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Translated Canadian Literature and
Canada Council Translation Grants 1972-1992:
The Effect on Authors, Translators and Publishers

Résumé

Le programme de subventions à la traduction du Conseil des Arts du Canada existe depuis 1972.

On peut juger de son impact par le fait que cinq ans après sa mise sur pied, il y avait eu près de deux fois plus de livres traduits que dans toute l'histoire de la traduction au Canada. L'étude des 1236 subventions accordées à des traductions entre 1972 et 1992 – en fonction des genres, des auteurs, des traducteurs et des éditeurs – révèle que 710 d'entre elles l'ont été à des œuvres littéraires. De ce nombre, plus de la moitié étaient des œuvres de fiction dont 50 % étaient destinées à la jeunesse. Sur 388 auteurs traduits, vingt-quatre ont reçu de 5 à 18 subventions et seulement 6 de ces derniers étaient des auteurs anglophones dont les œuvres ont été traduites en français. Des 231 traducteurs subventionnés, 33 ont traduit cinq livres ou plus et sur les 191 éditeurs qui ont reçu des subventions, une dizaine se partage la part du lion, soit près de la moitié du montant des subventions. Le programme ne semble pas directement influencé par des considérations idéologiques. Ceux qui en bénéficient le plus sont les maisons d'édition importantes et les critères de sélection assez conservateurs semblent liés au succès commercial : les deux auteurs les plus traduits sont Michel Tremblay et Lucy Maud Montgomery. La poursuite de ce programme semble essentielle à la publication de traductions de qualité d'œuvres littéraires canadiennes. Il pourrait néanmoins être amélioré par l'attribution de subventions aux éditeurs étrangers qui publient des ouvrages canadiens traduits par des traducteurs canadiens. (*trad. c.b*)

1. Prolegomenon

THE CANADA COUNCIL Translation Grants Programme was established in order to provide the best from the other culture (English into French and French into English), thereby fostering mutual understanding and cultural exchange. This mandate focuses on nationalistic therefore political and, to a certain degree, ideological motivations. However, since the publishers select the actual titles, there is no obvious ideological bias on the part of the Council as to which books receive grants. My paper will address therefore, the role played by Canadian authors, publishers and translators in the kinds of literature, categorized by genre, subsidized for translation by the Canada Council.¹

2. Canadian Literary Translations

Before proceeding with my analysis of the facts about the kinds of literature subsidized for translation, the following information provides a background of the history of literary translation in Canada.

Philip Stratford first made clear the irony inherent in the situation of literary translation in Canada. It is a paradox, for example, that Canada has accepted the idea of fostering two languages and two cultures for over 200 years, yet so little has been done in the way of literary translation: during the decade ending in 1972 Canada ranked somewhere between Iceland and Albania in annual production. Historically, next to no literary translation was published in Canada before 1920 (ten titles in English, and two in French), and little enough during the next forty years (thirty-nine titles in English, nine in French). Too often, Stratford says, Canadians not only have been guilty of ignoring each other but have adopted a colonial posture and left the initiative of translating Canadian books to foreign translators publishing in London, Paris, or New York. In short, Stratford says, there is no tradition of literary translation in Canada (Stratford, 1977, p. ii).

In 1972, Gérard Pelletier, then Secretary of State, inaugurated a Canada Council Translation Grants Programme in the hope that making the best writing in French or English available in the other language would foster mutual understanding and cultural exchange. In the subsequent five years, until 1977, over six hundred Canadian books were translated, in fact almost twice as many as in all the years before. So, says Stratford, (due to government intervention and subsidy) the history of literary translation in Canada might be said to have begun in 1972 (Stratford, 1990, 99).

¹ This study is limited in its discussion of political discourse since it does not address the question of texts which received government grants from the department of multiculturalism for translations from a heritage language into English or French.

The year 1992 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Canada Council Translation Grants Programme. Before I discuss the kinds of literary genres selected for translation via the Canada Council Translation Grants Programme, and the implications of same, I will begin by outlining the eligibility criteria for translation grants, and provide a brief background about the cultural and political implications of the grants as they relate to literary genre.

In 1991, I received a letter from Alan Gotlieb (then Chairman of the Canada Council) describing the way in which the Translation Grants Program works:

The Canada Council provides assistance to professional publishing houses through several programs, one being the Translation Grants Program. The mandate of the Translation Grants Program is to provide funding for the translation of works by Canadian authors into English or French or one of Canada's native languages. To be eligible for translation grants, publishers must be currently funded under the Block Grant Program or Project Grant Program, and the titles supported must meet Council guidelines. Further, publishers who wish to translate works into English and French must meet two additional eligibility criteria: they must have already published three eligible titles in the other official language and they must have an effective distribution network in place for these translations. All works by Canadian authors are eligible for translation into English and French or one of Canada's native languages, with the exception of certain ineligible categories of titles. There is no automatic correlation between grants awarded to authors and subsequent funding of translations...

It is the publishers who apply for the translation grants on behalf of the translators. Applications made on behalf of translators who have not yet received Council assistance are evaluated by independent assessors on the basis of the quality of the translation sample submitted. Applications made on behalf of translators who have already been funded through the program are reviewed by officers of the Writing and Publishing Section...

Alan Gotlieb, Chairman, The Canada Council/Conseil des Arts du Canada, October 23, 1991.

The preceding letter is self-explanatory, clearly outlining the Canada Council's various eligibility criterion in the choice of titles which are selected for translation. The majority of the decisions concerning the funding of translated Canadian literature, therefore, rest with the publishers. Although the Canada Council never initiates projects and actual political considerations may not influence the Coun-

cil's selection of individual titles, their mandate appears politically motivated. The Ontario Arts Council, by way of comparison, launched, in 1990, a permanent program which offers assistance to literary translators in the translation into English of book-length works not already translated, for publication in Canada. The program is designed to assist the translation of the works of contemporary authors working in languages other than English. The works may include French-language projects from countries other than Canada. Projects being proposed for translation must fall into one of the following categories: **adult fiction, poetry, or drama**. The Ontario Arts Council will pay the grant (up to \$10,000) directly to the translator in two stages – one-half upon the awarding of the grant and one-half upon completion of the first draft of the translation. Applications must be made by a book publisher on behalf of the translator. Publishers must publish trade books and be Ontario-based and Canadian-owned and controlled (Guidelines for a Program of Grants for Translation). The provincial program makes up for many of the deficiencies in the federal program, especially by paying the translator directly, and by allowing the translation of foreign authors from various language groups. The most obvious drawback of the program is that because it is a provincial agency, the grants are only into English – this means that literary translators working from English into French need to rely more heavily on the federal program for support. Secondly, the restrictions on genre categories disallows any kind of support for children's fiction – a genre greatly endowed by the federal program. The stated objectives of the program are to allow Canadians better access to works of quality in languages other than English; to allow writers in languages other than English access to a larger audience; to acknowledge the translator as a creative artist. The mandate of the Ontario Arts Council lacks the political and ideological motivations of the original 1972 Canada Council Translation Grants Programme, the latter of which is strictly Canadian (mainly English to French and French to English), with the intention of fostering mutual understanding and cultural exchange.

As a background for an examination of the motivations of the Canada Council, Ray Ellenwood's comments pertaining to the role of the literary translator in Canada are particularly useful. According to Ellenwood, it has become more and more obvious to the **Literary Translators Association** that Canada Council policy begins not with the primary intention of encouraging and improving literary translation itself, but of encouraging the dissemination of Canadian authors' works through translation. The translator is seen as a medium, which is why the Canada Council places control in the hands of the publisher. Canadian translators are not encouraged to initiate projects or to apply for grants independently, whereas in the United States bursaries similar to Canada Council exploration grants are available to translators, allowing them to work on projects, as authors do, and to find a publisher upon completion. But, Ellenwood says, the clearest evidence of an unstated

policy behind Canada Council intervention is the fact that it will not give grants-in-aid for a Canadian translation, even of a Canadian author, if the publisher is not Canadian; nor will it consider subsidizing a translation by a Canadian, published by a Canadian publisher, if the author translated is not Canadian. Yet it gives financial assistance to foreign publishers of Canadian works translated into a selection of languages.²

Since the inception of the Canada Council Translation Grants Programme there have been several attempts to discover how specific texts have been selected for translation. The answers have often been clouded in confusion because there appears to be no definitive answer. The political motivations of the various groups involved have been the topic of much discussion for at least the past ten years. In 1983, for example, the University of Ottawa Press published a series of articles, edited by Camille La Bossière entitled *Translation in Canadian Literature*. Three articles from this series are particularly interesting. These are *Traduction littéraire et « image » de la littérature au Canada et au Québec* by Richard Giguère; *Some Actualities of Canadian Literary Translation* by Ray Ellenwood; and *On the Politics of Literary Translation in Canada* by Larry Shouldice. It is useful to briefly discuss aspects of these three articles as a background and control for this study. Firstly, in La Bossière's introduction to the series, she describes aspects of culture and politics in literary translation implicit in Richard Giguère's paper. What is examined here, says La Bossière, is "la vision qu'on se fait de la littérature canadienne et québécoise via le corpus littéraire traduit." La Bossière mentions that Richard Giguère's statistical survey shows that there has been a considerable effort to translate from French to English some of the poetry and novels of the sixties; and that the subsequent "retour en arrière – les années cinquante, quarante et au-delà – s'effectue à partir d'une vision... de la littérature bien ancrée dans les années soixante." As for the essay and drama from Québec, says La Bossière, these are "littéralement nés au Canada, grâce à la traduction, à compter des années soixante pour l'essai et des années soixante-dix pour le théâtre." This is in sharp contrast to the state of translation from English to French during this period. "Le lecteur québécois, même cultivé ne connaît pas les poètes canadiens, il commence à peine à connaître quelques romanciers et romancières... il ignore tout de l'existence d'un théâtre canadien." It is observed that "on ne traduit bien souvent que ce qui intéresse le Québec." Finally, La Bossière writes, culture and politics converge to account for this state of affairs. Interest in Canadian literature in

² According to Ray Ellenwood, the fee paid to a literary translator in Canada is done so according to contract, but also in instalments controlled by the Canada Council. The system of payment through the publisher to the translator has been criticized because it does not recognize that translators usually know more about books and authors in the source language than do publishers. Also, the present method of payment affects the kind of work translated. Since it is based on word count, the current rate being ten cents per word (in 1987), it means that anyone who depends to any extent on literary translation for a living can ill afford to translate poetry (Ellenwood 1989, p. 82).

English will grow in Québec only when an image of “une culture et... une littérature *canadiennes*” becomes visible to francophones; according to Giguère, without a *Canadian* culture, there is no Canada (La Bossière, 1983, p. 10-11).

Secondly, the linkage between culture and politics in literary translation in Canada is advanced by Larry Shouldice in his article *On the Politics of Literary Translation in Canada*. In his discussion of the Canada Council’s role in this situation, Larry Shouldice defines politics as those forces that alter the prevailing balance of power, arguing that one of the consequences of this country’s history and ethnic make-up is that the balance of power in a national sense has often been viewed in cultural or linguistic terms. Shouldice views politics in Canada as being so connected with our linguistic duality that literary translation takes on a distinctly political colouring. Further, Shouldice argues, it is not uncommon for English Canadians to view translation as a means of fostering national unity; and while this is no doubt true of some French Canadians as well, one senses in the latter a more pronounced impulse to intelligence gathering for strategic defense purposes: **love thy neighbour** on the one hand, and **know thy enemy** on the other. Given the context of Canadian/Québec politics, the line between cultural curiosity and a cultural power struggle starts to get blurred (Shouldice, 1983, p. 74).

The preceding views by Shouldice about the linkage between culture and politics are reinforced by the opinions of Ben-Z. Shek who describes the traditional situation of translation between the English – and French-Canadian literary/linguistic systems in the following way:

La traduction, dans un sens symbolique, me semble être au cœur de la problématique canado-québécoise dès le tout début du régime britannique... La traduction à sens unique a reproduit les rapports réels dominants-dominés de la conjoncture militaire, en premier lieu, puis et par conséquent, politique et économique... Cette situation de fait peut sans doute être caractérisée par le terme **diglossie**. La diglossie est « la répartition fonctionnelle des langues » et ressort d’« une situation (...) par laquelle l’autre langue emprunte un nombre croissant de fonctions sociales telles que la langue de travail (...) dévalorisant ainsi la langue du foyer que l’on finit par classer parmi les patois de la nation, même si dans un autre pays, elle avait le statut de langue ou de dialecte ». Selon Alain Ricard, une situation diglossique comprend « une distribution hiérarchisée des niveaux et des codes linguistiques entre diverses langues ». Dans une situation **grosso modo** diglossique, donc, il n’est pas étonnant qu’il y ait eu un nombre relativement élevé de traduction de textes littéraires du français à l’anglais (situation non menaçante pour la majorité anglophone) et relativement peu de traductions en sens inverse, car cette dernière activité a sans doute été conçue à la

fois comme une menace, et comme une perte d'efforts dans une entreprise marginale, du point de vue de la lutte pour la survie d'une langue et d'une culture minoritaires (Shek, 1977, p. 111-112).

Shek is of the opinion that one of the reasons why less English-Canadian literature is received into the French-Canadian system via translation is the fear by the latter of cultural negation. Specifically the situation whereby French-Canada has endured for so many years is a situation of diglossia, the English language being dominant, and the French language, often treated as patois. Aside from such ideological arguments, the question appears to be what other considerations affect the publishers' selection decisions?

Ray Ellenwood believes that the publishers use the Canada Council Translation Grants in order to subsidize their trade publications, arguing that publishers, especially Québec publishers, were using Canada Council translation grants as a kind of subsidy for their trade publications, with very little inclination to bring out serious literature. Literary translations do not sell terribly well and selling, it appears, is the main concern (Ellenwood, 1983, p. 67). Without actual insights into the financial books or statements of publishing houses, it is difficult to determine exactly which activities are benefiting most from translation grants and how much money, if any, is transferred into trade publications.

In the same series, Ray Ellenwood conducts a study (*Some Actualities of Canadian Literary Translation*) which includes survey questions to publishers and translators in addition to an analysis of grants provided by the Canada Council. Ellenwood's intention was to ask who decides on what authors to present to the other culture and how do books get chosen for publication; he concludes that it is done largely on an *ad hoc* basis. Ellenwood argues that neither the publishers nor the translators have the security or the inclination, to work with any kind of systematic vision. They proceed book-by-book, making their decisions in a variety of mysterious ways about what to translate and what translations to publish (Ellenwood, 1983, p. 68-69).

Ellenwood concludes his article by suggesting that the present formula for selecting grants which is controlled by the publishers (who choose and submit titles to the Council for approval) leaves something to be desired. As Ellenwood points out, there exists a huge backlog of important books which have never been translated. These, in addition to a wide range of new works, deserve to be adequately represented in translation, and one or two publishers are not likely to be able to do the job (Ellenwood, 1983, p. 70). My current research which examines the impact of the Council's subsidy on authors, translators and publishers from 1972-1992 reveals that little has changed since Ellenwood's survey ten years ago. For example, the questionnaire responses I received from the translators echo those received by Ellenwood; translators are especially frustrated at not having enough power in the selection process, hence it is often very mediocre texts which are supported for

translation while important works are ignored. On the basis of his research and experience, Ellenwood has argued that it was a mistake on the Canada Council's part to leave so much of the resources and initiative for translation in the hands of publishers (Ellenwood, 1983, p. 71). In the past, the Canada Council has attempted to lessen the arbitrary nature of the grants by drawing up a list of titles to be given priority as translation projects. This list was circulated to publishers with an offer to help with publication as well as translation costs. Since the implementation of this list, publishers have greeted it with lukewarm if not hostile responses. This leads me to conclude that the Canada Council's list is an excellent idea, but it should be given to the literary translators to pick and choose titles, not the publishers. Such a change in policy would surely initiate some excellent translations of important works.

Information provided by The Writing and Publishing Section of the Canada Council³, reveals the following facts about translation grants: between 1972-1992, one-thousand two-hundred and thirty-six titles were supported by the Canada Council Translation Grants Programme. Of these one-thousand two-hundred and thirty-six translation grants, five-hundred and twenty-six are non-fiction and seven-hundred and ten are for various literary genres. The most predominant literary genre is that of fiction: three-hundred and fifty separate grants – here, fiction includes all kinds of prose, especially novels and short stories. Children's literature comes in second, with one-hundred and seventy-eight grants, followed by drama with one-hundred and thirty-one grants and then poetry with only fifty-one grants. Most of the translated titles may be classified, in general terms, as high, or canonized literature, with a few obvious exceptions.

The total number of fiction authors whose works were translated via the Canada Council is three-hundred and eighty-eight. This figure includes primarily translations from French into English and from English into French, with a few minor exceptions. In addition to twenty-four anthologies, (with a minimum of one author), the number comes to four-hundred and twelve.

3. Canadian Authors and Canada Council Translation Grants

Table 1 (figure 1) reveals that there are twenty-four authors whose works received the most grants (between five and eighteen). All the remaining Canadian authors had one to four titles translated by the Canada Council. From this list of twenty-four authors, we see that only six were translated from English to French. These six authors are very traditional names and considered to be part of the English-Canadian canon: Lucy Maud Montgomery, Morley Callaghan, Margaret Atwood, Mordecai Richler, Matt Cohen and Robertson Davies. Mostly all of these authors' works were translated under the category of general fiction (prose novels

³ I would like to thank Katharine A. Benzekri of the Writing and Publishing Section of The Canada Council for providing me with the facts about the translation grants.

and short stories). Even Montgomery, whose works are classified by subject as children's fiction, remain in the category of translated prose novels and short stories. The genre of prose, therefore, is the most popular one for government grants in the English to French direction. Conversely, thirteen French-Canadian authors whose works received five or more grants were translated from French to English, more than double the number from English to French. Of the French-Canadian authors whose works received five or more translation grants, there is a greater variety of literary genres than in the English-Canadian system. The plays by Michel Tremblay, for example, received sixteen grants; Suzanne Lebeau received five grants for translations of children's drama, and Henriette Major received five grants for translations of children's literature. Jovette Marchessault received eight grants for a combination of fiction and drama and Robert Marteau received eight grants for a combination of fiction and poetry. Only one author's works which received five or more grants was translated from a heritage language – Czech into English.

Canadian publishers choose titles for government grants, then submit them to the Canada Council in the hope that these titles will be accepted. It is difficult to guess the reasons why the publishers chose the texts they did. One may assume, for example that specific texts were chosen on the basis of two things: firstly, the particular tastes of the publishers and, secondly, texts which they thought would meet the eligibility criteria of the Canada Council. The Canada Council then approved or refused these texts.⁴ By observing the list of the authors whose texts received the most grants for translation, two main facts are evident: the first is that a small group of authors received multiple grants to have their texts translated – this would indicate a vigorous promotion of certain authors on the part of the publishers. The second factor is that aside from the small group of authors whose works were vigorously promoted, the majority of grants were provided to translate single titles by numerous authors: this means that the wealth was spread around.

If we look closely at the list of the twenty-four most translated authors, the question may be asked, what kind of canon has been created by the kinds of texts selected? First of all the twenty-four authors who received between five and eighteen grants for individual titles have been legitimized as canonized authors. Here, the question of literary genre plays a significant role in canonization. It is of some significance that two authors, one of Children's fiction (Lucy Maud Montgomery) and one of Drama, (Michel Tremblay) had the greatest number of translated titles which received grants. Prose fiction comes in third with MarieClaire Blais, Roch Carrier, Nicole Brossard and Victor-Lévy Beaulieu. Most of the Lucy Maud Montgomery titles received grants after the success of the television adaptation of **Ann of Green Gables**. These facts would indicate that one criterion for canonization is the huge commercial success of literary adaptations into film (especially if

⁴ Many of the publishers listed one or more titles categorized by the Canada Council as **refus**. Assumedly, these titles were refused because they did not meet the eligibility criteria.

these adaptations into film have received commercial success in the U.S.). Similar linkages exist between adaptations of Canadian novels into film (both television and motion pictures) which were later funded by the Canada Council Translation Grants Programme (**A Jest of God; Lies My Father Told Me; The Apprenticeship Of Duddy Kravitz; Bonheur d'occasion; Kamouraska; Les filles de Caleb**), to name a few. Conversely, several titles which were translated were later made into film (**Who Has Seen The Wind; Surfacing; The Diviners; Lost In The Barrens; Curse Of The Viking Grave**).

4. Canadian Literary Translators and Canada Council Translation Grants

According to my own research, the number of translators who received grants for non-fiction exclusively is two-hundred and thirty-four. The number of translators who received grants for literature, including prose (novels, short stories), poetry, drama, and children's literature is two-hundred and thirty-one. The total number of translators who received Canada Council translation grants for fiction or non-fiction is four-hundred and sixty-five.

There are two-hundred and thirty-one literary translators who received Canada Council translation grants for literary titles between 1972-1992, but only thirty-three translated five or more titles (Table 2, figure 2 provides the list of these thirty-three people). By examining kinds of literature translated according to genre, we may observe a discernable effect that these thirty-three people had on the Canadian literary institution. First of all, of these thirty-three people, there is double the number of translators working from English to French than from French to English. Secondly, most of these translators who worked on five titles or more, dealt with other literary genres aside from prose fiction. The two biggest names in literary translation, David Lobdell and Sheila Fischman translated mostly prose fiction. Aside from these two people, only six other translators worked on prose fiction exclusively (including Paul Wilson's five Czech to English translations, which were subsidized by the Canada Council's international programme). Twenty-one people in total translated prose fiction exclusively or a combination of prose fiction with other genres. Thirteen translators who received five or more literary grants, worked on a combination of literary genres. Eight translators worked on children's fiction exclusively, and almost half (sixteen people) translated at least one children's title; four people worked on drama exclusively.

In comparison to the fiction titles, six of the thirty-three literary translators worked on a few non-fiction projects, totalling five or more titles: Jacques de Roussan, Sheila Fischman, Michelle Tisseyre, David Homel, Raymond Chamberlain, and Jane Brierley.

I sent a questionnaire to the above thirty-three people in addition to several other prominent literary translators; I wanted to glean certain insights into the selection process about how literature gets translated in Canada. Thirteen people re-

sponded to my questions about the selection process. The thirteen people who responded to the questionnaire are, in fact, extremely knowledgeable about language and literature. Three of the thirteen are established Québécois authors (Daveluy, Martin, and Simard); three are academics, educators teaching language and literature (Ellenwood, Francière, and Stratford, the latter of whom is also a writer and literary critic); one was a foreign correspondent (Barsamian); one is a publisher (Roussan); one is a translator specializing in juvenile fiction (Côté); one is proficient in multilanguage translation (Alan Brown); two have been in the business long enough to be called experts in language re-creation (Bednarski and Claxton), and Sheila Fischman's name is synonymous with excellence in literary translation. The most general results of the questionnaire are as follows: Canadian literary translators are limited in their choice of literature due to the fact that selection decisions remain in the hands of the publishers. Secondly, the Government will not fund the translation of a text if the author is not a Canadian. Publishers are unwilling, generally, to take risks on market sales of non-subsidized texts.

In spite of the fact that the Canada Council places control primarily in the hands of the publishers, my research indicates that the literary translators must begin to receive more recognition about the role they play in the selection process. The translators know more about the text, and have greater understanding of the complexity and subtlety of language than the publishers – they are able to discern the difference between high quality texts and mediocre ones. The publishers seem to depend to some extent on the opinions of the translators as expert voices, though the latter express frustration at not being allowed enough recognition in the selection process. The facts obtained from my translator survey indicate that some decisions concerning selection procedure are translator-generated, though most publishers approach a translator with an offer.

It appears, however, that there is a great deal of frustration among literary translators about the way in which the publishing industry selects titles for translation. Since all the people surveyed, but one, work on literary translation part-time (it appears to be financially impossible to do so on a full-time basis for 90 percent of the respondents) their answers indicate that they feel very much on the outside of selection decisions and would like to have more recognition and even control over the kind of novels that are translated in Canada. Since, in most cases, they are approached by the publishers with a potential project, they feel that they have little freedom in choosing the texts that they would really like to translate, hence a great deal of very mediocre titles are selected.

5. Canadian Publishers and Canada Council Translation Grants

By referring to Table 3 (figure 3), it is evident that a total number of one-hundred and ninety-one Canadian publishers received Canada Council translation grants between 1972-1992: this figure includes fiction and non-fiction grants.

Category A accommodates the greatest number of publishing houses, that is, one-hundred and twenty-seven publishers received one to four translation grants for both fiction and non-fiction; this means that most grants in the Canada Council Translation Grants Programme were spread around to different publishers. Category B contains thirty-one publishers each of whom received between five to nine grants; Category C has sixteen publishers with ten to nineteen grants; Category D lists only four publishers at twenty to thirty grants; Category E contains three publishers at thirty-one to forty grants; Category F exhibits three publishers at forty-one to fifty grants. Category G shows the three top publishers who received the most grants for fiction and non-fiction (**Cercle du Livre de France Ltée./Pierre Tisseyre**;⁵ **Les Éditions Québec/Amérique Inc.**; **Sogides Ltée.**)

Table 4 (figure 4) outlines the twenty top publishers who received the most Canada Council translation grants between 1972-1992, literary and non-fiction listed in decreasing order, and ranging in numbers from eighty-three grants for **Cercle du Livre de France Ltée./Pierre Tisseyre** to sixteen grants for **Simon and Pierre Publishing**. (Here, literary includes all genre category including prose fiction, children's, drama and poetry).

By way of comparison, I have listed the top seven publishers who received the most grants for non-fiction titles. The first is **Sogides Ltée.**, who received forty-five non-fiction grants, followed by **Les Éditions Québec/Amérique Inc.**, with forty-one non-fiction grants; third is **Les Éditions de L'Homme**, with thirty-one non-fiction titles, fourth is **Les Éditions Libre Expression Ltée.**, with twenty-eight non-fiction titles; and the fifth is **Le Boréal Express Ltée.**, with twenty-six non-fiction grants. The last two publishing houses who received more than ten grants for non-fiction titles are **Les Éditions HMH** and **VLB Éditeur Inc.**, with eighteen and eleven grants consecutively. The preceding seven publishers who received the most Canada Council translation grants between 1972-1992 for non-fiction titles are Québec publishers, translating texts in the English to French direction.

By separating the literary grants from the non-fiction grants, we see the following facts in Table 5 (figure 5): *Ten Publishers who received the most grants for fiction*. Publishers who received the most translation grants for fiction are, firstly, **Cercle du Livre de France Ltée./Pierre Tisseyre**, totalling seventy-four fiction grants; secondly, **Oberon Press**, totalling forty-two fiction grants; thirdly, **Les Éditions Héritage Inc.**, totalling thirty-eight; fourthly, **McClelland & Stewart Inc.**, with thirty-seven titles; and fifthly, **Exile Editions Ltd.**, with twenty-four literary grants. If we examine the grants given for specific literary genres, we may observe the following. According to the facts about **Cercle du Livre de France/Pierre Tisseyre**, out of a total of seventy-four fiction grants, forty-seven

⁵ I have categorized Cercle du Livre de France Ltée and Pierre Tisseyre together because Monsieur Tisseyre founded and owns both publishing houses.

are for children's fiction and twenty-seven are classified as general fiction grants. Ibis means that the Canadian publisher who received the most Canada Council translation grants from the inception of the programme until 1992 received double the number of grants for children's literature as for general fiction.

The publisher who received the second greatest number of grants for literary translation, **Oberon Press**, published one volume of poetry and forty-one titles classified as general fiction. **Oberon**, like **McClelland & Stewart** has published a great deal of Governor General Award winners via the Canada Council Translation Grants Programme. Most of the authors listed may be classified as writers of high literature: names such as Jacques Benoit, Louise Maheux-Forcier, Claire Martin, etc. It is worth noting that all grants received by **Oberon** were for fiction.

The Canadian publisher who received the third greatest number of Canada Council translation grants for literary translation is **Éditions Héritage Inc.** This house specializes in children's fiction, therefore it is reasonable that out of a total of thirty-eight literary grants, thirty-six of them are for children's fiction and only two for general fiction. It is of some interest to note that between 1989-1992, twelve scripts from the Degrassi Jr. High television series (all by different authors) received Canada Council translation grants – each at a cost of \$3,600. and were published by **Héritage**. (The Degrassi Jr. High series, incidentally received great commercial success in the U.S.).

The titles published by **McClelland & Stewart** which received translation grants are mostly canonized authors of prose fiction, such as Gérard Bessette, Gabrielle Roy, Marie-Claire Blais, and Jacques Poulin, to name a few; **McClelland & Stewart** published twenty-eight such titles of high prose fiction, seven children's titles, one poetry and one drama title respectively.

Exile Editions received translation grants to publish thirteen fiction titles, nine poetry titles and one drama title.

All Canada Council translation grants received by **Talon Books** are for fiction. Almost all the grants received by **Exile**, **Coach House**, **Anansi**, and **Simon and Pierre** are for fiction, including the predominance of drama grants for **Simon and Pierre**. The preceding tables reveal that although one-hundred and ninety-one publishers received Canada Council translation grants for individual titles, the literary grants have acted primarily in the interest of the ten top publishing houses as outlined in Table 5, figure 5.

6. Conclusion: Canada Council Translation Grants and the Canadian Literary Institution

If it were not for the Government's grants to publishers for the translation of Canadian literature, it is doubtful that most Canadian literature in any given genre category, would have been translated at all. Most of the titles were first-time publications and had not been translated abroad.

The eligibility requirements for a Canada Council translation grant emphasize all things Canadian, including Canadian publishers. The grants are made directly to the publishers, hence selection decisions are controlled by them. Although it is difficult to guess the motivations of the publishers, certainly ideological considerations play a role, I strongly suspect, and this point has been debated elsewhere, that some of the publishers have viewed the grants simply as an additional financial resource. Secondly, in my conversations with literary translators, some have complained that the present system which pays grants to the publishers has been abused as some publishers are quite slow in passing the money on to the translators.

The original mandate of the Canada Council (to foster mutual understanding and cultural exchange) may be seen as a response to the political climate of the time, especially the official language policy and fervent nationalism of the nineteen-sixties. The mandate grew therefore from both a political and ideological impetus. Viewing this situation with the hindsight of 1994, and considering the economic recession and the recent failure of the Charlottetown Accord⁶ one may question if the Canada Council Translation Grants Programme has been effective in fostering mutual understanding and cultural exchange. The Council's policy which focuses on **quality** fosters selectivity according to the prevailing institutional criteria about values (aesthetic, social), so that this policy both reflects previous canonizations (books and authors with awards, for example) and fosters future canonization (the grant as a sign of approval and contribution to the visibility of the author and the genre favoured).

A complex relationship exists between literary translators, publishers and the government. In spite of certain aspects of the programme which leave room for improvement, there is a certain integrity on the part of all parties involved to select texts which they think will sell and, hopefully, survive. The enormous amount of children's fiction subsidized for support, for example, seems to indicate a genuine desire to reach this highly selective market and even turn a profit. It is particularly interesting to note that two of the Canadian publishers who received the most government grants for literary translations (**Cercle du livre de France/Pierre Tisseyre** and **Les Éditions Héritage**) received them for children's fiction. The key indicator here, I believe, is that children's fiction has a highly specific and guaranteed buying market. This is not the case, unfortunately, with most works of prose fiction categorized as high, or canonized literature. In fact for quality prose fiction to sell well in translation, it seems almost necessary, except in rare, celebrated cases, for any kinds of awards to be highly promoted on the jacket, etc.

I am arguing that the Canada Council translation grants have been essential in promoting the translation of Canadian literature, but the way in which the process

⁶ Though many reasons are given for the failure of the National Referendum on the Charlottetown Accord, one hears, most often, that French-Canadians voted no because Québec wanted more and that English-Canadians voted no because they thought Québec had too much.

works might be improved. Since the grants began, more Canadian literature has been published in translation than ever before. But this has not helped the cause of economically strapped Canadian publishing houses. For example, both **Anansi** and **Harvest House** are now pale shadows of their former selves. Even **McClelland and Stewart**, the largest Canadian publisher, is periodically in need of bail-outs. Secondly, a look through Books in Print for randomly chosen titles reveals that many of the novels which were funded for translation are now out of print. The substantial number of reprinted editions of translated French-Canadian novels is indicative of the willingness of the English-Canadian system to receive such literature from the other system. English-Canadian readers more readily receive the French-Canadian translations than vice-versa. In addition, publishers in Québec are much less willing to publish a translated novel, belonging to the category of high literature, unless it receives government funding, than their English-language counterpart. In all fairness to Québec publishers, this is probably because the books will not sell well.

The Government grants have been essential in providing quality translations of the literature of Canada; without them, the inestimable contribution of Canadian literature would be unavailable to English and French readers world-wide. The system of grants has, however, attempted to act primarily in the interest of the Canadian publishing industry. This attempt has not always been successful as many publishers have gone out of business and many of the titles supported for translation are now out of print. The sad fact of the matter is that foreign readers are generally more interested in reading translated Canadian literature, from both systems, than Canadians themselves. Secondly, Canadian readers, from both the English and French language systems, are more interested in reading foreign texts in translation. The fact that the Ontario Arts Council now provides translation grants for foreign texts into English supports this argument.

As we forge ahead into a new century, the Canada Council Translation Grants Programme should take a page out of the Ontario Arts Council's book. Positive changes in policy would include providing grants for the translation of foreign as well as domestic literatures. Also, the list of possible titles offered by the Council for translation is an excellent idea; however I believe that such a list would be favourably received if it were provided directly to the literary translators for selection, and, since the translators are the real experts, they should be allowed to put forth titles for consideration. Finally, the translators should receive the grants directly from the Canada Council, and not be paid through the publishers.

Such a change in policy would have positive effects on authors, publishers and translators. Firstly, it would allow for the translation of some great buried treasures – those authors whose works have hitherto gone unnoticed in the target systems. Secondly, it would help subsidize the publishers in addition to providing texts for domestic and foreign distribution which the reading public would buy. Thirdly, it would assist the literary translators by providing long-awaited recognition of the

fact that they are re-creative artists, equal in stature to the authors in craft and design. Such a change in policy could only enhance the breadth and depth of translations within the Canadian literary institution.

APPENDIX

Table 1 (figure 1):

**CANADIAN AUTHORS: MOST GRANTS BASED ON
INDIVIDUAL TITLES:**

NAME:	GENRE:	NUMBER OF GRANTS
1. Lucy Maud Montgomery (English - French)	C	18
2. Michel Tremblay (French - English)	D	16
3. Marie-Claire Blais (French - English)	F	12
4. Roch Carrier (French - English)	F	10
5. Nicole Brossard (French - English)	F	9
6. Victor-Lévy Beaulieu (French - English)	F	8
6.1. Morley Callaghan (English - French)	F	8
6.2. Jovette Marchessault (French - English)	F/D	8
6.3. Robert Marteau (French - English)	F/P	8
7. Margaret Atwood (English - French)	F	7

TRANSLATED CANADIAN LITERATURE AND CANADA COUNCIL TRANSLATION GRANTS

7.1. Jacques Ferron (French - English)	F	7
7.2. Antonine Maillet (French - English)	F	7
7.3. Mordecai Richler (English - French)	F	7
7.4. Josef Skvorecky (Czech-Eng - Int. program)	F	7
8. Matt Cohen (English - French)	F	6
8.1. Anne Hébert (French - English)	F	6
8.3. Gabrielle Roy (French - English)	F	6
9. Gilles Archambault (French - English)	F	5
9.1. Robertson Davies (English - French)	F	5
9.2. Marie-Francine Hébert (French - English)	C-D	5
9.3. Suzanne Lebeau (French - English)	D	5
9.4. André Major (French - English)	F	5
9.4. Louise Maheux-Forcier (French - English)	F	5
9.5. Henriette Major (French - English)	C	5

Table 2 (Figure 2):

**THIRTY-THREE LITERARY TRANSLATORS WHO
RECEIVED THE MOST GRANTS FOR FICTION TITLES
(LISTED FROM MOST TO LEAST):**

<i>Translator's Name</i>	<i>Literary Genre</i>
1. David Lobdell: 42 fiction; 2 non-fiction.	F
2. Sheila Fischman: 40 fiction; 13 non-fiction.	F
3. Linda Gaboriau: 30 fiction; 1 non-fiction.	D
4. Alan Brown: 27 fiction, 3 non-fiction.	F/C/ D/P
<i>Translator's Name</i>	<i>Literary Genre</i>
5. David Homel: 24 fiction; 6 non-fiction.	F/C
6. Michelle Tisseyre: 17 fiction; 7 non-fiction.	F/C
7. John van Burek: 16 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	D
8. Paule Daveluy: 15 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	C
9. Sarah Cummins: 13 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	C
10. Raymond Chamberlain: 12 fiction; 5 non-fiction.	F/P
11. Marie-Andrée Clermont: 11 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	C
12. H��l��ne Rioux: 10 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	C
13. Maryse C��t��: 9 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	C
14. Arlette Franci��re: 9 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	F/D/P
15. Maureen Labont��: 9 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	D

16. Michelle Robison: 9 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	F/C
17. Marc Plourde: 7 fiction; 1 non-fiction.	F/P/C
18. Claude Aubry: 6 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	C
19. Louise von Flotow: 6 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	F
20. Barbara Godard: 6 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	F
21. Frances Morgan: 6 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	C
22. Jacques de Roussan: 6 fiction; 17 non-fiction.	F/C
23. Yvan Steenhout: 6 fiction; 4 non-fiction.	F
24. Jane Brierley: 5 fiction; 5 non-fiction.	F
25. H��l��ne Filion (Martin): 5 fiction; 2 non-fiction.	F/C
26. Wayne Grady: 5 fiction; 1 non-fiction.	F
27. Yvonne Klein: 5 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	F/D
28. Suzanne De Lotbini��re-Harwood: 5 fiction; 1 non fiction.	F/D/P
29. Mich��le Marineau: 5 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	C
30. Robert Marinier: 5 fiction; 0 non-fiction.	D
31. Claire Martin-Faucher: 5 fiction; 1 non-fiction.	F/C
32. Philip Stratford: 5 fiction; 2 non-fiction.	F/P
33. Paul Wilson: 5 fiction (Czech-Eng); 0 non-fiction.	F

Table 3 (figure 3):

**TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLISHING HOUSES WHICH
RECEIVED CANADA COUNCIL TRANSLATION GRANTS
BETWEEN 1972-1992: 191**

<u>CATEGORY A:</u> <u>1-4 Grants</u>	<u>CATEGORY B:</u> <u>5-9 Grants</u>	<u>CATEGORY C:</u> <u>10-19 Grants</u>
(fiction and non-fiction)	(fiction and non-fiction)	(fiction and non-fiction)
127 publishers	31 publishers	16 publishers

CATEGORY D: 20-30 GRANTS: 4 Publishers

1. The Coach House Cultural Workshop Inc., The Coach House Press: (24) (23 fiction; 1 non-fiction)
2. Les Éditions HMH. (23) (5 fiction; 18 non-fiction)
3. Exile Editions Ltd. (26) (24 fiction; 2 non-fiction)
4. Les Éditions Libre Expression Ltée. (30) (2 fiction; 28 non-fiction)

CATEGORY E: 31-40 GRANTS: 3 Publishers

1. Le Boréal Express Ltée. (38) (12 fiction; 26 non-fiction)
2. Les Éditions de l'Homme. (38) (7 fiction; 31 non-fiction)
3. Les Éditions Guernica Ltd. (34) (29 fiction; 5 non-fiction)

CATEGORY F: 41-50 GRANTS: 3 Publishers

1. Les Éditions Héritage Inc. (46) (38 fiction; 8 non-fiction)
2. McClelland and Stewart Inc. (42) (37 fiction; 5 non-fiction)

3. Oberon Press. (42) (all fiction)

CATEGORY G: MORE THAN 50 GRANTS: 3 Publishers

1. Cercle du Livre de France Ltée. & Pierre Tisseyre for a total of 83.
(74 fiction; 9 non-fiction)
2. Les Éditions Québec/Amérique Inc. (57) (16 fiction; 41 non-fiction)
3. Sogides Ltée. (55) (10 fiction; 45 non-fiction)

Table 4 (figure 4):

TWENTY PUBLISHERS WHO RECEIVED MOST GRANTS, FICTION AND NON-FICTION (in decreasing order)

1. Cercle du Livre de France Ltée. & Pierre Tisseyre for a total of 83. (74 fiction; 9 non-fiction)
2. Les Éditions Québec/Amérique Inc. (57) (16 fiction; 41 non-fiction)
3. Sogides Ltée. (55) (10 fiction; 45 non-fiction)
4. Les Éditions Héritage Inc. (46) (38 fiction; 8 non-fiction)
5. McClelland and Stewart Inc. (42) (37 fiction; 5 non-fiction)
6. Oberon Press. (42) (all fiction)
7. Le Boréal Express Ltée. (38) (12 fiction; 26 non-fiction)
8. Les Éditions de l'Homme. (38) (7 fiction; 31 non-fiction)
9. Les Éditions Guernica Ltd. (34) (29 fiction; 5 non-fiction)
10. Les Éditions Libre Expression Ltée. (30) (2 fiction; 28 non-fiction)
11. Exile Éditions Ltd. (26) (24 fiction; 2 non-fiction)
12. The Coach House Cultural Workshop Inc., The Coach House Press: (24) (23 fiction; 1 non-fiction)
13. Les Éditions HMH. (23) (5 fiction; 18 non-fiction)
14. Les Éditions Fides. (19) (11 fiction; 8 non-fiction)
15. Harvest House Ltd. (18) (14 fiction; 4 non-fiction)
16. Talon Books. (18) (all fiction)
17. VLB Éditeur Inc. (18) (7 fiction; 11 non-fiction)

18. House of Anansi Press Ltd. (17) (16 fiction; 1 non-fiction)
19. Lester and Orpen Dennys Ltd. (17) (13 fiction; 4 non-fiction)
20. Simon and Pierre Publishing. (16) (15 fiction; 1 non-fiction)

Table 5 (figure 5):

**TEN PUBLISHERS WHO RECEIVED THE MOST GRANTS
FOR FICTION (in decreasing order)**

1. Cercle du Livre de France Ltée. & Pierre Tisseyre for a total of 74 fiction titles out of 83 grants. (Out of 74 literary grants, 47 are classified by genre as children's and 27 are classified as fiction).
 2. Oberon Press: 42 fiction titles out of 42 grants. (41 literary grants are for fiction; 1 for poetry).
 3. Les Éditions Héritage Inc.: 38 fiction titles out of 46 grants. (36 literary grants are classified by genre as children's and 2 as fiction).
 4. McClelland and Stewart Inc.: 37 fiction titles out of 42 grants. (28 literary grants are for general fiction and 7 are for children's; 1 for poetry and 1 for drama. The remaining 6 are for non-fiction).
 5. Exile Editions Ltd.: 24 fiction titles out of 26 grants. (13 fiction titles; 9 poetry; 2 drama).
 6. The Coach House Cultural Workshop Inc., The Coach House Press: 23 fiction titles out of 24 grants. (15 fiction grants; 4 poetry; 4 drama).
 7. Talon Books: 18 fiction titles out of 18 grants. (11 drama; 6 fiction; 1 poetry).
 8. House of Anansi Press Ltd.: 16 fiction titles out of 17 grants. (all fiction grants for general fiction).
 9. Les Éditions Québec/Amérique Inc.: 16 fiction titles out of 57 grants. (12 general fiction grants; 4 children's grants).
 10. Simon and Pierre Publishing: 15 fiction titles out of 16 grants. (13 drama grants; 2 fiction grants).
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