

**Cultural Diversity and Economic Convergence: The Dialectics of Canadian
Cultural Policy**

Sabine Milz
Graduate student in English
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
L8S 4M4
milzs@mcmaster.ca

02/4

Cultural Diversity and Economic Convergence: The Dialectics of Canadian

Cultural Policy

By Sabine Milz

Abstract:

Through an examination of the Canadian book and magazine sectors and the major international trade agreements to which Canada is a signatory, the paper interrogates the shortcomings of Canadian cultural policy's attempt at reconciling the realities of global capitalism with the Romantic ideal of non-commodified, non-economic national culture. The discussion highlights the contradictions involved in current policy attempts to protect a uniquely "Canadian culture" in an era of globalisation in which national cultures seem to increasingly disintegrate and give way to mass cultural expression. Moreover, it probes the policy terms for an economised reformulation of Canadian culture, which means a discursive and material, localised and globalised way of conceptualising the dynamics of Canadian cultural expression.

Introduction¹

As countries become more economically integrated, nations need strong domestic cultures and cultural expression to maintain sovereignty and sense of identity.

(The Cultural Industries Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade)

What do increasing internationalisation and mechanisation in today's world system entail for the future of Canadian cultural policy? Will the values of cultural sovereignty and diversity that have so far been crucial to Canadian self-understanding dwindle in the face of encroaching economic convergence towards a neoliberal paradigm, which increasingly converts all spheres of human life, knowledge, and experience in economic terms? Or will Canadian cultural policy have the strength to persevere against economic pressures towards a fully liberalised, commodified international market that absorbs all cultural goods and services?² These are some of the questions tackled in the 1999 report of The Cultural Industries Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade (SAGIT), which is part of the federal government's advisory system on international trade and as such provides a means for officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of Canadian Heritage to consult with representatives of Canada's cultural industries. As SAGIT's statement above indicates, economic integration and convergence definitely pose major challenges to the notions of cultural and national sovereignty and identity that underlie Canadian cultural policies. Why is it that societies like Canada still desire the ideal of distinct national cultures in a 21st century marked by global capitalism and mass culture? Why are we so reluctant to recognise culture's commodification and international rapprochement?

¹ I wish to thank Robert O'Brien, Neil McLaughlin, Daniel Coleman and the two anonymous referees for their invaluable comments, criticisms, and suggestions on this essay. Parts of this article were presented at the John Douglas Taylor Conference at McMaster University in October 2001; I am grateful for all the constructive feedback and stimulus I received on that occasion. A shortened version of this article is forthcoming in *Topia: A Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*.

One way to answer these questions is to reframe them by placing both sides of the economic and the cultural on the same register, which means by acknowledging that culture is as much a matter of economy as the latter is a matter of culture. The objective of this paper is to draw literature from both social science policy analysis and cultural theory from the humanities to offer a synthesis that helps us think about Canadian culture policy in both a materialist and discursive way. It is my view that the present literature is too often polarised between economic perspectives that under-theorise culture and idealised conceptions of “authentic” Canadian culture. This paper is rooted in a variety of theoretical orientations, which attempt to look at culture and its relationship to the market and economic policy in a dialectical fashion.³ The interrelations and dependencies between the cultural, economic, and political players of the dialectic are of increasing importance, especially as Canadian cultural industries are developing into a national and international stronghold of the market, a fact that is still largely non-recognised in Canadian public policy making.⁴ The latter proceeds from an idealised, nationalist conception of Canadian culture and its industries. It makes a clear distinction between material (economic) and cultural (non-economic) life and thus propagates an ideal version of non-commodified, immaterial, ideational-collective culture that is unaffected by politics and the

² For a closer discussion of competing standpoints and their staging in public, see Joyce Zemans, Colin Hay, and Suzanne Berger.

³ The belief that “culture” is independent of any economic instrumentality, i.e. autonomous and thus disconnected from the material realities of social and economic life, has been a contentious issue in 20th century Western Marxist, sociological, anthropological, literary, and postcolonial approaches. Theoretically and empirically grounded studies asserting the interconnectedness of culture, politics, and economy reach from the Frankfurt School (Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, Antonio Gramsci, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, etc.), to cultural studies (Raymond Williams, James Clifford, Stuart Hall, Lawrence Grossberg, Pierre Bourdieu, Fredric Jameson, John Fiske, Lucien Goldmann, Terry Eagleton, etc.), to postcolonial studies (Edward Said, Paul Gilroy, Aijaz Ahmad, Nestor García Canclini, Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James, Arif Dirlik, etc.), to the new American cultural sociology (Clifford Geertz, Edward Shils, Robert Bellah, Wendy Griswold, Michèle Lamont, Philip Smith, etc.). What these multidisciplinary, diverse, and in some instances highly divergent approaches share is the premise that culture is a concrete social activity in which all human beings are engaged collectively (for a comparison see Smith, introduction and Griswold, chapter 1). Culture and cultures are conceptualised in terms of their actual interplay with institutions, civil society, technology, production, distribution, and consumption (the culture industries) both on a local/national and global/international range.

economy. Moreover, Canadian cultural policy seems to understate that it always already exists within economic discourses and practices of market liberalisation and international convergence. At the same time, it neglects the effects its concepts of cultural nationalism and identity have exerted on the workings of Canadian capitalist economy.

The first part of the paper will give an overview of the notions of national culture and cultural sovereignty propagated and operationalised by Canadian cultural policy. It will argue that the “Dialectics of Canadian Cultural Policy” has its root source in the still-romanticist public notion of cultural nationalism, of Canadian culture as the very soul of the Canadian nation.⁵ It is a relationship that embraces international economic convergence and market liberalisation at the same time that it exempts the idea of Canadian culture from the laws of the neoliberal market. The second part of the paper will examine the contradictions and challenges that such assumptions and practices face in the context of international trade agreements, investment in the cultural and particularly in the book and magazine sectors, technological development (Internet mediastores, the e-book), consolidation, and multimedia corporatism. It will take both an “economised” approach to the concepts of Canadian culture and cultural sovereignty and a “discursified” approach to notions of trade liberalism and economic convergence. Finally, the concluding remarks will probe Canadian cultural policy’s potential for and route towards a “minor” position, by which Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari mean a ghettoised, non-privileged and simultaneously radical-subversive position within “major” or dominant discourse and

⁴ Wolfgang H. Reinick defines public policy as “the principle instrument by which governments operationalise internal sovereignty both in a constitutive and in an executive sense” (54).

⁵ Obviously, the distinctions between material and cultural life made in this paper do not exist in those clear contours in reality. They are rather used here as abstract categorisations that help to think through the complex make-up of “The Dialectics of Canadian Cultural Policy.” In no way do they want to intimate a binary of Canadian nationalist culture versus non-/post-nationalist, globalised neoliberal culture. I am grateful to conference participants for pointing out this risk of interpretation.

practice,⁶ that is within international free trade and its concomitant policy making. Within the context of cultural policy making, the minor signals a “space-clearing gesture” (Appiah 339), a clearing of space for alternative cultural and political manifestations, both symbolic and material, that have been formerly elided and excluded by dominant discourse. The key goal of “minor” Canadian cultural policy is still the promotion of domestic Canadian cultural goods and services, yet its approach acknowledges the inseparability of the cultural and economic, the political and public spheres as well as of the local and global markers of any culture. Canadian cultural products might be affected differently by the increasing conversion of all sites of human experience, activity, and thinking into economic terms as such products as Canadian cars, lumber, or minerals. However, the production and exchange of specific (neoliberal, market oriented, liberal, etc.) values, ideas, and beliefs accompanies the material exchange and distribution of any kind of product, cultural or non-cultural.

Hence, an alternative, minor approach to Canadian cultural policy reinvents the, in Benedict Anderson’s words, “imagined community” of Canadian culture and the national framework in which it is situated. In this reinvented national framework, major forces of neoliberalism and minor struggles for a culture that is not fully commodified interact, clash, struggle, and compete in what Mary L. Pratt calls “contact zones” of highly asymmetrical relations. The paper will argue that though Canadian cultural policy is the weaker, minor player in these contact zones, it yet has the potential to challenge the major from within the circuit of its own parameters and structures. This means, however, that it has to open to scrutiny and revision

⁶ Deleuze and Guattari’s poststructuralist, deconstructive approach to the minor – minor literature, knowledge, desire, culture – in their collective work *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* has been hotly debated and variously applied and transformed by literary and cultural critics. For a close discussion and criticism of Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptualisation, which is not possible within the confines of this paper, see Caren Kaplan’s *Questions of Travel* (85-100) or the 1987 special issue of *Cultural Critique* edited by Abdul JanMohamed and David Lloyd, the organisers of the 1986 conference “The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse.”

its own politics of cultural nationalism, which has tended to obscure and elide the acceptance of neoliberal rationale in Canadian structures of power. Romanticist-nationalist notions of non-economic Canadian culture have served as mythmakers that distort Canada's subscription to neoliberal capitalism and make believe that Canadian state capitalism is different, more "philanthropic." A minor approach to cultural policy does not entail the end of national culture *per se* but its conceptual reinvention as both a material and symbolic, cultural and non-cultural practice that is influenced by and in return influences social, political, and economic decision-making on a national and international plane.

An Overview of Canadian Cultural Policy

As Donna P. Pennee notes in "Culture as Security: Canadian Foreign Policy," the legacy of the 19th century model "of the maintenance (or emergence) of national sovereignty through cultural sovereignty" (194) is pronounced in Canadian policy documents. Pennee argues that Canadian culture has come to function as a national security measure in international policy and economy. Governments ever since the 19th century have protected and promoted domestic cultural production and distribution by means of cultural policies. Similarly, Imre Szeman points to the resemblance of the rhetoric of current public policy statements with the Romanticist, bourgeois ideal of culture as the well or spiritual source of national independence and strength forged by Johann Gottfried von Herder and other early theorists of the nation (227).

Relying on Herder's application of the principles of authenticity and originality to the *Volk* or culture-bearing collective, the philosopher Charles Taylor situates Canada's national base in the identification of its citizens with an "authentic", "original" Canadian way of life and culture (101). Taylor argues that individual as well as group identities are always socially derived, that is based and dependent on a collective's taken-for-granted social structures,

customs and traditions (103). He refers to the Canadian Charter of Rights in order to illustrate his idea of a national model with a common cultural base to which diversity can be added. On the one hand, the Charter defines a set of individual rights that are relative to the U.S. charter's liberal procedural doctrine. On the other hand, however, it espouses a number of collective goals, however not only on behalf of the Canadian nation as a culturally homogeneous totality but also on behalf of particular cultural groups like First Nations or Quebecois (Taylor 114-5). In other words, what Taylor emphasises is that Canadian society – with its historical experience of First Nations claims and Franco-/Anglo-phone biculturalism and group conflict – is organised around the well-being of the group and not, like in the U.S., around the well-being of the individual. Unlike what Robert O'Brien's calls the "hyperliberal state model" of the U.S., which privileges the individual vis-à-vis the state or group, the Canadian "state capitalist model" of liberalism attaches more importance to groups' rights (O'Brien 42).⁷

Accordingly, Taylor comes to assert that the Canadian national community has the right to ensure the future survival of its culture, which might, at times, override individual rights:

They [the proponents of the defense of certain communal rights] are willing to weigh the importance of certain forms of uniform treatment against the importance of cultural survival, and opt sometimes in favour of the latter. They are thus in the end not procedural models of liberalism, but are grounded very much on judgments about what makes a good life – judgments in which the integrity of cultures has an important place. (119)

⁷ Taylor's arguments of Canadian cultural "authenticity", "equal recognition" and "common good" or "good life of all of society" have triggered heated debate and criticism on a national and international scale. See especially the discussions of Ranu Samantrai, William Coleman, and Anthony Perl. The latter argue that public cultural policy, in practice, proceeds from a historically-conditioned notion of culture as a relatively coherent, static set of privileged, unexamined or taken-for-granted Anglo-Saxon traditions termed "cultural heritage" that neglect the kinetic, polycentric cultural dimension theorised by Taylor (697-8). Samantrai's counter-argument to Taylor's communitarian model of cultural survival is that it infringes on individual rights by eliminating the option of non-participation in the culture-bearing collective (38) and thus suppresses the fundamental heterogeneity and historicity of any culture and society (42).

As governmental policy making shows, protective measures are one way of giving this support to an “authentic” national culture and “good life” of Canadian society. The dialectical relationship cultural policy makers have assigned to Canadian economy and culture is one that “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” (SAGIT). SAGIT agrees with Taylor that Canadian culture needs to be maintained and perpetuated through the public or communitarian support of different cultural groups, products and services, including national writers and artists. Canada’s geographical closeness to the “superpower” U.S.A., its large size and small population and its cultural diversity make it particularly necessary for Canadian policy makers to obtain a potent government policy on culture, which includes the mechanisms of legislation, regulation, programme support and tax measures (SAGIT).

The concern with Canadian cultural sovereignty, i.e. with “Canada’s ability to make laws and policies that can effectively protect and promote its culture and cultural industries in the interest of Canadians” (Media Awareness Network, *Canadian Cultural Sovereignty*), has gained increased significance in the current era of global capitalism. The historical timeline on Canada’s cultural sovereignty issued by the Media Awareness Network in 1999 clearly shows the increase of protective governmental funds and acts with the resurgence of neoliberal politics under the Reagan administration in the U.S. and the Thatcher administration in Britain in the 1980s. Unlike the rise of print capitalism, which was a major impetus for the construction of national identities in the 18th and 19th centuries (Benedict Anderson 46-50), today’s growing mechanisation and commercialisation of cultural products and services seems to follow the opposite goal of

constructing a more globalised sense of identity. Canada's increasing commitment to global free-market exchange and economic policy convergence in the (post)developed world⁸ poses a major challenge to the ideal of a genuine national culture and identity. In response, governmental associations like SAGIT, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the National Film Board, or the Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission have increasingly committed their cultural policies and programmes to the defense of Canadian cultural sovereignty, of the ideal of national culture. Policy measures include a combination of direct and indirect subsidies – financial incentives, requirements of “Canadian content” and its nation-wide accessibility, rules on foreign investment and ownership, intellectual property tools such as copyright protection, or cultural exemption clauses in international trade agreements.

As a member of the WTO, GATT, NAFTA and UN, Canada is a signatory to several international trade agreements.⁹ Yet, at the same time, it exempts its cultural industries from these economic treaties with the argument that its culture is more than a totality of commodities, of consumable and tradable goods and services. Canada opted out of the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) “most favoured nation” status 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 (FTA) exempts Canada's cultural industries from the terms of the agreement.¹⁰ Article 7 of the OECD (Organisation for

⁸ The way the terms policy and capital convergence are used in this paper does not imply a globalising but an internationalising trend. “Globalising” would mean all embracing or worldwide, whereas “internationalising” relates to developments taking place in Western “core” states only, where capital is headquartered (Gill and Law 116-7). While the discourse of globalisation works on the premise of non-territorial spaciality, the discourse of internationalisation does not challenge existing territorial spaces but re-territorialises the world around the North American-European-East Asian triad of industrialised countries (Grossberg 34-5, Reinick 64-5). Western political discussions on the internationalisation of public policy largely focus on this triad; they tend to omit African, Middle Eastern and South American countries.

⁹ Canada also is member of several regional trade agreements such as the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement or the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement (Media Awareness Network, *International Agreements and Treaties*).

¹⁰ As O'Brien points out, the U.S. entertainment industry was highly displeased with the FTA cultural exemption clause, which served as a precedent for ensuing negotiations with European countries (especially France), which,

Economic Cooperation and Development) Code of Liberalisation of Capital Movements permits Canada to restrict foreign investment in “activities related to Canada’s cultural heritage or national identity” (Media Awareness Network, *Canada and the World*). Through provisions in the Investment Canada Act (1985), foreign investment in Canada is annually reviewed and new investment limited to Canadian-controlled joint ventures. According to SAGIT, “this policy reflects the fact that Canadian-owned cultural industries are more likely to create, produce, distribute and exhibit Canadian content.” Relying on Statistics Canada data, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage points out that 80% of Canadian authors reach their markets through Canadian book publishers, that 46% of all books sold in Canada in 1999 were authored by Canadians, and that 72% of exports in 1999 were Canadian-authored books.

As Szeman notes in his essay “The Rhetoric of Culture: Some Notes on Magazines, Canadian Culture and Globalisation,” the Canadian government’s involvement with the International Network of Ministers Responsible for Culture and its commitment to UNESCO’s *Stockholm Action Plan* on national culture signify internationally coordinated attempts to defend the concept of national cultural sovereignty (not only in Canada but internationally, 216). Other culture-related international agreements to which Canada is a signatory are the 1961 *Rome Convention*, the 1971 version of the *Berne Convention* (also known as the *Paris Protocol*), the 1996 *WIPO* (World Intellectual Property Organisation) *Copyright Treaty*, and the 1996 *WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty*. They are directed towards the advance of internationally harmonised copyright rules (Media Awareness Network, *Canada and the World, Timeline*). The *Canadian Copyright Act*, which was first passed in 1924, has been repeatedly amended throughout the century, reflecting changes in technology (cable, satellite, computer programmes)

like Canada, largely operate along the lines of protectionist cultural policies (88-9, 122-3). During the GATT Uruguay round, the U.S. had to capitulate to the European position on national cultural sovereignty, just as it had to

and Canada's trend towards internationalisation. The most recent amendment of the act in 1998, for instance, grants equal copyright treatment to domestic and foreign authors published and distributed in Canada. Still, under the *Rome Convention* (Article 15), "any Contracting State may, in its domestic laws and regulations, provide for exceptions to the protection guaranteed by this convention." The protocol of the *Berne Convention* also underlines the cultural sovereignty of its member states: "The provisions of this Convention cannot in any way affect the right of the Government of each country of the Union to permit, to control, or to prohibit by legislation or regulation, the circulation, presentation, or exhibition of any work or production in regard to which the competent authority may find it necessary to exercise that right" (Article 17).

The protective approach taken by Canadian cultural policy gains support from non-state, civil actors like the Writers' Union, the Canadian Publishers' Council or the Canadian Booksellers Association. In its attack against the current consolidation trend, the latter, for instance, insists on the crucial role independent publishers and booksellers play for the survival of Canadian cultural diversity by promoting new talents and regional authors. Many small domestic publishers, literary scholars and writers echo the association's claim for forceful cultural policy measures, which protect Canadian literary diversity and thus preserve Canadian culture and identity. In a round-table discussion on multiculturalism, writer and literary critic George Elliot Clarke also points to the achievements of interventionist cultural policy:

Multiculturalism in Canada may have been promulgated as a means of trying to gloss over issues of race, language and class; but I think that writers and artists in Canada have been able to take advantage of the policy....Canadian writing has become polyethnic, as polyethnic as the society itself. And one reason for this has been...the presence of government funds. (Huggan and Siemerling 102, 100)

There appears to be agreement among state and non-state actors that the advance of the commercialisation and homogenisation of multicultural “Canadian culture” in the current age of neoliberal or global capitalism can be counteracted effectively by a forceful, protective domestic cultural policy.

Challenges to Canada’s Cultural Policy

How can Canada continue to nurture its culture and identity, and still be an active participant in the free trading world?
(SAGIT)

The relationship between cultural-protective and economic-liberal interests inevitably is highly conflictual. Cultural policy regulation of foreign investment and governmental subsidies for Canadian publishers clash with such GATT enforced principles of trade liberalisation as demands for freedom of investment and trade in services, and protection of intellectual property rights. SAGIT’s declaration that “Canada has always been at the forefront of international efforts to liberalise global markets and at the same time...has always been a champion of cultural sovereignty and cultural diversity” is not as untroubled as it sounds. The maneuver between domestic policy objectives and international policy obligations has created strong tensions. The collective-utilitarian notion of culture propagated by contemporary Canadian public policy forms a sharp contrast with the American (critical or celebratory) notion of culture as commodity. The individualist U.S. approach to culture rejects a clearly articulated domestic cultural policy on the basis that cultural products are noble, autonomous endeavours, which exist beyond any utilitarian functions (Cargo 215-6). American public policy maintains that culture industries are entertainment industries and as such always subject to free market principles. Culture, like any other product, is a commodity and cultural issues, like any other trade issues, are business matters. The U.S. cultural critics Lawrence Grossberg and Fredric Jameson reaffirm Theodor

Adorno's radical-subversive argument of mass culture¹¹ within the context of global capitalism. They argue that, in the current age of globalisation, culture has been completely reduced to cultural capital matters; joined together with technology and economics, it is disintegrating into a commodified "media machine" without agency (Grossberg 30-1).

Being Canada's major source of import in cultural goods and services (Statistics Canada), the U.S. has been highly displeased with Canada's cultural exemption and subsidy practices in the name of cultural-national heritage and sovereignty. As the split-run magazine¹² dispute between Canada and the U.S. at the WTO in 1997 shows, the U.S. does not attack Canadian cultural policy for promoting the production and distribution of "uniquely" Canadian cultural content. It rather denounces Canada's protectionist measures, such as the taxing of foreign products through the *Excise Tax Act* (1995), for hampering the free market flows legitimised by international trade policies. In 1995, the U.S. magazine *Sports Illustrated* was punished by the Canadian government with an 80% tax on all advertising for having by-passed the Canadian Customs Tariffs. The new tax on advertising in all split-runs was incorporated in the 1995 *Excise Tax Act* and immediately contested by the U.S. government as a violation of GATT trade rules. Although Canada argued that the tax was imposed on a cultural service outside the terms of GATT, the WTO ruled against Canadian legislative protection of its magazine industry. The decision clearly "points to difficulties in future attempts to protect Canadian culture in the age of globalisation" (Szeman 216); Canada's subsidy rules in the name of "Canadian content" seem to

¹¹ The concept of "mass culture" must be distinguished from that of "popular culture." Whereas the latter is tied to clear class distinctions and refers to cultural activities by non-professionals, the former breaks with the "high"/"low" culture-divide and defines culture as that which professionals produce and the masses consume. Culture becomes a matter of demand and supply, capital profit and consumption. As Adorno and Horkheimer lament in "The Culture Industry", "no independent thinking must be expected from the audience: the product prescribes every reaction" (137).

¹² A split-run magazine or "split-run," is a foreign owned magazine that prints a second edition in Canada in order to benefit from Canadian advertising revenues. For details on the debate and its context see Szeman.

become increasingly vulnerable. On March 29, 1999, after months of debate within Canada and negotiations with the U.S., 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 (Media Awareness Network, *Canada Versus the U.S. on "Split-Run" Magazines*).

As the split-run magazine debate shows, Canada is at times required to make difficult compromises in return for its cultural exemption clauses. The GATT and NAFTA agreements allow the U.S. to "retaliate" against Canada's measures of cultural exemption through other trade sectors if Canada's protective actions can be found to violate certain economic policy rules of the agreements.¹³ Though commended by Canada as a triumph over U.S. pressure, the cultural exemption clauses in international trade agreements have obviously not been capable of halting the increasing challenges to Canadian cultural sovereignty; they tightly knit the cultural and economic spheres in a correlation of cultural exemption and economic retaliation.

Accompanying growing market liberalism, technological developments, multinational mergers and multimedia/publishing corporatism complicate the maintenance of cultural sovereignty. At the same time that foreign investment is controlled and limited by Canadian cultural policy it is also indispensable, since it provides much needed capital and strategic alliances for the domestic culture industries, which again significantly contribute to the national economy. In its 1999 report, SAGIT clearly acknowledges that foreign, especially U.S. competition dominates the Canadian cultural market. With respect to Canada's own investment in foreign markets, the 1995 Chrétien government statement *Canada in the World/Le Canada dans le monde* promotes the international marketing of Canadian culture as a source of capital

¹³ Discussing the Canada-U.S. FTA, Graham Carr (8) points out that the cultural exemption clause of Article 2005(1) is considerably weakened by the retaliation clause of Article 2005(2), which states: "Notwithstanding any other provision of the Agreement, a Party may take measures of equivalent commercial effect in response to actions that would have been inconsistent with the Agreement by for paragraph 1."

and national prosperity. The document asserts that “cultural affairs, in addition to politics and the economy, are one of the pillars of our foreign policy” (38). Victor Rabinovitch, assistant deputy minister of cultural development in the Department of Canadian Heritage until 1997, emphasises that this has always been the case: “public policies on the creation and distribution of cultural products have always been concerned with market pressures...And these practical matters inevitably focus on the dominance of the largest player, almost always American” (217).

Pennee, in her discussion of the double-edgedness of Canadian culture as foreign investment (205), draws attention to John Ralston Saul’s military rhetoric in a position paper given in 1994 as a member of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy. In this position paper, Saul assures that “a strengthening of Canadian identity and culture makes us better *armed* to deal with a more competitive global system” (sic; www.carleton.ca/npsia/cfpj/john.html). In the function of economic armament, Canadian culture and its “content rules can be *flexible*” (SAGIT, emphasis added) in order to help the cultural industries get access to global capital and export markets. “Canadian content” is defined differently for sound recordings, television broadcasts, books and magazines; as SAGIT notes “under these agreements, productions with as little as 20% Canadian participation can meet the requirements from Canadian content.” What this statement shows is, first of all, that Canadian cultural content and thus Canadian culture are negotiable variables of the material process of Canadian participation in cultural production, and, second of all, that Canadian culture and content vary with economic-material foreign and domestic market needs.

Non-domestic investors mainly gain potency of the Canadian book trade through consolidation. Recent mergers and acquisitions have led to a decreasing number of publishing firms – in particular to the consolidation of the multinational mega-mediastores Time Warner,

Bertelsmann, and Pearson.¹⁴ Being more moneyed and powerful than small-scale publishers, multinational corporations are in the position to lobby not only their parent governments but also their host governments and dominant international institutions (such as the IMF, WTO, World Bank or UN) in order to sidestep cultural policies. The recent merger of the Canadian bookstores SmithBooks and Coles with Chapters, which again merged with Indigo indicates that national mergers are indispensable if Canadian retailers want to stay competitive with foreign-owned corporations. The fact that the recent financial trouble over Chapters' merger with Indigo led to a major crisis in Canada's book industry¹⁵ is indicative of multinational and national superstores' economic power in the national or local book markets. Even though the Department of Canadian Heritage took the unprecedented step of advancing about six months of grants to publishers in order to help them cope with the financial deficits caused by heavy book returns (about 50%) from Chapters, corporatism will increasingly limit the diverse literary landscape of Canada cultural content.

Though still in their beginnings, online retailing (e.g. amazon.com) and publishing (e.g. the e-book) pose a further challenge to the future of Canadian territorial rights and policies. Countries like the U.S. or New Zealand, which have reacted to the e-technological challenge by abolishing their territorial rights and policies altogether, are pressuring other Western countries to follow their example and form an institutional union that can guarantee the drafting and introduction of coherent e-rights and e-book policies (Scott Anderson 1998). They argue for the

¹⁴ Even Canada's leading national publishing house McClelland & Stewart, which ever since its foundation in 1906 has been committed to publish Canadian authors and books of national concern, has been owned to 25% percent by Random House (a subdivision of the Bertelsmann Group; www.mcclelland.com). On 27 June 2000, then-owner of McClelland & Stewart Avie Bennett donated 75% of his shares to the University of Toronto and sold the remaining 25% to Random House Canada. The latter since then has been in control of marketing and sales. The deal, which was made in five year long negotiations in which the government was involved, says that the University of Toronto has to keep its shares for at least three years. One may wonder whether McClelland & Stewart will become yet another imprint of Bertelsman after these three years.

stabilisation of the “e-sector,” which so far has been highly vulnerable and confused: “Right now, it’s chaos...There’s going to have to be some legislative control of the Internet...If things are available for free, the creators will stop creating” (Lorinc 25). Still, the feedback of European and Canadian publishers towards electronic publishing is rather restrained and wary because of the lack of a legal framework that would protect its authors (Lorinc 26); Canada’s only online publisher is Coach House Press. However, the response of big publishing conglomerates indicates a movement towards the integration of e-technologies on a national and international scale. The merger between Time Warner and AOL is only one instance in this development. Currently, Microsoft, Bertelsmann, HarperCollins, Penguin Putnam, and barnesandnoble.com are working on the formulation of common technical standards for e-books (Lorinc 26). If, as Cynthia Good, president and publisher at Penguin Books Canada, notes “bricks and mortar become less important” (Quill & Quire 25) with the growing expansion of e-technologies, then territorial cultural boundaries will decrease in importance and become more and more permeable. In this scenario, domestic rights and policies might not suffice in dealing with issues of Canadian cultural production and distribution, which can more easily permeate national borders and at the same time be permeated from outside. Canada’s decision to keep pace with technological change¹⁶ might eventually entail concessions regarding the protective and exclusive approach of its national cultural policy.

Both Diversity and Convergence? Concluding Remarks

Canadian culture and its industries evidently are very much affected by and involved in processes of global cultural commodification, mechanisation, and convergence. The attempt at

¹⁵ For more details see Marina Strauss and Strauss and Jacquie McNish.

¹⁶ The Department of Canadian Heritage, for instance, proposed the implementation of a five-year technological transition programme in its annual list of cultural policy recommendations of 1999.

reconciling the realities of global capitalism with the ideal of a non-commodified, non-economic Canadian cultural heritage via Canadian cultural policies has mutated into a dialectics of cultural policy divergence and economic policy convergence. The outcome is a kind of Canadian “default neoliberalism” or “default state capitalism” that, though diverging in its cultural policies, converges in its final output, which means in the actual consequences, effects and outcomes of these policies.¹⁷ The de-economised concept of Canadian culture expressed through cultural policy forms a complex contradiction with the actual output (marketing and commodification) of cultural products and services. The course that seems to be taken by large corporations and small independent distributors alike is towards Canadian culture as a resource for consumption and multimedia entertainment: a commodity. Moreover, policy protection and support of cultural goods and services is itself argued for in terms of the market principles of economic profitability and competitiveness.

As illustrated above, present policy concepts and practices of exemption, subsidy, and taxation have achieved little to actually slow down the U.S. drive for liberalised trade in culture that subsumes Canadian culture as yet another marketable commodity. Contemporary cultural policy seems to face a gap between the vast complexities, insecurities, and obscurities of modern global economy and the capacity to grasp and react to these challenges.¹⁸ Presently, cultural policy measures are both a site of cultural resistance against globalisation defined as Americanisation and a site of nationalist cultural revival and control. “Canadian culture” has been pinpointed alternately as instigator and purveyor of national identity and cohesion and as repository of revolutionary consciousness in a world increasingly controlled by global capital and American culture. The discussion above shows that both positions are inadequate when it

¹⁷ The terms “default neoliberalism” and “default state capitalism” are taken from Hay and Berger.

comes to dealing with contemporary culture's energetic oscillation between globalisation or routedness and localisation or rootedness. Catherine Mavrikakis maintains that liberal cultural policy has created the conditions for constructing a unique "Canadianness" that sells well on the global market: "ce qui vaut cher sur le marché mondial de l'échange, c'est la couleur locale, c'est la touche d'exotisme qui permettra au pays moderne...une capacité de mettre à profit son passé colonial" (40).

In *Globalisation and Culture*, John Tomlinson notes that "globalisation fundamentally transforms the relationship between the *places* we inhabit and our cultural practices, experiences and identities" (106). Canadian cultural policy needs to recognise and try to come to terms with these deterritorialising transformations in the relationship of place and culture, where cultural identity is "complexly forged out of a 'local' experience dominated by its relationship to *other* places (140).¹⁹ This means it has to adapt to and change with the changed conditions with which it is faced. Cultural sovereignty cannot be guaranteed by means of rigid policy measures, since the notion of national culture, of culture and place, is always already employed in dynamic historical, material, and discursive processes of localisation and globalisation. Canadian cultural policy needs to move beyond its habitual national and globalisation paradigms and work towards an alternative framework, which not only articulates the globalising and economically oriented tendencies of contemporary Canadian culture but also negotiates minor, diverging-subversive positions within the parameters and structures of these tendencies. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the minor as space-clearing gesture is instrumental to this kind of struggle insofar as it

¹⁸ Evidently, the threat of a homogenising modern global economy and culture has caused strong cultural, ethnic, and/or religious response all over the world. The "gap" described in the case of Canada is by no means unique.

¹⁹ A discussion of the concept of deterritorialisation would by far exceed the scope of this essay. For an introduction into the concept and its problems, especially in the way Deleuze and Guattari theorise it, see Tomlinson's forth chapter entitled "Deterritorialisation: The cultural condition of globalisation" (106-149).

conceptualises effective transformation to existing power structures as political activity that initiates both symbolic and material change.

So when Rabinovitch asks whether there is “any reason for arts and culture to be treated differently under the current economic orthodoxy” (219), I would agree with him: “my answer is yes” (219), yet for very different reasons than the ones he gives in his nationalist approach. Culture does not deserve special treatment in comparison to other Canadian products and services because it is central to national survival in the present age of neoliberal globalisation. My answer to why it is justifiable to negotiate a special status for the concept of Canadian culture by means of cultural policy is twofold. Firstly, public (and thus cultural) policy will be an important vehicle and spectre of democratic governance as long as the traditional Western notion of liberal democracy is well and alive in Canada and beyond. On the one side, public policy is the principle instrument by which governments operationalise democratic governance, allocate symbolic and material resources, and structure civil society; on the other side, it is forged and formulated on the basis of democratic principle. Secondly, public and in particular cultural policy can play a crucial minor role in the potential composition of a national framework that recognises and works out Canada’s complex local-global, private-public-governmental, symbolic-material cultural interactions and relations.

On the national level, a minor approach to cultural policy will expose the hidden contiguity between knowledge and power in nationalist claims of cultural formation and identity, claims that have helped to keep English-French cultural hegemony in place in a country defining itself in terms of liberal multiculturalism. Insisting on the coexistence and competition of diverse local and global, symbolic, economic, and political cultural claims, the minor opens up closed sites of power to formerly marginalised knowledges, cultural practices, and desires. It thus seeks

democracy to present it with equality and agency where they have not been present. In *The Field of Cultural Production*, Pierre Bourdieu manifests cultural authority in the collective forgetting of the economic and political side of culture (74). For minor cultural policy making, to collectively remember this often forgotten economic and political side means to remember the forgotten artificiality of representations of national culture as the “natural” culture of “a people” that is far removed from the machinery of mass cultural production.

Ultimately, cultural policy’s nationalist definition of Canadian culture in terms of symbolic representation needs to give way to a definition in terms of (equal) access to political representation, of a commitment to recover those culturally marginalised and occluded from dominant French and English Canadian systems and rivalries of power: First Nations, ethnic minorities, “visible” minorities, women, etc. The minor approaches to cultural policy articulated by Szeman, Mavrikakis, Himani Bannerji, Eva Mackey and many others challenge Western liberal assertions of the nation as a “non-political and natural ‘people’” (Mackey 140) by exposing the Canadian nation as a highly asymmetrical, hegemonic political and social construct. They argue that the claims of symbolic representation of liberal Canadian nationhood and multiculturalism (“infested” with the supposedly universal principles of progress, liberty, equality, justice, rationality, tolerance, pluralism, and diversity) actually prevent cultural policy strategies that are truly democratic and not dominated by the “two solitudes” (French and English Canadians) and the market. In order to formulate and practice a genuinely democratic cultural policy, cultural institutions need to slip out of their present role as arts patrons, concerned with Canadian cultural survival and sovereignty under threat of Americanisation, into the role of guardians of equal access to Canadian cultural representation and allocation of

resources. It is then that cultural policy becomes a truly public policy, that is a policy that is no longer exclusive or limited to national representation but accessible to all Canadians.

As Szeman argues, “instead of worrying about what might happen to Canadian culture in the era of globalisation, we should focus on the recovery of our sense of the public, which decades of neoliberalism has dissolved” (225-6). This recovery needs to start with the recognition that the increased conversion of Canadian culture in economic terms is not a result of cultural Americanisation. It is symptom of a larger, more complex dilemma, of a system of global capitalism called neoliberalism, which transforms all political, social, ecological, and cultural values to values that best serve free market flows and ideologies, in anti-democratic values masked as modern Western democracy. In his analysis of globalisation and multicultural conflicts in Latin America, Nestor García Canclini maintains that the role of states in this scenario is to reconstruct public space as a space where diverse political, economic, social, ethnic-cultural, sexual, individual, and group agents will be able to negotiate agreements for the development of public interest (134). This public space is “neither subordinated to the state nor dissolved in civil society [nongovernmental organisations, private corporations, and individuals], it is reconstituted time and again in the tension between both” (154); García Canclini calls this the practice of “responsible citizenship” (134).

Deleuze and Guattari maintain in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* that a minor literature is not limited to the literature written by a minority, which would establish new hierarchies. Instead, a minor literature more generally stands for the revolutionary conditions of every literature that opposes “what is called great (or established) literature” (18). A similar assertion can be made in the context of Canadian cultural policy and globalisation. A minor concept of Canadian culture is not limited to expressions from Canadian minority cultures; it is

rather than which the public space of Canadian cultural policy articulates within and against the major discourses of deregulated global trade in culture. This might mean that a minor Canadian cultural policy employs a strategic politics of identification and location in order to negotiate Canada's distinct, not fully liberalised placement in the contemporary world, in order to negotiate alternative scripts of globalisation. It also means that Canada participates in an international effort of minor cultural policy making such as the International Network for Cultural Diversity, which relegates the public space of international cultural policy to the interactions of arts' NGOs and governmental actors.

Minor cultural policy making, on a national and international scale, recognises and confers the simultaneous local and global, symbolic, political, and economic character of Canadian culture, its production and distribution – not only in the current age of globalisation, but also in Canada's past. Yet, it is also aware that a reformulated, minor notion of Canadian culture, nationhood, globalisation, and their relationship still resides in the major, that is the project of Western modernity. A minor approach to Canadian cultural policy ties the notions of democracy, culture, and economy, of the national and the global in a close and complicated knot. The players of this network interact, clash, coexist, and struggle in contact zones of highly conflictual, unequal power relations. Recognising the radically subversive capacities of a minor approach thus also means recognising the asymmetrical social and economic relations that determine these capacities within the circuit of dominant power structures. Likewise, paying attention to the complex alternative positionings the minor opens also means paying attention to the potential complicities with dominant forces that arise in contact zone interactions. Minor approaches might defeat themselves by turning into an apotheosis of deconstructive rebellion and subversive complicity vis-à-vis economic-cultural convergence and cultural-protectionist

nationalism. They might also defeat themselves by striving for major positionings. Minor activities are context-dependent²⁰ and need active intellectual involvement in public spaces, that is a form of political intellectualism that dialectically relates the discursive and the material worlds and with it the theories and realities of culture, nationhood, and globalisation.

²⁰ This means that the Canadian context cannot be representative of all minor cultural policy positionings. Nonetheless, the imagined community of non-hegemonic manifestations of globalisation and Canadian culture is open to potential political alliances between countries with similar cultural policies. Jack Miles and Douglas McLennan, for instance, compare the Canadian situation to that of countries such as South Korea, India, France, and other European countries whose cultural policies face similar problems and which have formed international alliances of which Canada is a member.

Works Cited

- Adorno, Theodor W, and Max Horkheimer. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. 1944. Trans. John Cumming. New York: Herder & Herder, 1972.
- Anderson Benedict. "The Nation and the Origins of National Consciousness." *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Migration*. Eds. Guibernau Montserrat, and John Rex. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997. 43-51.
- Anderson, Scott. "Frankfurt Fair Finds Global Book Industry in Flux." *Quill & Quire* 64 (December 1998): 11.
- "Next Stop: eFrankfurt." *Quill & Quire: 65th Anniversary Issue* 66 (December 2000): 7, 12.
- Appiah, Kwame A. "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" *Critical Inquiry* 17 (Winter 1991): 336-357.
- Bannerji, Himani. "On the Dark Side of the Nation: Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of 'Canada.'" *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 2000. 87-124.
- Berger, Suzanne. "Introduction." *National Diversity and Global Capitalism*. Eds. Suzanne Berger, and Ronald Dore. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996. 1-25.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Canada in the World/Le Canada dans le monde*. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1995.
- Canadian Publishers' Council. *Submission to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade Respecting Canadian Interest in Forthcoming World Trade Organisation Negotiations* (April 28, 1999) <www.pubcouncil.ca/WTONegotiate.html>
- Cargo, Russell A. "Cultural Policy in the Era of Shrinking Government." *Political Studies Review* 14 (Spring/Summer 1995): 215-224.
- Carr, Graham. "Trade Liberalisation and the Political Economy of Culture: An International Perspective on FTA." *Canadian-American Public Policy* 6 (June 1991): 1-54.
- Coleman, William D., and Anthony Perl. "Internationalised Policy Environments and Policy Network Analysis." *Political Studies* 47 (September 1999): 691-709.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- Department of Canadian Heritage. *Recommendations* (1999) <www.parl.gc.ca/infocomdoc/36...tudies/reports/heri01/11-rec-e.html>
- *Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage* (December 7, 1999) <www.parl.gc.ca/infocomdoc/36...ri/meetings/evidence/heriev06-e.htm>
- Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Cultural Industries Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade. *New Strategies for Culture and Trade: Canadian Culture in a Global World* (February 1999) <www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/tna-nac/canculture-e.asp>
- García Canclini, Néstor. *Consumers and Citizens: Globalisation and Multicultural Conflicts*. Trans. George Yúdice. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

- Gill, Stephen, and David Law. "Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital." *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*. Ed. Stephen Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. 93-124.
- Griswold, Wendy. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 1994.
- Grossberg, Lawrence. "Speculations and Articulations of Globalisation." *Polygraph* 11 (1999): 11-48.
- Hay, Colin. "Contemporary Capitalism, Globalisation, Regionalisation and Persistence of National Variation." *Review of International Studies* 26 (2000): 509-531.
- Huggan, Graham, and Winfried Siemerling. "U.S./Canadian Writers' Perspectives on the Multiculturalism Debate: A Round-Table Discussion at Harvard University." *Canadian Literature* 164 (Spring 2000): 82-111.
- Industry Canada. *Guide for SIC 2831: Book Publishing* (August 24, 2000) <www.strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/gi28311e.html>
- International Network for Cultural Diversity <www.incd.net>
- Jameson, Fredric. "Culture and Finance Capital." *Critical Inquiry* 24 (Fall 1997): 246-265.
- JanMohamed, Abdul, and David Lloyd, eds. "The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse." *Cultural Critique* 6 (Spring 1987).
- Kaplan, Caren. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Lorinc, John. "The Battle for Copyright." *Quill & Quire: 65th Anniversary Issue* 66 (April 2000): 25-6.
- Mackey, Eva. *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada*. London & New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Mavrikakis, Catherine. "Politiques culturelles de la visibilité ou comment le spectre des classes sociales vient encore hanter le spectacle du multiculturel." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35.3 (2000): 33-42.
- Media Awareness Network. *Canada and the World* (1999) <www.media-awareness.ca>
 ----- *Canada Versus the U.S. on "Split-Run" Magazines* (1999) <www.media-awareness.ca>
 ----- *Canada's Cultural Policies* (1999) <www.media-awareness.ca>
 ----- *Canadian Cultural Legislation* (1999) <www.media-awareness.ca>
 ----- *Canadian Cultural Sovereignty* (1999) <www.media-awareness.ca>
 ----- *International Agreements and Treaties* (1999) <www.media-awareness.ca>
 ----- *Timeline* (1999) <www.media-awareness.ca>
- Miles, Jack, and Douglas McLennan. "Global Crossing: Part One: The Movies." *Arts Journal* (27 April 2001) <www.artsjournal.com/artswatch/Globalculture%20-I.htm>
 ----- Global crossing: Part Two: The Battle for National Cultures." *Arts Journal* (27 April 2001) <www.artsjournal.com/artswatch/Globalculture%20-II.htm>
- O'Brien, Robert. *Subsidy Regulation and State Transformation in North America, the GATT and the EU*. London: Macmillan, 1997.
- Pennee, Donna P. "Culture as Security: Canadian Foreign Policy." *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 20 (Fall 1999): 191-213.
- Pratt, Mary L. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Quill & Quire. "The Future of Canadian Publishing: Eleven Industry Leaders describe the Road Ahead." *Quill & Quire: 65th Anniversary Issue* 66 (April 2000): 19-24.

- Rabinovitch, Victor. "Method and Success in Canada's Cultural Policies." *Queen's Quarterly* 106.2 (1999): 217-231.
- Reinick, Wolfgang H. *Global Public Policy: Governing Without Government*. Washington: Brookings, 1998.
- Samantrai, Ranu. "States of Belonging: Pluralism, Migrancy, Literature." *Writing Ethnicity: Cross-Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Québécois Literature*. Ed. Winfried Siemerling. Toronto: ECW Press, 1996. 33-50.
- Smith, Philip, ed. *The New American Cultural Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Strauss, Marina. "Hard-Pressed Publishers Get Federal Aid." *Globe & Mail* 20 March 2001.
- Strauss, Marina, and Jacquie McNish. "Chapters, Indigo Agree to Put 23 Stores on Block." *Globe & Mail* 6 April 2001.
- Szeman, Imre. "The Rhetoric of Culture: Some Notes on Magazines, Canadian Culture and Globalisation." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35:3 (2000): 212-230.
- Taylor, Charles. "The Politics of Recognition." *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. Eds. Ajay Heble et al. Peterborough: Broadview, 1997. 98-131.
- Tomlinson, John. *Globalisation and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Zemans, Joyce. "Canadian Cultural Policy in a Globalised World." *Canadian Review of American Studies* 27:3 (1997): 111-125.