demonological treatises composed at Arras in the penumbra of the trials distinguished this “new sect” of devil-worshipping witches from the anticlerical, Bible-reading, preaching followers of Pierre Valdes (see Andrew Gow et al. trans and eds., *The Arras Witch Treatises*, College Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2016).

The great strength of Vervoort’s volume — aside from the 121 superb full-colour and black-and-white illustrations — is her insistence on reporting on the very latest scholarship and her firm command of the major issues in scholarly debates. She is also extraordinarily good at explicating complex, layered imagery in what might seem, at first glance, to be quite familiar images. This is a pleasant book on a most unpleasant topic.

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Elaine Dewar, *The Handover: How Bigwigs and Bureaucrats Transferred Canada’s Best Publisher and the Best Part of Our Literary Heritage to a Foreign Multinational* (Windsor, ON: Biblioasis, 2017), 381 pp. \$29.95 (cloth) ISBN 9781771961110

In 2011, Random House took control of McClelland & Stewart (M&S), arguably Canada’s most prominent publisher. Admittedly, Avie Bennett, who purchased M&S from Jack McClelland in 1985, paved the path for foreign control in 2000 when he sold 25 percent of the shares of M&S to Random House and donated the remaining 75 percent to the University of Toronto (U of T). Controlling shares in the company remained Canadian until 2011, when U of T deemed their shares worthless and transferred them to Random House. Elaine Dewar’s exposé of the minutiae of this eleven-year-long business transaction, *The Handover*, has garnered significant public attention, perhaps best evidenced by Roy MacSkimming’s 9 June 2017 review in the *Globe and Mail* and Elaine Dewar’s 14 July 2017 appearance on CBC Radio’s *The Current*. *The Handover*, published by independent publisher Biblioasis, posits that Avie Bennett used a “salami strategy” to circumnavigate Canadian cultural policy and transfer an iconic Canadian publisher into foreign hands (236).

Dewar utilizes a creative non-fiction approach to recount the process by which she slowly uncovers Avie Bennett’s motives for

donating a publishing company to a university, particularly the \$15,900,000 tax credit he received for this gift (199). She is not a disinterested journalist, admitting she published three projects with Random House (35), and she is not a dispassionate journalist, admitting that the paper trail leaves her both sad and mad. While she claims ambivalence towards the unravelling of protectionist policy, she expresses nostalgia for a previous time in the Canadian cultural landscape, explaining that she is trying to pinpoint “when Canadian book publishing began to collapse on itself like an origami version of a black hole” (39).

Despite the hyperbolic language, which positions the book as an exposé of a scandalous business transaction, *The Handover* offers impressive new research. This includes descriptions of interviews Dewar conducted with Avie Bennett (past chairman and owner of M&S), Doug Gibson (former publisher and president of M&S), Robert Prichard (former President of U of T), Ron Scott (a business valuator who consulted on the value of M&S’s shares), and Jack Stoddart (former distributor of Canadian independent publishers through General Distribution). It also contains detailed descriptions of documents Dewar obtained through two separate requests for information from U of T’s *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) office. Thirty pages of endnotes and a twenty-page bibliography ensure future researchers can locate the numerous documents Dewar employs to make her case.

Moreover, Dewar illuminates the ways in which the *Investment Canada Act*, which regulates the acquisition of Canadian businesses, including publishing houses by non-Canadians; the Department of Canadian Heritage, which “hands out \$39.5 million a year to 235 Canadian publishers”; and the Canada Council, which grants another “\$19 million” (76) to the industry, work together to support Canadian authors and publishers. For the eleven-year period in which U of T held the majority of M&S shares, M&S received almost seven million dollars in grants from national and provincial organizations, not including tax credits (77). Dewar’s moral outrage stems from her belief that while U of T controlled M&S on paper, which ensured the publisher qualified for these grants, Random House controlled marketing, distribution, and finances, which proves they were actually in control of the company. In fact, Dewar accuses U of T and Random House of propagating a shell game to funnel Canadian grants towards a foreign company, while championing Avie Bennett as a philanthropist dedicated to promoting Canadian publishing.

This is just one accusation in a longer string of finger-pointing: from former Minister of Canadian Heritage Sheila Copps for blessing the business transaction to Bertelsmann, which owns Penguin Random House, for its often-hidden history of publishing propaganda for the Nazi State (65).

In addition to concern over how Random House acquired M&S, Dewar defends her general anxiety about monopsony in Canadian publishing. Random House controls 32 percent of the Canadian book-trade market (16), which puts them in the position to “drive down advances” to writers (103). Worrisomely, Brad Martin, the president of Penguin Random House (PRH), is not “interested in a book that is going to generate less than \$100,000 in revenues” (112). This ambition has dire consequences in a market like Canada, Dewar highlights, since “the average paperback priced at \$20 would need to sell 9,000 copies”; however, sales of “1500 [copies] are high for Canadian fiction” (113). These concrete figures — and the book has lots of them — render audible to a general audience the challenges of Canadian publishing: the population is too small to create a strong national market, and the country neighbours the largest cultural exporter in the world.

The Handover excels in investigative journalism. Perhaps most impressively, it opens the world of Canadian publishing to a general reader through its colourful character sketches of Canadian cultural figures. However, the book has a distinct weaknesses: Dewar claims she is conflicted about the global turn not just in publishing, but politics more broadly, whereas she clearly prefers Canadian ownership to foreign conglomerates. She mourns cultural nationalism, claiming it was “Pierced in secret, left to bleed, smothered by silence” (284). In using the sale of M&S to discuss the moment when “Canadian publishing went into the tank” (259), Dewar blatantly favours protectionist cultural policy, but for some strange reason refuses to claim this position. Nevertheless, *The Handover* speaks to a broad audience: from those who have always wondered how much an author makes on the sale of a novel, to those who closely follow the Canadian publishing landscape.

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