

‘What is my country?’: Supporting Small Nation Publishing

Alistair McCleery and Melanie Ramdarshan Bold

Introduction

In 1996 Craig Brown, the then Manager of the Scotland football team, took his players to the cinema to see *Braveheart* (1995) in the hope that the film of Scottish victory in the fourteenth-century Wars of Independence would inspire them to success on the pitch. The film traced the career of William Wallace, chiefly from the point where he had returned from Rome, fluent in the universal language of clerical hegemony, Latin, and included his victories against the armies of Edward I, before his capture and death by being hung, drawn and quartered in London. More apocryphal incidents in the film included the impregnation of the French wife of the Crown Prince by the doughty Scotsman; while the more historically accurate account of the Scottish nobles sharing a common heritage with their English counterparts, and indeed owning estates in both countries, provided a key motivation to the narrative’s depiction of upper-class pusillanimity and desertion.

The film was based on a book by Randall Wallace, an American academic of Scottish ancestry; William Wallace was played by Mel Gibson, an Australian born in the USA where he now lived and worked; most of the action was shot in Ireland with the collaboration of the Irish army; and *Braveheart* is owned, reflecting the production investment, by an American studio, Twentieth Century Fox, part of News Corp., itself a media conglomerate and the fiefdom of Rupert Murdoch, an Australian of Scots origins who has taken American nationality. The Scotland football team, mainly composed of Scots playing in English teams as opposed to Scottish teams comprising players from everywhere except Scotland, failed to make much progress in Euro ’96 but, unusually for those in such an occupation, Craig Brown remained in post until he resigned after failure to qualify for the 2002 World Cup. He was succeeded by Berti Vogts, a German whose contract as Manager of the Kuwaiti national side was bought out by the Scottish FA.

Globalisation, in this sense of disregard for the boundaries of the nation state, has a long pedigree; even globalisation, in the sense of the

spread of specific cultural narratives and icons, has an extended history; but perhaps globalisation, in the sense of transnational ownership of the media, is a phenomenon more clearly associated with the second half of the twentieth century and beyond. It is also a phenomenon that particularly affects publishers in small nations and national regions. Such publishers find themselves in competition with much, much larger enterprises that know no national or regional allegiance or responsibility. For example, Scotland is a national region of roughly five million inhabitants; like Ireland, situated on the northern periphery of Europe. It has formed since 1707 a political union with England and Wales, its neighbours to the south who constitute a population of fifty-five million. In turn, it now forms part of the European Union with its commitment to free movement of goods and labour across national borders. Within the larger English-language community, Scotland, again like Ireland, has been both an embattled minority culture and a leading influence thanks to its imperial diaspora (as the ancestry of those involved in *Braveheart* showed). A separate Scottish history and culture existed before and after the Union: during Scotland's period as an independent nation state, the status Wallace fought for, but also in its later incarnation as a stateless nation or national region.

Scotland and the World

Scotland not only has its own political history but a continuing distinctive social and cultural history, including many of the institutions of civil society: the legal system, the educational system, and its post-Reformation predominant church. These institutions shaped over time the nature of the Scottish book trade and shared something of their distinctiveness with it. However, defining publishing in Scotland has long involved the disentangling of what is the Scottish-based industry from the aggregated UK profile of a metropolitan (i.e. London-based) industry and, since the mid-twentieth century, from the profile of a transnational industry.¹ Disentangling can be more difficult in this

¹ In terms of data sources, it often also involves disentangling printing from magazine publishing from book and journal publishing. Standard forms of UK and Scottish government data collection and aggregation fail to make those distinctions and even to recognise amongst all the trades and professions delineated from bookbinder to journalist that of 'publisher'. See, for example, DC Research, *Economic Contribution Study for the Arts & Creative Industries* (Edinburgh, 2012), <http://www.creativescotland.com/resources/research>, accessed 23 October 2012. When we

context as a Scottish publisher can be the imprint of a UK or transnational group with its performance data hard to disaggregate. Such a group is now more likely to have general media interests of which book publishing will be only one. The disentangling involves distinguishing between media products and their role within the group, the book of the film as opposed to the film as opposed to the film of the book, education as opposed to reference books, for example, every bit as much as it does seeking separate profiles for member companies within the group.

Instead of disentangling, however, we can cut through the Gordian knot. There is an easier way of answering the question: what really is Scottish publishing? This is not merely an 'academic' question as it provides the basis upon which a more focussed cultural policy and form of support can be developed and allocated. A rough distinction can be made on the basis of output between those firms that publish for Scotland and those that publish in Scotland. The former are founded to reflect a cultural nationalism and its literary or historiographical expression. Many of these small presses fail after initial success or remain relatively stagnant. Where success is consistent, these firms can lose their independence through merger with or acquisition by larger, London-based, houses. (A similar migration can often be noted in the place of publication of Scottish writers: early work published in Edinburgh, later work in London.) The number of Scottish publishers covered by our periodic surveys of the industry rose from ninety in 2003 to 110 in 2011, currently producing some three thousand titles a year.² This confirms the ease of entry into the sector rather than a core robustness. Those firms that publish in Scotland, though not necessarily for it, have been even more vulnerable just because of their dependence on markets outside Scotland—particularly those

use the term 'publishing' throughout this essay, it is to refer to book and journal publishing, whether print or screen-based, but not printing or magazine or newspaper publishing. Consequently, we use our own periodic surveys of publishing in Scotland in preference to government data.

² The first of these surveys was used as the foundation of Marion Sinclair, Alistair McCleery and Mark C. Graham, *A Review of Scottish Publishing in the Twenty-First Century: Summary Report* (Edinburgh, 2004); the second was summarised in the course of Alistair McCleery, et al., 'Publishing in Scotland: Reviewing the Fragile Revival', *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 24 (2008), 87–97; and the 2010 survey formed the basis of Melanie Ramdarshan Bold, 'The Rights and Wrongs of Operational Practices in the Scottish Publishing Industry', *Publishing Research Quarterly* (2012) DOI: 10.1007/s12109-012-9293-0. The figure for the current total number of publishers in Scotland comes from Publishing Scotland at <http://www.publishingscotland.org/about-publishing/about-the-industry/>, accessed 23 October 2012.

firms whose success pre-1950 was based on the imperial enterprise. We can quote two detailed illustrations of this.

In 1962, Thomas Nelson & Sons merged into the Thomson Organisation in an effort to sustain its educational publishing interests on a global scale. The production plant remained in Edinburgh while the editorial offices moved to London. The firm also began to seek competitive quotations for production work from printers in the UK, and more frequently abroad. The printing division was sold off in 1968; the works, in 1880 the epitome of forward-looking investment, were razed to the ground to make way for the headquarters of an insurance company. In 1969, the successful US division was sold off to a Tennessee publishing firm which retained the name Thomas Nelson & Sons. The earlier move of the editorial offices to London represented the first in a number of changes of address indicative of the imprint's role as a building block in international merger and acquisition strategies. Thomson merged the imprint with its acquisition of Pitman and it moved to Walton-upon-Thames. Thomas Nelson & Sons made a further migration from Walton-upon-Thames to Cheltenham as a result of its sale by Pearson, which had only just bought it from Thomson, to the Dutch conglomerate Wolter Kluwers. Kluwers merged the imprint in 2000 with Stanley Thornes to form a new division, Nelson Thornes. Nelson Thornes is now (2012) part of Infinitas Learning, an international company specialising in multimedia educational publishing. (The US Thomas Nelson & Sons, specialising in Bible and other Christian publishing, has just been taken over by HarperCollins.) All this is itself a local consequence of global realignments in educational publishing.

Oliver and Boyd represents a less clear-cut illustration in terms of its development but not of its outcome. It began as a distinctly cultural publisher in 1798, issuing Burns' 'Holy Willie's Prayer', for example, in 1801 as well as the poems of Ramsay, Fergusson and many anthologies of Scottish song. It published for Scotland. The company published the *Edinburgh Almanac* from 1812 until 1932 and the *British Ready Reckoner* in 1812. From the middle of the nineteenth century, its educational and medical lists dominated and provided the basis for strong export revenues. It had become a publisher in Scotland. This position persisted until the second half of the twentieth century when the company retrenched to serve the distinctive Scottish educational market. It became again a publisher for Scotland. The company was sold to the *Financial Times* in 1962, itself to be absorbed by Pearson. The university and general publishing departments were immediately closed but the schools division continued to thrive. Its textbooks designed for the then new Scottish Standard

Grade examinations anticipated the change from O-level to GCSE in England and Wales and captured some of the market south of the border. However, Oliver and Boyd was closed down completely by the then Pearson Longman in 1989 with a turnover of £2.75 million and a net profit level of 10 per cent. Its closure left Scotland at that point without an educational publisher to supply the needs of its distinctive schools system (although the gap was eventually filled by Leckie and Leckie, now part of HarperCollins, Gibson, now Hodder Gibson and part of Hachette UK, and Bright Red—still independent). The Oliver and Boyd list was transferred to Longman in Harlow and allowed to expire in time. The group into which Oliver and Boyd sank, never to reappear, Pearson (Education), with currently about forty thousand employees, serves over seventy countries through Pearson International with its headquarters in London and Pearson North America based in New Jersey, which accounts for over 60 per cent of total group sales. Pearson's gaze remains outwards to a global market rather than on local needs.

We could have quoted a third illustration: that of Chambers, its Edinburgh operation closed in 2009 by its parent Hachette UK and existing now only as an imprint administered by Hodder Education (also Hachette-owned) from London. Or even a fourth in the withdrawal of Churchill Livingstone and Wiley Blackwell ending a tradition of medical publishing in Edinburgh since 1728 and progressing through a sequence of conglomerate takeover from Pearson to Harcourt to Elsevier. However, the point is surely now well evidenced. The operation of globalisation upon publishers providing a successful and needed service within small nations and regional nations can be detrimental to the economic, social and cultural interests of those nations and regions.

So the model, or models, based on the operations of the global information economy emerge: dominance on a local scale succeeded by absorption by global players; a continuing creation and disappearance of small publishing houses to provide outlets for a Scottish cultural output falling in and out of fashion on a UK and international stage. This instability must then be also set against increasing competition from other sources of information and other forms of expression, often backed by the deep pockets in research and development, and trialling, of transnationals such as Google. In the case of Oliver and Boyd, another key aspect of the process may be seen in the closure by the centre of a reasonably healthy branch. Oliver and Boyd's 10 per cent net profit failed to meet the corporate targets of Pearson while, on the other hand, it did represent a strong and solvent position within a limited local market that many current enterprises would envy. The stress on making targets like this

not only makes publishers search for larger markets than the small nation or national region but it also makes them risk-averse. They need to search for the 'sure thing' and this leads in turn to moving into educational and academic publishing or to copying the latest trade publishing success—more boy wizards or vampires—or to the offer of huge advances to celebrities of all kinds whose fame might be expected to deliver the necessary sales and margins. In order to make the sure thing more secure, the conglomerates expend large advertising budgets, employ huge sales forces, and exploit strong media connections (often within a sister company). Even if the book does not sell, and the public is on occasion perverse enough to assert its own tastes, it is not without want of promotion and publicity. Globalisation not only leads to the loss of local publishers but it also severely limits the range and diversity of content being actively promoted and distributed.

Of particular relevance to Scotland are the large advances offered to authors whose work produced by an independent publisher has demonstrated the 'surety' of its sales. Literary agents do not tend to deal with Scottish publishers because the latter are unwilling, and cannot afford, to pay the level of advances agents demand. Just under a third (28.6 per cent) of publishers here do not pay their authors an advance; just over a quarter (26.1 per cent) base their advance payments on sales expectations; just over three-tenths (30.4 per cent) say their advance payments fluctuate, and less than a tenth (8.69 per cent) pay a flat fee. Not surprisingly, those publishers who do not pay their authors an advance also do not deal with literary agents. This is also reflective of the 2010 survey of authors we undertook, in conjunction with the Society of Authors Scotland, where just under two-fifths (39.1 per cent) of authors did not receive an advance. However, less than two-fifths (39.3 per cent) of the publishers questioned published fiction, which also provides a partial explanation of the lack of author advances. Of the publishers who produced fiction, just under half (45.5 per cent) dealt with literary agents: another partial explanation of the lack of author advances. A third of the publishers who published fiction did not pay an advance, leaving their authors without any initial financial support from them. The survey of authors, and subsequent interviews, found that advances are more important to authors than, for example, rights sales.³ It might be reasonable to conclude that authors will constantly be lured away from Scottish publishers by higher advances.

³ See Bold, 'The Rights and Wrongs of Operational Practices'.

This issue of the ability to pay competitive advances may not necessarily be compounded by present general economic circumstances. The recent (2012) Economic Contribution analysis commissioned by Creative Scotland took into account the impact of the recession when calculating that the extremely broad-brush Writing & Publishing sector of the Scottish economy contracted 1.8 per cent from 1971 to 2010. However, because the sector data included the rapidly declining area of printing and the slowly declining area of newspaper publishing, this negative figure may in fact conceal a real growth over this period as far as book and journal publishing is concerned.⁴ This view may be reinforced by the actual increase in the number of publishers operating in Scotland through that period.

The World and Scotland

The 2003 survey of Scottish Publishing that we undertook found that 77 per cent of Scottish publishers' turnover came from sales in Scotland with the larger companies more likely to look outwith the domestic Scottish market for sales. By comparison, the 2010 survey we undertook found that just under a third (32.1 per cent) of the surveyed publishers said that less than a fifth of their sales are in the domestic Scottish market, nearly half of the publishers said that over 51 per cent of their sales are in the domestic market, and just under three-tenths (28.6 per cent) said over 71 per cent of their sales are in the Scottish market. Both the 2003 and 2010 surveys revealed that a number of Scottish publishers are the imprints of a larger UK-based or international company, so they have a more international outlook and interest in other media. However, in 2010 this type of publisher accounted for just over a tenth (10.2 per cent) of Scottish publishers. Unfortunately, they are the ones, as evidenced by Nelsons, Oliver and Boyd, Chambers and Churchill Livingstone above, that are both most significant in terms of publishing diversity and most vulnerable in terms of closure from the centre (whether London, Paris or New York). The remaining 90 per cent of publishers do not have in the main such easy and automatic access to different, external markets and of course to the financial backing of a larger company.

These processes have left contemporary Scottish publishing, defined as both publishing for Scotland and publishing in Scotland, in a fragile and

⁴ DC Research, *Economic Contribution Study for the Arts*.

fragmented state. The Scottish book publishing industry, as noted above, consists of some 110 publishers. The 2010 survey found that there is the same number of relatively new companies, established since 2000, as there are older companies, established before 1960. The largest percentage of publishers were established between 1981 and 2000, which could be as a result of the rejuvenation of Scottish literature in the 1970s and 1980s and/or in response to the growing nature of the UK publishing industry itself during this period. Further down the supply chain, the retail and library supplier sectors in Scotland have suffered major casualties with closures and takeovers. The overall picture is one of a loss of control, with independent Scottish businesses being acquired by larger UK-based companies, a trend found in the UK publishing industry in general and one echoed on a larger scale as non-UK owned companies have taken over large parts of the UK publishing industry. The Scottish publishing industry (in common with those in other countries) is characterised by a small number of larger publishers and a relatively large number of medium, small and micro companies.

These two constituencies within the industry were defined within the 2004 *Review of Publishing* as the 'Key Group' of larger companies in terms of turnover and employment, and the 'Lifestyle Group' comprising smaller companies whose main objectives are not necessarily focused upon profitability.⁵ The two clusters roughly correspond to the publishing in Scotland and publishing for Scotland categories identified above. Most of the Key Group published little that is aimed specifically at a Scottish market and for some of those publishers less than 55 per cent of their turnover came from that market. The five largest publishers averaged between them 10 per cent of their total sales in the Scottish market. This contrasted with a minority of publishers in the group whose turnover in Scotland accounted for between 70 per cent and 99 per cent of their total sales, a position echoed strongly in the Lifestyle Group. The rise in the overall number of publishers between 2003 and 2010 might conceal a disproportionate loss in the number of Key Group publishers and the corresponding fall in importance of markets beyond Scotland. As already noted, the 2010 survey found that just under a third (32.1 per cent) of the surveyed publishers said that less than a fifth of their sales are in the domestic Scottish market, nearly half of the publishers said that over 51 per cent of their sales are in the domestic market, and just under three-tenths (28.6 per cent) said over 71 per cent of their sales are in the Scottish market.

⁵ Sinclair et al, *A Review of Scottish Publishing*.

To summarise, the Scottish publishing industry is characterised by: a diverse set of independent companies; domination—in sales terms—by a few large commercial players, based mainly outside Scotland and even outside the UK; high levels of competition, both from within Scotland and from other English-language publishers; a limited set of product formats, mainly print with small evidence of e-book production; in some cases, decreasing markets (minority-language publishing); retail markets that are consolidating across the UK, leading to the increased power of any remaining intermediaries, particularly Amazon; and proximity to London, one of the world's major publishing centres, leading to a 'drain' of successful authors. All of these elements are, to some extent, shared by other small publishers in the UK and by other industries in small countries. Publishers in other small countries, while many are currently protected internally by a linguistic firewall, at least as far as trade publishing is concerned, are also operating within wider European and global spheres of influence and are not immune to the mechanisms described above.⁶

Two questions require to be addressed: is it possible to redress the balance between these local minnows and the global sharks to ensure that a range of cultural and educational needs are met; and how can support of whatever kind be targeted to be most effective in terms of the no doubt limited resources available? One possible answer, adopted in both the UK and Ireland, is fiscal; books in Scotland are rated as zero for VAT purposes along with other 'public benefits' such as children's clothes. Books do attract reduced rates of VAT in most of the other countries of the EU: zero only in the UK, Ireland, Poland and Croatia. By contrast in Denmark the full rate of VAT of 25 per cent is paid on books. There is no discernible impact on book sales. Some might even propose that to tax books generally, no matter the genre or point of origin, would create funds to focus on the support through library purchase schemes, for example, of those titles that are culturally or educationally important. Dan Brown pays for Robin Jenkins! However, scepticism is the order of the day here as, first, hypothecation of tax revenue is a principle most governments shun and, secondly, today more than ever, governments are more likely to use these revenues at national and EU levels to fill the holes left elsewhere by the present economic conditions. Independence for Scotland would result in fiscal autonomy, the ability to create tax regimes that benefit specifically

⁶ See Alistair McCleery, 'Legions, Laws and Languages: Book History and English Hegemony' in Simon Frost and Robert Nix (eds), *Angles on the English-Speaking World 10* (Copenhagen, 2010), 39–54. This discusses the increasing dominance of Anglophone publications within Europe.

the Scottish economy, such as a lowering of corporation tax. However, given current policies, and the longstanding consensus on zero-rating for books, it seems implausible that a Scottish government would introduce VAT on books.

It might also be appropriate to link at this point resale price maintenance (RPM), aka the recommended retail price, aka in the UK the Net Book Agreement (NBA), to the question of VAT. Both are indiscriminate mechanisms. RPM has been abolished now for some seventeen years in the UK and Ireland where it had only the force of a voluntary agreement. However, it still exists in Denmark, Germany, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Spain and Portugal: either as a statutory condition or in the form of business-to-business agreements, as with the NBA, normally agreed on behalf of their members by trade associations of publishers, booksellers, and authors. Where it still exists, that is, in most of Europe outside the British Isles, RPM applies to all titles; or where there are exceptions, those exceptions are just those educational and academic books that are likely to be of greatest cultural value. What RPM does, in other words, is to prevent the consumer from buying Ian Rankin in Tesco (two for £7) – or anywhere else at a discount for that matter. What it may not do is maintain a level playing field in terms of retail price between the ‘non-net’ products of local publishers, particularly non-fiction and educational books, and those of the global conglomerates. Again, it has been argued cogently that if our concern is that people read, without concern for what they read, then the abolition of RPM, certainly in the UK, has made books available at lower prices through more retail outlets such as Tesco or online through Amazon. There is less evidence, however, to show that this has actually increased the number of active readers rather than shifting the point of purchase from booksellers to superstores and the internet. We should have a concern for what people read if we are to sustain and grow, rather than conserve and display in museums, the patchwork of distinctive cultures, histories and narratives across Europe and the rest of the world.

Supporting Publishing

When such a sermonising statement results in support for writers who express that diversity, it draws little flak; but when it results in state support for publishers, it more often provokes the criticism that it creates ‘lazy’ publishers who persist in producing a larger number of titles than the market warrants. It is true that contemporary book sales across Europe demonstrate the long tail:

most sales at any given point are generated by the top 100 titles. The remaining titles—and about 110,000 were published in the UK last year, six thousand (English-language) in Ireland—sell few copies and then over a longer period. The objections to this situation are economic, based on the presumption that publishers should only produce what most people want, presumably Dan Brown, and to a lesser extent environmental, based again on a market-led presumption that the low-selling titles will eventually be pulped rather than stored and distributed over a longer period. However, all we are describing here is increased consumer choice, the costs of which are increasingly mitigated by print-on-demand, online selling, and of course e-books. The alternative, to make available to consumers only the top 100 titles at any point, identified in advance through celebrity authorship or success elsewhere, would be to limit them to a diet of Katie Price and Niall Ferguson, Michael Palin and James Patterson—not necessarily bad in itself but relatively bland and lacking local ingredients. The interests of authors—in being published and read—and of readers—in having a wider choice—underpin the support by Creative Scotland for publishers.

The issue remains how best to offer this support. The devolution settlement that led to the re-establishment of a Scottish parliament in 1999 gave greater control over cultural policy to Scotland although, as noted above in the case of VAT, it continued to centralise the key area of fiscal regulation within the Westminster government. This led to an increasingly frenetic search for new administrative mechanisms through which a distinctive national culture could be stimulated, sustained and promoted while remaining within the restraints of that devolution settlement. The then Scottish Arts Council initiated a series of strategic reviews of different art forms, including the review of publishing from which the 2004 Report was derived; the then Scottish Executive produced a national cultural strategy; an independent but consensual Cultural Commission reported on the topic; and a Culture Bill was suspended pending the 2007 Scottish parliamentary election; its major innovation was a new funding body, Creative Scotland, which subsumed both the SAC and Scottish Screen. This was reintroduced by the new Scottish Government after much debate, changing of course, and expenditure of consultants' fees; a further Literature Working Group reported in February 2010 making recommendations affecting writers and publishers. Since 2010 Creative Scotland has invested over £700,000 in Scottish publishing; and it plans to review the Literature Sector in 2012–13 to consider again appropriate mechanisms of support.

What all contributors to the search for administrative mechanisms in Scotland share to date is a willingness to examine policies and processes within other small countries and assess the potential for the import of good practice into Scotland. The only qualification to this within a devolved government remains, as stressed earlier, the inability to use the tax regime as one of the mechanisms available to comparator nation-states.

Two countries tended to be quoted consistently: namely Ireland and Canada, given the similarities in their industry structures and the need to address issues related to dual and/or minority languages. In particular, the range of support programmes and initiatives offered to support and encourage the development of their creative, including publishing, industries were the subject of acute analysis within Scottish (overlapping) cultural and political circles. Ireland represents the closest (in all senses) analogue. There were some 100 publishers in Ireland in 2010, a fall from the 120 noted in 2004.⁷ These 100 publishers were responsible for six thousand titles, double the number of their Scottish peers, and four out of the top five served primarily indigenous educational markets. However, Irish publishers between 2007 and 2010 had reduced average prices and increased sales volume by over 1.5 million copies but received some €5 million less in sales income. That the industry in Ireland has not suffered more as a result of the recession there may be a factor of the stability of those educational, as opposed to consumer, markets. Canada has around 471 publishers for a population of 34.5 million.⁸ The publishing industry in Canada has experienced some contraction between 2007 and 2010 to a turnover of CAN\$2 billion but sales of educational titles, which accounted for 45.1 per cent of total sales in 2010, increased by 4 per cent from 2008. As in Ireland, the stability of the educational market offered a buffer against a general decline in income. The other significant factor was ownership: 69.8 per cent of Canadian publishers were Canadian-owned in 2010, a small increase over 2008, and had been showing, since 2006, a steady increase in turnover and profit margin. Exports accounted for only 11.9 per cent of sales by these Canadian publishers. They are publishers in Canada publishing for Canada.

There are other similarities between the Canadian, Scottish and Irish publishing industries in that all exist alongside larger English-language

⁷ The Booksellers Association produces a digest of statistics (2010) at <http://www.booksellers.org.uk/BookSellers/media/SiteMediaLibrary/News%26Industry/Irish-Book-Industry-Statistics.pdf>, accessed 23 October 2012. The 2004 figure comes from Sinclair et al, *A Review of Scottish Publishing*.

⁸ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/87f0004x/87f0004x2012001-eng.pdf>, accessed 23 October 2012.

publishing industries and all have other language publishing: French-language and First Nations in Canada, Gaelic and Scots in Scotland and Gaelic in Ireland. The French language has equal status with English in Canada and the fate of the French language itself is not wholly dependent on speakers in Canada, unlike the example of Scottish Gaelic where the number of speakers is in decline. Quebec publishers have a potential other market in selling to French readers in France and elsewhere, a market that is not paralleled in the Scottish or Irish Gaelic case. There is a market in producing educational French-language titles for the curriculum throughout Canada. However, government support for publishing in both Canada and Ireland is not confined to minority-language publications.

The best known of the support mechanisms in Ireland is the artists' exemption from income tax upon earnings derived from creative works of cultural merit. However, the exemption currently covers only the first €40,000 of any such earnings.⁹ Its steady reduction has been a result of the recession in Ireland and the consequent need to increase government revenue. (The publishing sector in Ireland does not receive any preferential tax status.) The emphasis upon support for artists, including writers, rather than publishers, colours much of the work of the Arts Council Ireland; in 2010 only €307,000 was spent to support publishing directly from a total budget of €68.65million.¹⁰ The Arts Council in Ireland supports publishing primarily as a means of securing a strong and stable Irish literary culture: writing for Ireland, rather than publishing in Ireland. While its financial assistance may reflect the belief that Irish writers are likely to be better served by editors in Irish publishing houses, this is not a restriction on its investment. Irish publishing suffers, however, from the same phenomenon as its Scottish neighbour: indigenous companies may nurture and develop authors but local success will bring more lucrative advances from London-based publishers. From the Arts Council's point of view, this presumably benefits Irish literature in providing it with a wider readership—as well as providing authors with a larger income. From this narrower cultural perspective, the economic consequences for the Irish publishing industry may be of less significance. Indeed, the latter's underpinning by its successful educational output may seem to balance the industry's overall books, if not those of individual companies.

⁹ <http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/reliefs/artists-exemption.html>, accessed 23 October 2012.

¹⁰ http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/Arts_Council_Annual_Report_2010.pdf, accessed 23 October 2012.

To summarise, Ireland's trade publishers, in common with their Scottish counterparts, face strong challenges from the London-based publishing industry in terms of competing for authors, for sales in the home market, and for the primary role in promoting their distinctive literary culture overseas. Ireland's particular advantage is the strength of its educational publishing base, accounting for over two-thirds of total publishers' revenues. This is in sharp contrast with the situation in Scotland where the educational publishing base has been eroded in terms of the number of companies and the lack of Scottish ownership of these companies. However, the more limited cultural ambitions of the Arts Council in Ireland contrast strongly with those, cultural and economic, of Creative Scotland – and certainly with those of the Canadian agencies involved in supporting publishing.

A recent study of support mechanisms in Canada concluded that the nationalist impetus that had driven them since the 1970s, when 70 per cent of books sold in Canada were published by foreign-owned companies, had achieved its aim in securing the dominance of Canadian-owned companies within Canada.¹¹ These mechanisms, ranging from interest-free loans to publishing houses through grants to start-up publishers to an overall Canada Book Fund (from 2009), were enacted at both Federal and Provincial levels of government. The predecessor of the Canada Book Fund, the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP) had as its aims: to offer financial aid to publishers; to make the supply chain more effective through targeted investment; to underwrite collective initiatives such as trade bodies; and to provide specific international marketing assistance. The move from this intensive support to the Canada Book Fund embodied a recognition that the Canadian-owned industry was by 2010 needing mechanisms that were more focused on stability than development (as well as reflecting the political outlook and policy of the Conservative government after the 2008 federal election). Support for publishers within the Canada Book Fund is more limited than the BPIDP in both its inward-facing scope and the funds available; it supports 'the ongoing production and promotion of Canadian-authored books through financial assistance to Canadian-owned and -controlled publishers'.¹² The Canadian government is also currently reviewing the policy on foreign investment in book publishing and distribution and it is anticipated that this

¹¹ J. Boggs, 'An Overview of Canada's Contemporary Book Trade in Light of (Nearly) Four Decades of Policy Interventions', *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 26 (2010), 24–45.

¹² <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1290024798836/1290024798838>, accessed 23 October 2012.

will lead to higher levels of foreign ownership of Canadian publishing and bookselling. The Canada Council for the Arts also ‘provides financial assistance to Canadian publishers to offset the costs of publishing Canadian trade books that make a significant contribution to the development of Canadian literature. This assistance is made available through Emerging Publisher Grants (for emerging publishers) and Block Grants (for established publishers)’.¹³ In other words, support is available only to publishers for Canada whose independence may in turn come under threat, as in Scotland, if barriers to foreign takeover are weakened or removed.

At provincial level in Canada, broader programmes of support have survived although they vary in nature and scale from province to province. In Quebec a great deal of investment has been made in the publishing industry both as an instrument of asserting cultural sovereignty—much like Scotland—and as a means of renewing the local economy that has in places been much affected by the collapse as here of traditional industries such as textiles.¹⁴ That is also an objective of the provincial government in Ontario (through the Ontario Media Development Corporation) where the chief tool is fiscal: a tax credit plan that enables publishers to gain tax credits (or cash) for eligible Canadian-authored titles.¹⁵ Funds there for marketing and digital transformation are more markedly aimed at revitalising a post-manufacturing economy. The province of New Brunswick launched a Book Policy in 2009 and has initiated support programmes for publishing to add diversity to a local economy over-dependent on tourism.¹⁶ British Columbia in the west has concentrated on supporting local publishers, including first-nation publishers, through book-purchase programmes for schools and libraries.¹⁷ All these programmes and policies to support the production, distribution and promotion of Canadian books, magazines and newspapers reflect a belief in Canada’s distinctive culture(s). They are based on the premise that Canadians must have access to Canadian voices and Canadian stories. However, the

¹³ <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/grants/writing/ap127723094273982142.htm>, accessed 23 October 2012.

¹⁴ <http://www.sodec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/programme/route/livre>, accessed 23 October 2012.

¹⁵ <http://www.omdc.on.ca/page3259.aspx> and <http://www.omdc.on.ca/Page3397.aspx>, both accessed 23 October 2012.

¹⁶ http://www.gnb.ca/0131/art_book-e.asp, accessed 23 October 2012. The Book Policy document is available from <http://www.gnb.ca/0131/pdf/a/BookPolicyE.pdf>, accessed 23 October 2012.

¹⁷ http://www.bcartsCouncil.ca/documents/guidelines/pdfs/Project%20Assistance/guidelines_title_asst_nov2011.pdf, accessed 23 October 2012.

defensiveness that characterises some of these measures is balanced by the capacity-building nature of others available to the publishing sector through a general desire to grow the creative economy in Canada. These initiatives to date (and that is an important qualification) have sustained not only publishing for Canada—a cultural mission—but also publishing in Canada—an economic one.

Conclusion

The three aspects of globalisation identified initially—increased transnational flows of media products; increased commonality of transnational culture; and increased transnational ownership—are not discrete elements but aspects of a cyclical, reinforcing process. The consolidation of publishing within media groups, through take-over, merger and integration, leads to a concentration of the book market. Such a concentration results, despite perceptions to the contrary, in a decrease in consumer choice and an increase in the commonality of transnational culture (in turn, exaggerated by the integrated marketing of a range of media products within the one group noted above). The emphasis here is not on non-Scottish (or Irish, or Canadian) ownership in itself but on the effects of that non-Scottish (Irish, Canadian) ownership. Ultimately the concern is not just with the economic vulnerability of publishing in small nations or non-indigenous ownership of the booktrade *per se* but with the effects of that upon the small nation's sense of itself, upon its cultural identity.

Increased transnational flows of books are a challenge to an open marketplace, particularly in the sense that economies of scale will nearly always enable larger publishers, with the cooperation of larger booksellers, to supplant the smaller. Government, directly or through its agencies, must then take up the responsibility for maintaining the open marketplace by preventing the development of cartels, both those that seek to dominate the entire cycle and those that operate across media; and ensuring freedom of expression for writers and a concomitant freedom of choice for readers. There is a nexus here of economic, social and cultural responsibility through which national governments must ensure diversity by applying mechanisms to fill the gap between social and cultural benefits and market viability. If, at national or regional level, governments cannot affect the power of transnationals directly, then indirectly they can counterbalance that power by privileging national and regional companies and products without infringing statutory commitments

to a free market. The chief defence of this form of intervention—in Scotland, in Ireland, and in Canada as elsewhere—is a cultural one. A commonality of transnational culture, including media integration of product development and marketing, threatens small nation linguistic and cultural diversity—to our global detriment.

Edinburgh Napier University and Loughborough University