



Cultural Industries.ca: Making Sense of Canadian Media in the Digital Age. Edited by Ira Wagman & Peter Urquhart. Toronto, ON: James Lorimer & Company, 2012. 244 pp. ISBN 9781459402737 (pbk).

For all the attention paid to cultural industries in contemporary academic and popular discourse, few books exist that attend to the specificities of Canadian cultural industries, especially as they are being transformed by the use of digital technologies. And so *Cultural Industries.ca: Making Sense of Canadian Media in the Digital Age* is a welcome text. The book is the third in a series from Lorimer that maps the landscape of Canada's cultural industries. The first, Paul Audley's *Canada's Cultural Industries*, was published in 1983. The second, *The Cultural Industries in Canada: Problems, Policies and Prospects*, edited by Michael Dorland, was published in 1996. Sixteen years later, the 2012 edition, edited by Ira Wagman and Peter Urquhart, is long overdue, and the book's twelve chapters offer an excellent survey of contemporary debates animating cultural production. The book will be an important reference for students and researchers seeking examples of how to apply critical theory to cultural industries research (see Chapter 7 by Zoë Druik and Chapter 4 by Greig de Peuter); how to do empirical and policy research (see Chapter 8 by Dwayne Winseck and Chapter 9 by Jeremy Shtern); and how to approach cultural industries research from a historical or production studies perspective (see Chapter 12 by Sandra Gabriele and Paul Moore and Chapter 10 by Oliver Côté, respectively). These are just some of the frameworks and methodologies examined.

Divided into two sections, the book offers a timely glimpse into Canadian cultural industries. The first section surveys a range of cultural industries in transition (film and television, sound recording and radio, newspapers and magazines, video games, books, and telecommunications), outlining key issues and reviewing the constitution of each of the industries, the policies that shape them, and new challenges presented by technological change. The second section offers a sampling of methodological approaches to researching cultural industries, as well as some case studies. From these chapters we learn that Canada's networked media economy is the eighth largest in the world, and that, from video games to mobile phones, corporate ownership of cultural industries remains highly concentrated. Traditional industries such as film and television persist as important sites of cultural production in Canada, but emergent digital-based industries and production practices are reshaping Canadian culture.

Notably, despite the emergence of digital technologies and new formats of cultural production, some longstanding anxieties still plague Canadian culture, including, as Michael Dorland notes in the book's foreword, notions of cultural sovereignty, the maintenance of national cultural policies amid globalization, and tensions between commercial and non-commercial culture. Publicly funded institutions such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board remain key institutions in Canadian cultural production, and, as Mark Hayward's chapter makes clear, ethnic broadcasting plays an important, if overlooked, role in Canadian cultural industries. Such continuities in key institutions and anxieties about Canadian culture indi-

cate that Canadian cultural industries in the digital age should be understood, as Druik's chapter title suggests, through notions of continuity amid change.

The changes are notable. New technologies mean that large US-based companies such as Apple, Amazon, and Netflix are reconfiguring Canadian cultural industries, yet remain outside of national regulatory scope and challenge the policy apparatus established to foster the development of Canadian culture. Emergent industries, such as the video game industry, are financed by state subsidies, which are given to massive multinational corporations and are deeply integrated into global finance capital and requires different scales of analysis. Companies and issues that receive only a brief mention in the book—such as Amazon and the spread of precarious employment, for example—will continue to pressure Canadian cultural industries in coming years, indicating the ongoing need for up-to-date research.

The strongest chapters engage directly with the political and economic shifts that have shaped Canadian cultural production, including post-Fordist capitalism and the free-market forces of neoliberalism. Amid this broader context, new pressures are placed on long-standing tensions underpinning Canadian cultural industries: is culture a commodity or a public good, or both? How should policy regulate in this area—open cultural industries to foreign ownership or maintain national oligopolies? And should Canadian culture continue to be discussed in a framework of underdevelopment and cultural sovereignty, or as capitalist industries enjoying enormous profits and high profiles, often at the expense of the people who produce culture: workers, artists, and citizens? As Wagman and Urquhart note in the book's introduction, previous frameworks for understanding Canadian culture have not begun "with the recognition that the providers of Canadian software, television, radio and so on are commercial operations whose *raison d'être* is to generate profit" (p. 12). While the production of Canadian culture is shaped by nationalist policy and artistic impulse, it is at the same time propelled by competitive, for-profit entities that compete on a global level.

This insight is applied unevenly throughout the book's chapters. The strongest chapters confront the power relations and processes that shape the production of culture, including de Peuter's survey of Canada's video game industry, Druik's theoretical examination of the discourse and politics of cultural industries, and Daniel Paré's outline of the implications of liberalization in Canadian telecommunications. In other instances, cultural industries are presented as static, rather than as marked by tensions and contradictions that spur transformation. Cultural industries in Canada are ongoing sites of contestation. Representing industries as being "fixed" serves to sideline the processes and conflicts that constitute cultural production, leaving "success" to be measured by profits alone. In his discussion of magazine publishing, for example, Christopher Dornan usefully reviews the important challenges that American magazine publishing has historically posed to Canada's domestic magazine industry, but overlooks a major site of contestation that is emerging as magazines transition into digital age: large publishers and freelance writers—who provide most magazines' content—are battling over wages and copyright terms that will shape the character of magazine publishing for years to come. In general, the book pays very little attention to working conditions and to those who produce Canadian culture, therefore giving the impression at times that

the state and large corporations are the only actors in the cultural sphere. Also missing are the perspectives of Quebec's cultural industries, alternative and literary cultural production, and attention to social relations of gender, class, and race (apart from Hayward's valuable contribution on ethnic broadcasting). While *Cultural Industries.ca: Making Sense of Canadian Media in the Digital Age* is an excellent resource for those working, researching, and teaching in this area, the book's omissions point to the need for further and ongoing research on Canadian cultural industries.

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