in Canada and the diverse forms of consciousness and responsibility that such independence enables.

#### NOTES

A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the conference, Réseaux et circulation internationale du livre: Diplomatie culturelle et propagande 1880-1980, Lausanne, Switzerland, 13-15 November 2008. The proceedings of this conference, including a version of this paper in French, will be published by Nouveau Monde Éditions in 2010. Ultimately, the paper springs from the authors' involvement in *History of the Book in Canada / Histoire du livre et de l'imprimé au Canada*, directed by Patricia Lockhart Fleming and Yvan Lamonde and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

- 1 *Exclusive agencies* are foreign-published books of which a Canadian publisher has negotiated to be the sole local supplier; for reasons explained below, exclusive agency is more common in English Canada than French Canada. *Branch-plant publications* are books published in Canada by a foreign-controlled firm.
- 2 Government and religious publishing, newspapers, and textbooks all flourished in Canada before the twentieth century. By definition less exposed to foreign competition, they have a somewhat different history from that of trade books, or "general literature," the focus of this paper. See Gallichan; Brodeur; Distad; Clark, "Reckless Extravagance"; Clark, "Publishing of School Books"; and Aubin.
- 3 For a full statistical description of twentieth-century Canadian book importation, see Brisson, "International Sources."

- 4 It is important to note that the ruling in *Routledge v. Low* (1868), L.R. 3 H.L. (English and Irish Appeal Cases), 100, permitted American authors to secure British copyright by publishing in London.
- 5 On this subject, Philippe Prévost even speaks of a French book “slump” (*mévente*) in Canada (81-82).
- 6 Michel Verrette argues that this backwardness, which placed Quebec behind most European countries but still ahead of Belgium and Italy, must be analyzed in light of the more recent industrial development of the province (141-42).
- 7 “D'environ 39,9 pour cent en 1901, le taux d'urbanisation atteint 63 pour cent en 1931. Cette année-là, le Québec compte 1 060 649 ruraux et 1 813 606 citadins” (Hamelin and Montminy 23).
- 8 According to the amendment to article 2931 of the School Code, “les commissions scolaires doivent employer à l'achat des livres canadiens la moitié du montant affecté à l'achat des prix” (Farley 8-9, qtd. in Lemieux 90-91).

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