

Notes From The Underground:
A Case Study of *subTerrain*

by

Nitant Narang

B.A., University of Mumbai, 2011

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Publishing

in the

Publishing Program

Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology

© Nitant Narang, 2015

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Fall 2015

Creative Commons CC-BY

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Approval

Name: Nitant Narang
Degree: Master of Publishing
Title: *Notes From The Underground:
A Case Study of subTerrain*

Supervisory Committee:

John Maxwell
Senior Supervisor
Director and Associate Professor,
Publishing Program

Leanne Johnson
Supervisor
Visiting Professor,
Publishing Program

Brian Kaufman
Industry Supervisor
Publisher, *subTerrain*

Date Approved: December 18, 2015

Abstract

In 2015, *subTerrain* celebrated its 27th anniversary. What began as a small, obscure publication has over the course of the last three decades evolved into a prominent magazine with a distinctive voice in the Canadian literary landscape. This report considers *subTerrain*'s challenges in ensuring a steady supply of government funding and the impact of the introduction of the Canada Periodical Fund on literary magazines. This report makes the case that *subTerrain* has grown in readership and relevance by cultivating a vibrant community of writers and offering them an alternative and attractive space to publish experimental and progressive work. Finally, it examines the magazine's ongoing attempts to augment itself for online consumption.

Keywords: *subTerrain*; literary magazine; Canada Periodical Fund; writing contests;
Line Break

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Brian Kaufman for giving me an opportunity to intern at *subTerrain* and for letting me share the magazine's fascinating journey. I would also like to express my gratitude to my supervisor John Maxwell for his constant encouragement and patient assessment of this report. A special thanks to Leanne Johnson for her help and insights in making this report more coherent and readable.

Table of Contents

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. What is <i>subTerrain</i>?	4
A Vital Space for Underground Writers	4
A Community of Readers and Writers.....	8
Chapter 2. CPF and the Uncertainties of Funding.....	17
Chapter 3. Challenges and Comebacks	24
Chapter 4. <i>subTerrain</i> in the Digital Age.....	28
subterrain.ca	28
<i>Line Break</i> , an Online Experiment in Art and Poetry	31
Chapter 5. Conclusion.....	38
Works Cited	42

Introduction

In 2014, British novelist Will Self wrote a highly contentious article in *The Guardian*. Titled *The novel is dead (this time it's for real)*, the article argued that the literary genre of the novel was rapidly losing its readership and would soon be reduced to the same rarified space that is permitted to classical music or easel painting.¹ Let's just assume that Self's prognosis is correct; if the literary novel is losing steam, then what of the fate of literary magazines?

Consider the challenges of running literary magazines: limitations of resources and manpower, funding woes, limited readerships, and a small but saturated market forever bristling with closures of old publications alongside launches of new ones; these conditions aren't recent but have dogged the industry for a long time. And so it's natural to ask how literary magazines sustain themselves at all?

To answer the question, it is essential to examine the motivations of starting a literary magazine, the role it plays in purveying and shaping contemporary literature, and how it performs this role. This paper will delve into various facets of *subTerrain*, a Vancouver-based literary magazine, to formulate answers to these questions.

In 2015, *subTerrain* celebrated its 27th anniversary. What began as a small, obscure publication has over the course of the last three decades evolved into a prominent magazine with a distinctive voice in the Canadian literary landscape. Its long history of publish-

¹ Will Self, "The novel is dead (this time it's for real)", *The Guardian*, May 2, 2014

ing—longer than that of other contemporary magazines of repute such as *Geist* and *Broken Pencil*—has turned out award-winning covers, stories, poems and brought a long list of writers and poets to the attention of book publishers and Canadian readers.

Between April and September 2015, I spent nearly four months interning at *subTerrain*. From evaluating submissions to assisting in *subTerrain*'s social media operations, I took on a variety of small roles in bringing out the magazine's September issue. My experience working at the magazine and my interactions with its team sparked my interest in identifying the decisive factors that guided *subTerrain*'s rise to prominence and in studying the magazine's ongoing attempts to augment itself for online consumption.

I was privileged to work with Brian Kaufman, founder of *subTerrain*; Natasha Sanders-Kay, its managing editor; Shazia Hafiz Ramji, who managed *Line Break*, *subTerrain*'s blog of art and poetry. Using their insights and observations, as well as my own experience, I will make the case that *subTerrain* has grown in readership and relevance by cultivating a vibrant community of writers and offering them an alternative and attractive space to publish experimental and progressive work. This paper is divided into five parts:

Chapter 1 attempts to answer the fundamental question: What is *subTerrain*? It delves into the magazine's publishing mission, its roots, its personality and its role as a vital space for underground writers. This chapter makes the case that *subTerrain* has successfully built an abiding and engaged readership by organizing a series of writing contests. Through these contests, *subTerrain* has catalyzed aspiring writers and engendered a community of writers and poets who constitute a significant part of the magazine's readership.

Chapter 2 surveys the precarious environment for literary magazines that was obtained after Canadian Heritage dissolved the Publishing Assistance Program (PAP), a long-running postal subsidy program, and the Canada Magazine Fund (CMF) in 2009, before replacing them with the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) that effectively rendered many magazines ineligible for postal subsidy.

Chapter 3 looks at *subTerrain*'s constant attempts to meet CPF's stringent criterion to qualify for postal subsidy. It also looks at the magazine's challenges in ensuring a steady supply of government funds. Further, it examines the magazine's revenue channels and its recent growth in newsstand sales.

Chapter 4 offers an antidote to the uncertainties in government funding highlighted in the preceding chapters. This chapter looks at *subTerrain*'s web presence (www.subterrain.ca) and examines the magazine's ambitious plans to revamp its website. By examining online opportunities to capitalize on its archive and *Line Break*, *subTerrain*'s online experiment in building a nascent community of poetry readers, this chapter considers alternative avenues that can be useful in boosting *subTerrain*'s readership and expanding its sphere of cultural influence.

Chapter 5 summarizes the aforementioned challenges of running a literary magazine like *subTerrain* and the ways in which it can face these challenges. This chapter revisits the onerous tasks of maintaining a steady supply of government funding for a niche, literary enterprise and how the opportunities wrought by the growth of digital reading can be a hedge against its reliance on government funding. Above all, it looks at *subTerrain*'s continued efforts in producing a quality literary product and considers what the future holds for the magazine.

Chapter 1. What is *subTerrain*?

A Vital Space for Underground Writers

“*subTerrain* has been essential in guiding me to some of the country’s most impressive new voices.”²
– Michael Holmes, editor, ECW Press

It’s impossible to talk about *subTerrain*’s inception without first examining its founder-publisher Brian Kaufman’s motivations in starting the magazine or its “origins and intents.”³ In media kits and press releases, the magazine brands itself as “outlaw literature”⁴, which, as a descriptor of the nature of its content, coheres with its title—*subTerrain*. As such, the word subterrain does not figure in the Oxford Dictionary; rather, it’s a coinage often used in construction work. Brian saw fit to use it as the magazine’s title as it was evocative of the magazine’s place which was, in relation to the prominence of the more institutional literary periodicals of the time, subterranean.

In an interview with *ABC Bookworld*, Brian stated that *subTerrain* came about as a reaction to the prevalence of these older and sedate literary publications, which were dominated by university professors who, acting as canonical gatekeepers, gave little attention

² *subTerrain* (website), “Nice Things Other People Have Said”

³ Brian Kaufman, “A Few Thoughts On subTerrain’s Origins and Intent”, *subTerrain*, Feb 15, 2008

⁴ Magazine Association of BC characterizes *subTerrain*’s content as “outlaw literature”, <http://www.bcmags.com/magazines/subterrain>

to the interests of younger readers like Brian and his friends who were more keen on progressive and experimental writing by new and obscure writers.⁵

“I wanted something that was in your face—gritty, edgy, something that was a bit rough around the edges, something more ‘street’ than what I was seeing out there in the majority of lit-mags/journals.”⁶ This position was taken by the magazine with the subtitle *Strong Words For a Polite Nation* in its later issues.

The first issue of *subTerrain* was published in the summer of 1988. By any yardstick, its production quality was by no means comparable to its later issues. Rather its look and quality were more DIY than professional. Desktop publishing had only just begun to democratize the means of publication and, armed with only a crash course in typesetting, Brian bought a PC and went to work on the first issue. When it hit the stands in August, it was, for the price of \$2, no thicker than 12 pages comprising a total of eight contributions—stories and poems which were for the most part solicited from friends and acquaintances (Brian, himself, contributed one of the stories).

Clearly, the incipient publication was not conceived as a profit-seeking enterprise; in fact, Brian had scarcely made any marketing, demographic, distribution or other business-related considerations before putting out the first issue. Contributors were paid in the form of a handful of copies and issues were parcelled out to bookshops and other establishments in person. The impetus behind the first issue was to make the editorial collective’s voice heard, an objective that could be achieved only by publication; any concerns about the magazine’s economic viability were secondary and did not receive any consideration until later.

⁵ *ABC Bookworld*, Brian Kaufman’s interview

⁶ Brian Kaufman, personal interview, July 2015

However, with subsequent issues, it became clear that the magazine needed external funding. By then, Brian had become more acquainted with industry practices and realized that he would have to turn the magazine into a non-profit so that it could qualify for provincial art funding. In year two of its operation, *subTerrain* was turned into a non-profit.

From the start, *subTerrain*'s *raison d'être* was the creation of an alternative space for literature that was being discounted by bigger and established magazines. *subTerrain*'s endeavour was to fill a void in the Canadian literary landscape. Over the years, it has succeeded in carving and consolidating a niche readership for experimental writing.

In the long roster of writers published by *subTerrain*, Mark Jarman, Grant Buday, Nadia Bozak, Craig Davidson and Stuart Ross figure prominently. These distinguished writers have gone on to secure book contracts with prominent publishers, including Penguin, Random House, House of Anansi, and won highly coveted awards and international acclaim. Mark Jarman was published during the magazine's early years before his book of short stories was nominated for the O. Henry Prize. Craig Davidson's short story for *subTerrain* was included in the *Journey Prize Stories, 2005*,⁷ around eight years before his novel was nominated for the Scotiabank Giller Prize.⁸ Similarly, Stuart Ross, a veteran writer from Toronto's literary scene, wrote a highly popular column called *Mondo Hunkamoog* for the magazine for over 12 years.

These writers, among several others featured by the magazine in its long record of publication, were being championed by *subTerrain* long before their talents were recognized by publishing houses. According to Brian, "We were publishing some fine writers, many of whom were not yet very well known...I like to think we know the good writers when

⁷ Find mention of *Failure To Thrive*, Craig Davidson's short story for *subTerrain*, which was included in the *The Journey Prize Stories: From the Best of Canada's New Writers*, Volume 16

⁸ Simon Houpt, "Giller Prize short list announced", *The Globe And Mail*, Oct 8, 2013

we read them.”⁹ *subTerrain* was thus instrumental in bringing influential voices in Canadian literary fiction out of obscurity, and bringing their work to focus before major publishing houses in the country.

In 2014, Brian received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Western Magazine Awards Foundation.¹⁰ On the occasion, Margaret Reynolds, executive director of the Association of Book Publishers of BC, noted:

*Brian has been responsible for launching the careers of a new breed of writers and artists onto the literary scene in Vancouver and indeed the rest of the country. Emerging and experimental writers have benefitted from Brian's guidance and support, many of whom have gone on to win their own awards and to secure book publishing contracts.*¹¹

subTerrain's record of cultivating emerging writers comes from a history of building an abiding relationship with its writers and Brian's role as a guide to writers of obscure work, which doesn't easily lend itself to a market. A significant factor in this abiding relationship is Anvil Press, which was founded by Brian a year after *subTerrain* was launched. According to Brian, "We would often receive stories from writers that we would get to know and publish a few times and then as their work built, we'd often end up publishing them through Anvil Press." Indeed, both Mark Jarman and Stuart Ross had their books published with Anvil Press after their works appeared in *subTerrain*. Nearly all of the writers mentioned above continue to write for *subTerrain*. And more recently, Anvil Press published Madeline Sonik, Annette Lapointe, W. Mark Giles and Gary Barwin—writers whose work came to Anvil Press' attention through their submissions to *subTerrain*.

⁹ Brian Kaufman, personal interview, July 2015

¹⁰ Magazines Canada (website), "subTerrain's Brian Kaufman Receives Lifetime Achievement Award", Sept 15, 2014

¹¹ Ibid

A Community of Readers and Writers

“*Descant* is a community. It’s not just a magazine.”¹²
— Karen Mulhallen, former editor-in-chief, *Descant*

“Because they give new writers hope!”¹³
— Jenny Penberthy, *The Capilano Review*,
on the importance of little magazines

As this paper had argued earlier, *subTerrain* has proven itself to be crucial in the discovery of new writers and in bringing them to the attention of book publishers who subscribe to literary magazines to spot new talent. Small literary magazines¹⁴ predating *subTerrain* have been indispensable in cultivating new writers and been the stepping stones to the canonization of such writers. Canada’s literary magazines were instrumental in launching the careers of writers who have, in the course of the last few decades, become part of the Canadian pantheon. Writers such as Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro and Michael Ondaatje had their earliest writings published in literary magazines. As Mark Medley, former Books Editor at *National Post*, writes, “They [literary magazines] are where most major writers get their start.”¹⁵

It’s clear that *subTerrain* and other magazines of its ilk perform a service to publishers and literary agents by separating the wheat from the chaff of submissions streaming into their mailboxes. But literary magazines also make another contribution that is instructive in understanding their vital role in culture.

¹² Mark Medley, “Literary journals: The writers' sandbox”, *National Post*, Jan 24, 2009

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ I use the word “small” in accordance with Magazines Canada which applies the term to those publications that sell under 10,000 copies annually.

Magazines Canada, “How to Start a Magazine”

¹⁵ Mark Medley, “Literary journals: The writers' sandbox”, *National Post*, Jan 24, 2009

In his foreword to *We All Begin in a Literary Magazine*, an anthology of poems from *Arc Poetry Magazine*, John Barton, the former co-editor of the eponymous magazine, writes, “Any literary magazine is emphatically about the new work of the authors it publishes and the recent books it reviews.”¹⁶ By curating the “new”, literary magazines influence and shape contemporary trends, conversations and notions about literature. Unlike the academy which is pre-occupied with works that have already acquired a reputation to deserve a critical study, a literary magazine is the first to chronicle the changing face of literature and occupies a rare position where it can stimulate a conversation about the contemporary state of literature among its readers.

And in purveying the new, the undiscovered and the obscure, small literary magazines play a crucial role. In one of its earliest issues, *Broken Pencil* made the case that little magazines with fewer readers have a lot more to say about what’s going on in the local and cultural spheres of Canada than bigger ones that enjoy higher readerships.¹⁷ Magazines of this stripe are thus subscribed by readers because they provide them with a vantage point that looks over literary and cultural niches existing beyond the horizons of mainstream media.

And so it’s fitting that literary publishers, particularly independent publishers, would not only want to see their books reviewed in literary magazines but excerpted on its pages as well. Over the years, *subTerrain* has occasionally excerpted upcoming books from a range of publishers. The magazine’s September 2015 (#71) issue carries extracts from upcoming books by four independent publishers. *subTerrain* provides smaller publishers a vital space to introduce their books to its readers who tend to be receptive to unknown, emerging voices and evince an engagement with contemporary CanLit. For example, in a

¹⁶ Arc Poetry Society, *We All Begin in a Little Magazine: And the Promise of Canada's Poets 1978-1998*, Carleton University Press, 1998

¹⁷ *Broken Pencil* (blog), “US needs help selling mags in Canada”

recent survey of *subTerrain*'s readership, 80.92% of respondents agreed that they valued the magazine because it was a Canadian literary magazine.

Smaller literary publishers stand little chance of having their titles excerpted in bigger magazines such as *The New Yorker* or *The Atlantic* or competing with the promotional and marketing machinery of bigger, multinational publishers. But *subTerrain* offers audience reach, free promotion and, in doing so, connects indie literature to its most likely readers; this holds up in *subTerrain*'s survey—45.6% of respondents answered that they occasionally buy books either excerpted, advertised, or reviewed in the magazine.

According to Natasha Sanders-Kay, *subTerrain*'s managing editor, this augurs well for business as well—book publishers may book ads in the magazine if they find that the strategy has generated more publicity for the book and amounted to an increase in sales.¹⁸ And more importantly for small presses, *subTerrain* lends its sheen and authority to these books which, in effect, may pique the interest of the magazine readers. But, the expectation that readers would be more suggestible to books that bear *subTerrain*'s imprimatur begs the fundamental question—Why? To answer this, it is essential to look at how *subTerrain* came to acquire and build a lasting readership.

There are several factors behind the rise in *subTerrain*'s readership since its inception 27 years ago. According to Brian, for the first few years, single copy sales were mostly confined to Vancouver. Sales picked up significantly after *subTerrain* became a member of Canadian Magazine Publishers Association (now Magazines Canada, the national trade association for magazines) that offered direct-to-retail newsstand distribution. “This also proved to us that there was a much larger audience for *subTerrain* than we thought.”¹⁹ The introduction of online commerce to *subTerrain*'s website, which was fairly recent

¹⁸ Natasha Sanders-Kay, personal interview, August, 2015

¹⁹ Brian Kaufman, personal interview, July 2015

(2010-11), helped in increasing the number of subscriptions. The system allowed visitors to purchase or renew subscriptions, and led to a substantial increase in the magazine's reader base. According to Brian, "That was an eye-opener, the subscriptions starting showing up on a regular basis ... so that was a painful lesson—to realize how many subs we had probably been missing."²⁰ But these were only logistical improvements that made the most of *subTerrain*'s hitherto unrealized potential to attract more readers. A more crucial factor behind *subTerrain*'s accumulation of its readership was a series of initiatives that it has undertaken over the years.

In *We All Begin in a Literary Magazine*, John Barton quotes a character from the eponymous short story by Canadian writer Norman Levine in which a character says, "We used to send our stories, optimistically, to the *New Yorker* and the *Atlantic*. But that was like taking a ticket in the lottery. It was the little magazines who published us, who gave us encouragement and kept us going."

This particular quote aptly encapsulates *subTerrain*'s relationship to its writers. The magazine serves its contributors not just by virtue of being a special platform for unestablished writers and, by paying for their work, but by making special efforts to encourage and incentivize their efforts.

From the early '90s, the magazine began holding writing contests starting with The Penny Dreadful Campaign for short stories and The Last Poems Contest for poetry. These contests encouraged budding writers to send in submissions for consideration for prize money and a chance for their work to be featured in the magazine. For much of its publishing history, *subTerrain* has brought several writers to its fold with its writing contests. Brian, who has been overseeing the 3-Day-Novel, an internationally-known writing contest, for close to two decades, has been a relentless proponent of writing contests. And,

²⁰ Ibid

despite what are generally considered to be their drawbacks, such as the compulsory entry fee, Brian believes that they are valuable in nurturing, remunerating writers and engendering a literary community.

In an opinion piece for *Magazines Canada*, he wrote, “A contest or writing ‘award’ is a great way to promote your magazine while reaching out to a larger audience of potential new readers and writers. Contests are a means of enlarging your literary community. In the process of running a contest, you will have inspired the creative act of writing, put some money into the hands of a few worthy writers and provided the thrill and reward of publication to the winner.”²¹

It’s a proverbial observation that the field of literary writing is grossly underpaid in proportion to the effort it exacts from its practitioners. For a large section of writers labouring away at the solitary desk, the vaunted book deal or the coveted inclusion in the likes of *The New Yorker* or *The Paris Review* is a statistical improbability. Writing contests offer them a chance at obtaining some degree of prestige and money, as well as recognition from the literary fraternity.

Winners receive publicity upon the announcement of the results; they are interviewed and profiled by other literary magazines in Canada and gain more visibility which bodes well for their future writing projects. But, for *subTerrain*, these writing contests are an opportunity to forge bonds with the participants by engaging them in a common, collective endeavour. These efforts have, over the long run, yielded a small community of writers, poets and readers who have become a vital part of *subTerrain*’s readership.

And these contests have consolidated the magazine’s readership not only in Canada but also south of the border. For example, at the moment, *subTerrain* has over 100 subscrib-

²¹ Brian Kaufman, “Defending Literary Contests”, *Magazines Canada*, 2006

ers in the US.²² More importantly, almost 43% of visitors to *subTerrain*'s website were located in the USA. According to Brian, *subTerrain* gained a foothold south of the border largely because of the popularity of the Penny Dreadful Contest and the Last Poem Contest. "We would promote/publicize those contests far and wide. Also, the *Writers' Markets* reference guides list you, word travels and listings appear all over the place; so it helps," says Brian.

The Penny Dreadful Contest and the Last Poem Contest were discontinued in the early 2000s. In their place, the magazine began the annual Lush Triumphant Literary Awards which accepted submissions for all three genres—short stories, poetry and non-fiction—under one banner, with a separate cash prize reserved for each category. This made the process of reviewing the submissions more streamlined and time-efficient because it allowed *subTerrain* to accept submissions across genres collectively, instead of organizing separate contests for prose and poetry. Now in its 13th year, the Lush Triumphant Literary Awards offers \$3,000 in cash prizes split among three categories: Fiction, Poetry and Creative Non-fiction.

It is industry practice to charge entrants a submission fee; like other literary magazines holding writing contests, *subTerrain* provides participants with a free one year subscription in exchange for the entry fee. With \$27.50 as the fee, this model not only allows the magazine to raise its subscriber base but to interest these writers in *subTerrain*'s content and its role as a cultural institution; more importantly, it allows the magazine to co-opt these writers as participants into *subTerrain*'s community.

This community that *subTerrain* has built is bounded by a shared interest in the magazine's content and in writing itself. According to Natasha, a large part of the magazine's readership comprises those who are either directly or indirectly involved with writing in a

²² Natasha Sanders-Kay, personal interview, August, 2015

professional capacity.²³ This holds up in *subTerrain*'s survey; 84% of the respondents consider themselves to be writers.

And, if there's any proof that these writing contests succeeded in creating a new readership for the magazine, it's to be found in *subTerrain*'s survey in which close to 33% of respondents said that they had submitted their entries to Lush at least once. Moreover, going by the survey, it's safe to say that *subTerrain*'s readers tend to be pro-active and participative actors of its community—around 43% said that they had sent their writing to the magazine at least once. Given these survey findings and the literary nature of the magazine's content, it can be said conclusively that *subTerrain*'s readers have a predilection for works that can be bundled under the rubric of literary writing. But, more importantly, it can be inferred that an overwhelming number of these readers are themselves writers.

That writers would make up a substantial portion of a literary magazine's readership is hardly surprising. As Mark Medley's *National Post* story points out, the target audience for *Descant* "is mainly writers"²⁴. This seems to be an industry-wide pattern; publishers of literary magazines recognize it and many provide complementary copies to creative writing programs in order to find new readers among writing students.

But, the fact that a majority (84%) of *subTerrain*'s readers self-identify as writers turns up interesting insights upon comparison with the readership data of other Canadian lit mags. *Brick*, another literary magazine of long standing, claims that 40% of its readers are writers.²⁵ Whereas the case of *Grain Magazine*, a Saskatchewan-based literary quar-

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Mark Medley, "Literary journals: The writers' sandbox", *National Post*, Jan 24, 2009

²⁵ Media Kit, *Brick*

terly that was founded in 1973, is closer to *subTerrain*'s, with over 80% of its readers being themselves writers.²⁶

A crucial difference between *subTerrain* and *Brick* is that the latter does not hold an annual writing contest. Not surprisingly, *Grain Magazine* does—a short story contest that is now in its 27th year.²⁷ This raises important questions: Seeing as participation in both the Lush and Penny Dreadful writing contests came with a free one-year subscription to the magazine, would *subTerrain* have had a smaller portion of writers among its readers if it hadn't conducted these contests? Conversely, would *Brick* have more writers among its readers if it had made conscious attempts to organize writing contests?

Granted, the wide gap between the percentage of writers within *subTerrain*'s readership (84%) and that of *Brick* (40% of readers) cannot be explained by writing contests alone since there are many more variables at play. But, this data makes a strong case for the utility of writing contests. *subTerrain* was doubtless able to turn its writing contestants into subscribers and this is a crucial reason why its readership is predominated by writers and, more importantly, why the number of *subTerrain* readers continues to grow.

Lush's popularity is growing: compared to its 2014 figures, the number of Lush submissions nearly doubled in 2015. It's difficult to nail down precisely why there was such a precipitative rise in the number of entries. But the spike may have resulted from more vigorous promotional efforts on the magazine's social media channels, along with a higher number of swap ads (both online and off-line) in other literary magazines. Additionally, this year, Brian doubled the print-run of postcards advertising the contest; consequently, they were circulated more widely across local libraries, cafes, museums and educational institutions with creative writing and publishing departments. But while it does in-

²⁶ Advertising Section, *Grain Magazine*'s website

²⁷ *Grain Magazine*, "Grain Magazine's 28th Annual Short Grain Writing Contest"

crease its subscription numbers, Lush does not directly increase the magazine's revenue; rather, a large part of the money obtained by accepting entry fees is expended in offsetting the cost of marketing the contest. That is why *subTerrain* is currently seeking sponsorships for Lush in the hopes of both organizing the contest on a larger scale and ensuring that it does not have to dig into its own finances to meet its costs.

Chapter 2. CPF and the Uncertainties of Funding

In January 2015, *Descant*, which was widely held to be one of the most significant literary magazines in Canada, published its final issue. Started as a mimeograph in 1970, before gaining national and international prestige as an eminent magazine of literature and arts, *Descant* folded after publishing for 44 years.²⁸ That a prominent magazine, with a long history of publishing literary stalwarts such as Margaret Atwood and Michael Ondaatje,²⁹ would fold was seen as an indubitable affirmation that the terrain of Canadian periodical publishing was more uncertain than ever.

Although the discontinuation of the magazine was perceived as a blow to Canada's literary firmament, the news, according to sundry publishers, was hardly surprising. The alarm bells for literary magazines started ringing as early as 2009 when James Moore, the minister of Canadian Heritage, replaced the Publishing Assistance Program (PAP) and Canada Magazine Fund (CMF) with the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF).

The notion that changes in government funding have a fateful effect on the sustainability of magazines becomes comprehensible upon considering the long history of government funding and postal subsidies which began to be doled out to Canadian periodicals in the middle of the 19th Century.

²⁸ Deborah Dundas, "Descant literary journal folds after 44 years", *The Toronto Star*, Dec 11, 2014

²⁹ Magazines Awards (blog), "Farewell, *Descant*", December 2014

Postal subsidies were first granted to periodical publishers after the passage of the Post Office Act, 1849. Since then, periodical publishers in Canada have been accustomed to one or more forms of government funding to support their operation. Until 1990, the eligibility criteria for postal subsidies were not restrictive and the government did not discriminate between controlled-circulation or subscription-based magazines. By 1990, however, postal subsidy funding was reduced by 50% and stricter conditions were put in place — notably, foreign publications were excluded from funding.³⁰

The administration of these subsidies—commonly referred to as the Postal Subsidy Program—used to be within the purview of Canada Post but, in 1996, the newly created Department of Canadian Heritage took over the task of deciding on the eligibility of applicant magazines and the amount of subsidy to be allotted.

As mentioned earlier, the CPF replaced its predecessor PAP and CMF in 2009. Out of the two, PAP's funding was substantially bigger—for example, in 2006-07, PAP stood at \$60 million while the CMF totalled \$16 million.³¹ But, as it happens, PAP did not exist until 1998. In fact, the age-old Postal Subsidy Program was transformed into PAP in reaction to developments entirely outside the control of the federal government: the 1994 amendment of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT 1994) which turned GATT into a legal institution—the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Only a few months after Canadian Heritage took over the reins of the Postal Subsidy Program, the United States Government filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO) arguing that the Crown Corporation's preferential mailing rates for Canadian periodicals were in contravention of GATT 1994. A WTO panel ruled against Canada because Canada Post was being recompensed for the discounted rates by receiving the

³⁰ Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, *Publications Assistance Program, 1998-99 Activity Report*, 1999

³¹ Chris Powell, "Changes Coming For Canadian Magazine Funding", *Marketing* magazine, Jan 28, 2008

subsidy amounts from Canadian Heritage. In the *Canadian Parliament Review*, Dennis Browne, former director of the Centre for Trade Policy and Law at Carleton University, wrote:

*The WTO panel found the postal subsidy paid by the government to Canada Post to be a permissible domestic production subsidy, but the appeals panel disallowed it by determining that for any such subsidy to qualify as a domestic production subsidy, it should be paid directly to the publishers rather than through Canada Post.*³²

To satisfy WTO and still be able to support Canadian periodicals, the government of Canada introduced PAP. Under PAP, Canadian Heritage decided to subsidize publishers directly; it did this by crediting subsidy amounts for each of the eligible periodicals into their respective Canada Post accounts. Under PAP, these subsidies were directly applied to the publishers' postal bills.³³

Given their long history of reliance on federal funding, the revocation of postal subsidies would have had a catastrophic effect on Canadian periodicals—particularly smaller, low-budget, literary magazines that survive at the largesse of the government funds. But despite making adjustments crucial to the continuance of postal funding following the WTO imbroglio, both Canadian Heritage and Canada Post have, over the years, made decisions that have put literary magazines under even more financial strain.

During the 2004-05 fiscal year, PAP doled out subsidies worth \$64.6 million to periodicals and non-daily newspapers. Out of this, around \$15 million (close to 24%) was fi-

³² Dennis Browne, "Canada's Culture/Trade Quandary and the Magazine Case", *Canadian Parliament Review*, Vol 23 no 28, 1998

³³ Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, *Publications Assistance Program, 1998-99 Activity Report*, 1999

nanced by Canada Post which funded this sum in exchange for the exclusive right to distribute PAP-funded periodicals till as late as 2009.³⁴

However, on April 1, the first day of the 2004-05 fiscal year, PAP changed its subsidy system from the reference-tariff regime to a percentage-based formula. Under the old system, periodicals would pay the reference tariff—a fixed subsidized postal rate—to Canada Post.³⁵ But, under the new system, the amount of postage subsidy for each recipient was based on a certain percentage of the total number of copies circulated annually. Under the percentage system, magazines were to be given subsidies amounting to 63% of the postage bill—the publisher would have to pay the remaining 37%. However, findings³⁶ by Magazines Canada, the national trade association of Canadian-owned magazines, showed that magazines circulating less than 5,000 copies annual (which typically comprise literary periodicals) would have to contend with a higher postal expenditure because the old system used to subsidize up to 72% of their postage bill. In effect, such magazines would have to go from paying 28% of their postage bill to 37% of it as a result of the changeover.

At the outset, PAP's stated intention behind the changeover was to prop up smaller magazines that needed more support. Despite PAP's initiative to provide greater aid to smaller magazines, those under 5,000 copies in annual sales would have had to expend more money on postage. The situation was rectified only after Magazines Canada raised objections to the new system and Canadian Heritage increased the rate of subsidy to 70% of the postage bill—this was still 2% lesser than the rate of subsidy offered under the old system.

³⁴ Canadian Magazines (blog), "Postal subsidy and mag fund in serious jeopardy", Sept 20, 2006

³⁵ Department of Canadian Heritage, *Summative Evaluation of the Publications Assistance Program*, June 22, 2005

³⁶ Read second paragraph under the heading PAP Percentages, Magazines Canada, "CMPA Advocacy Efforts Pay Off With Canada Post", Feb 24, 2004

To compound problems further, Canada Post, which, until 2009, held the exclusive right to distribute subsidized periodicals, had been sharply increasing its publication mail rates. According to a report by Magazines Canada, between 1999 and 2008, average mailing rates for magazines using Canada Post increased four times faster than inflation.³⁷ This, as per the report, was because the Crown Corporation was buffering its losses in letter mail by increasing the cost of publications mail.

The steep rise in mailing rates cut into PAP funding. Since PAP had earlier introduced percentage-based subsidies in place of the reference-tariff, it was no longer providing a fixed amount of subsidy. Rather, it was providing postal subsidy for a fixed percentage of copies circulated. Given the rise in publications mail prices, it had to pay a higher subsidy for each copy sold. Having to increase its expenditure on postal subsidies, PAP was stretching itself thin and, in November 2005, slashed funding to magazines by \$7 million. The cut in funding dug heavily into publishers' postage costs with smaller magazines (under 5,000 copies) having to spend an extra 7.1% on postage.³⁸

It needs to be said that these cuts resolved into higher postal expenses for all PAP-funded magazines across the board. However, given the extremely limited readership, for most literary magazines, which were already working under a shortage of resources and wafer-thin margins, the increased postage costs were considerable.

To understand the indispensability of government funding to the survival of literary magazines, it is instructive to examine the replacement of the PAP and CMP by CPF in 2009 and the challenges it wrought thereafter. Unlike its predecessors, PAP, which served the express purpose of subsidizing postal expenses, and, CMF, which was founded to provide editorial support to periodicals, the CPF, being an amalgamation of the two, provided a

³⁷ Magazines Canada, "Canada Post Strategic Review Submission"

³⁸ Michael J. Fox, *PAP Attacked! Prepare for the impact*, Magazines Canada, Oct 19, 2005

blanket fund that publishers were free to utilize towards different aspects of their business.

Although the total value of funding disbursed under the new program remained unchanged, several smaller publishers were, under CPF rules, effectively edged out of the list of recipients eligible to receive funding. This happened because of an unprecedented change in the Department of Canadian Heritage's eligibility guidelines with regard to postal subsidies for magazine publishers. According to the new guidelines, those magazines, which sold less than 5,000 copies annually, were considered ineligible for CPF funding.³⁹ For literary magazines, the consequences were catastrophic. According to *The Globe and Mail*, *Descant*, *The Malahat Review* and *Grain Magazine* were in danger of being excluded from CPF's coffers. While *The Malahat Review* struggled for the first few years, it managed to meet the new eligibility criteria in 2012-2013 and won its place in the program. However, between 2010 and its closure in 2015, *Descant* did not receive CPF funding for five years.⁴⁰ *Grain Magazine*, too, has been hitherto unable to make it to the list of recipients.⁴¹

For literary magazines that failed to meet CPF's eligibility criteria, the immediate financial repercussions were immense. Founded in 1981, *The New Quarterly*, a well-known literary publication, projected a 67% rise in postal costs;⁴² for *Taddle Creek*, an Ontario-based literary publisher, the funding cut translated into a 40% loss to its annual operating

³⁹ Here, the number of copies sold annually is not the same as paid circulation. According to CPF's applicant guide, annual sales comprise subscription, single and newsstand copies. On the other hand, paid circulation includes sales of sponsored copies as well.

Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers - Applicant's Guide 2015-2016*

⁴⁰ *Descant* did not figure in list of CPF recipients from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015. Check Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers: List of recipients* links for these years under Works Cited.

⁴¹ *Grain Magazine* did not figure in list of CPF recipients from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015. Check Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers: List of recipients* links for these years in the bibliography.

⁴² *The New Quarterly* (blog), "What is the Canadian Periodical Fund trying to accomplish?", Aug 9, 2009

budget.⁴³ Similarly, *subTerrain* has had to grapple with the changes brought in by the introduction of the CPF. The next section looks at the strategies it has devised to cope with these changes, along with its successes and challenges in acquiring other grants.

⁴³ Eric Veillette, “The Feds' new grant that's actually a cut”, *The Toronto Star*, May 2, 2010

Chapter 3. Challenges and Comebacks

As stated in the previous chapter, the changes introduced with the formation of the CPF posed significant challenges and *subTerrain*, like any other literary magazine, has had to devise several ways to cope with them. For *subTerrain*, the challenge to sell 5,000 copies was significant because unlike its counterparts in BC, quarterlies *Geist* and *The Malahat Review*, it is published thrice a year. According to Brian, to qualify for CPF funding, the gap between the 5,000 cutoff and annual sales is bridged by selling copies equivalent or more than the difference to literary festivals. Each copy is sold for the price of \$1 and additionally, ad space commensurate to the value of purchase is provided by the magazine. For example, if a literary festival purchases 300 copies, its purchase will buy it ad space worth \$300 in the magazine. For literary festivals, this is a good opportunity to advertise their events and, for *subTerrain*, it is an ingenious way of increasing its sales and meeting CPF's eligibility criterion. Moreover, the sale is legitimate because CPF guidelines allow for single copies to be sold at a minimum average single-copy price of \$1 per copy.⁴⁴

Even so, CPF's eligibility criterion continues to be a source of anxiety. *subTerrain* obtains between six per cent to 10% of its annual revenue from the CPF. Thus, the loss of postal subsidy for even a period of one year can strain the magazine's financial health. For example, although it received \$13,139⁴⁵ from the Canada Periodical Fund in 2010-2011, *subTerrain* did not qualify for the fund the following year.⁴⁶ Its revenue for 2011-

⁴⁴ Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers - Applicant's Guide 2015-2016*

⁴⁵ Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers: List of recipients, 2010-2011*

⁴⁶ Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers: List of recipients, 2011-2012*

12 took a significant dive as a result of the funding loss. Such an abrupt and heavy loss in revenue can result in serious consequences as most of *subTerrain*'s revenue is spent on meeting costs and expenses; the loss of any funding channel can thus introduce a significant deficit and hamper the magazine's operations.

"It was a case of simply not quite making the 5,000 mark and it's hard to 'fudge' the numbers; you have to back up the sales so I think we had 4,560 [copies] or some such but didn't crack the 5,000," says Brian. Since then, both Brian and Natasha have been keeping a steady eye on *subTerrain*'s sales throughout the year to make sure it makes it past the 5,000 mark every year.

Even though the importance of CPF funding to the magazine's financial health cannot be overstated, there are other funding sources that are larger in scale and importance. For example, the Canada Council for the Arts provides around 30% of the magazine's total revenue and the BC Gaming Grant makes up around 20%. Other funding agencies include the BC Arts Council and the City of Vancouver.

In total, 65% of the magazine's revenue comes by way of funding; the rest is earned revenue comprising advertising, subscription and newsstand sales, along with other sources of income such as intern subsidies etc. Out of these revenue sources, CPF—as explained earlier—is the most tenuous. The rest of the funds, barring the BC Gaming Council's grant, have been steady and constant over the years.

Obtaining the BC Gaming Grant, however, often poses problems. Gaming grants, administered by the provincial Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, are a small portion of the state's gaming revenues earmarked for disbursement to eligible non-profits across the province. *subTerrain* qualifies for this grant under the Community Gaming Grant category. Unlike the bulk of *subTerrain*'s other funding agencies that are devoted primarily to

supporting art and cultural projects, gaming grants cater to a variety of causes such as sports, environment, public safety etc, with art and cultural endeavours being one of its many target areas.⁴⁷

According to Brian, the biggest obstacle in obtaining the grant is convincing the grant committee that the magazine is indeed an art and cultural producer that serves and benefits the community. Periodicals and even newsletters dedicated to fine or performing arts are readily categorized under art and culture but *subTerrain*'s content, which is edgy, literary and, not to mention, niche, is often lost on the committee. The review process can, at times, be fraught with arbitrariness.

For example, despite receiving \$21,000 in gaming grants on a consistent basis for three years, *subTerrain* received only \$3,600 in 2009-10.⁴⁸ This shortfall affected the magazine's bottom line and to add to its troubles further, *subTerrain* was deemed ineligible for funding in 2010-11.⁴⁹ Although *subTerrain* has been able to reclaim its funding since, the sudden freeze in gaming grants cost the magazine dearly.

According to Brian, "Luckily, it was not the same year as the CPF loss. It did seriously affect our ability to publish the mag as we had been doing. It was about a 20% revenue loss so it was hard to find a way to replace that." Since approximately 65% of *subTerrain*'s revenue is provided by government funding; the magazine's significant dependence on government grants makes it very sensitive to changes in funding allotments and rules.

⁴⁷ Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, *Guidelines, Applying for a Community Gaming Grant*, August 2014

⁴⁸ Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, *Special One Time Grants to Community Organizations - 2009/10 Report*

⁴⁹ Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, *Gaming Grants Paid to Community Organizations - 2010/11 Year-End Report*

But, despite these challenges, *subTerrain* has been posting gains in its newsstand sales figures. Its 2014, newsstand sales were up by 175% over the previous year. The 175% spike in newsstand sales came primarily from the magazine's increased presence and visibility in the US market. *subTerrain* had to change its American distributor after its previous distributor declared bankruptcy. According to Brian, *subTerrain* signed a new contract with Disticor, a multi-national distributor with a vigorous presence across North America, which also handles distribution for *The Paris Review* and *Granta*. Disticor, which also distributes *subTerrain* in Chapters, managed to find a new and strategic newsstand market in specialized bookstores in the American Midwest. The initial response to the magazine was overwhelming — Disticor doubled its order after retailers demanded more copies of the magazine.

According to Brian, retail chains like 7-Eleven and big box stores are reluctant to stock literary magazines on their newsstands. But *subTerrain* found favour with specialized bookstores, which have turned out to be highly effective in connecting the magazines to a new set of readers and increasing *subTerrain*'s newsstand sales. The changeover to a new distributor and the enthusiastic response from American retailers also proved that the magazine had a considerably large if latent readership in America which it can now cultivate more effectively. *subTerrain* now intends to make a stronger push into the American market and tap into new readers beyond the midwestern states.

Chapter 4. *subTerrain* in the Digital Age

subterrain.ca

Started in the mid-'90s, around the time publishers began cottoning on to the utility of the web, *subTerrain*'s website plays a supplementary role to the print magazine. The reticence to prioritize its online presence over print is understandable; *subTerrain* needs to sustain its volume of copies in order to qualify for grants and meet revenue expectations by way of sales, subscriptions and advertisements. And releasing its latest content on the website in simultaneity with the release of the print edition might discourage readers from renewing their subscriptions upon finding that the same content is available free of cost online.

Even literary magazines with enduring legacies and substantially bigger readerships, such as *Granta*⁵⁰ and *Paris Review*⁵¹, do not part with the entirety of content from the latest issue without enforcing a paywall between it and the reader. Given its 27 years of publishing history, *subTerrain* can be easily bracketed with these two august publications on the basis of its longevity. Indeed, *subTerrain*'s impressive pile of issues over the last 27 years invests it with the rare opportunity to utilize previously published content towards bolstering its online presence.

⁵⁰ Note how select content on *Granta*'s website needs paid access,
<http://granta.com/cage-of-you/>

⁵¹ Content from previous issues of *Paris Review* can be read only after availing of paid access,
<http://www.theparisreview.org/poetry/6408/sonnets-so-far-geoffrey-g-obrien>

Understandably, long-running magazines possessed of a vast collection of back issues have not shied away from making use of their archive. *Paris Review*, in particular, has benefitted handsomely from digitizing its much vaunted writer interviews, stretching all the way back to 1950; according to editor Lori Stein, the interviews drew in 550,000 visits in 2013.⁵² Both *Granta* and *Paris Review*, in pioneering efforts to redefine literary magazines in the Digital Age, dug deep into their resources to realize that they were sitting on a goldmine of archival material. While *Paris Review* lifted the veil on its interviews in 2010,⁵³ it still maintains a paywall before large tracts of its archive. *Granta*, on the other hand, permits access to select writings not only from its archive but also its latest issue while gating the rest.

But, as it happens, it was the *New Yorker* that attempted the most ingenuous experiment in capitalizing on its archive. In the summer of 2014, it unlocked access to the entirety of content published since 2007, including selected pieces published pre-2007, as part of a sustained effort to enhance user experience.⁵⁴ The sudden unlatching of the gates acquainted readers to its rich collection of archived writings and caused a massive surge in demand—a few months later, in January 2015, subscription signups were 95% higher than the same month the year before.⁵⁵

Considering its 27 years in publishing, it is fair to say that *subTerrain*'s archive can increase its web traffic substantially. Even if *subTerrain.ca* hosts select writings by notable writers from its back issues, it is likely to attract a significant influx of visitors. But, at the moment, the website offers very limited content which isn't updated with regularity. Although the magazine's cover image and the list of contributors appearing below the ban-

⁵² Gabe Habash, "Literary Magazines Adapt to the Digital Age", *Publisher's Weekly*, Mar 10, 2013

⁵³ Dwight Garner, "Paris Review Editor Frees Menagerie of Wordsmiths", *The New York Times*, Oct 22, 2010

⁵⁴ The Editors, "A Note to Our Readers", *The New Yorker*, July 28, 2014

⁵⁵ Justin Ellis, "After the archive came down: The New Yorker's revamped paywall is driving new readers and subscribers", *NiemanLab*, Mar 11, 2015

ner are updated every time a new issue hits the stands, much of the other content is rarely updated.

Where the website succeeds is in soliciting submissions for the magazine and the Annual Lush Triumphant Literary Awards. Data obtained from its Google Analytics reveals that over the course of the last four years, the page dedicated to submission guidelines for writers registered the largest percentage of views (20.21%). Equally telling is the distribution of traffic to the website from the start of the year to May 15, which is the deadline for submission to Lush. During both 2014 and 2015, Lush's submissions page received the second highest number of views within this time interval. Considering these observations, it's evident that the website functions primarily as a gateway for writers interested in getting their work published in the magazine.

But *subTerrain.ca* has other uses too. For example, the bulk of its readers renew its subscriptions online—in its reader survey, around 75% of its respondents said that they renew their subscriptions online; readers clearly aren't indisposed to using its website. Over the years, Brain has made several value additions to the website. In 2010, a blog section was introduced to the website; these blogs are online-only pieces wherein members of *subTerrain's* editorial collective reflect on the writing life.

But, more importantly, *subTerrain.ca* is poised for a complete transformation. *subTerrain* is currently working on an ambitious plan to overhaul its website; the plan, which has for long been in the works, shifts the website from Textpattern to Squarespace, a highly popular website builder that counts *Wired* and *Fast Company* among its customers.⁵⁶ For *subTerrain*, this will be a pivotal transition that will allow it to readapt to the online environment more seamlessly. According to Brian, while Textpattern was useful in carrying

⁵⁶ Wired and Fast Company are mentioned in Squarespace's list of customers, <http://www.squarespace.com/customers/>

out basic tasks, it proved to be problematic in uploading new content; oftentimes new posts on the website would end up interfering with the code and this would alter the appearance of the website. In comparison, Squarespace excels in user-friendliness and the variety of design solutions and templates that it offers. It would allow the magazine to furnish its website with more content without risking any unintended changes to the website's CSS. Currently, *subTerrain* is working with Clint Hutzulak, a graphic designer who regularly collaborates with Anvil Press, to work out a design template that would be conducive to *subTerrain*'s long reads and image-rich content.

With the website in the midst of a major revamp, Brian is keen to host archival content from *subTerrain*'s vast trove of back issues. More importantly, once its new website goes live, *subTerrain* will be able to optimally position its content and realize its online presence more fully.

Line Break, an Online Experiment in Art and Poetry

At the turn of the century, the tremendous growth in the number of internet users and the attendant drop in print ad revenue alerted publishers to the importance of striking their roots into the World Wide Web. Even as the internet was *terra incognita* for newspaper and magazine publishers, it opened up a trove of new advantages and conveniences. It was cost-effective on account of being paperless, and it could stride over geographic and temporal limitations by instantly reaching millions of users across the world. In recent years, both legacy and new publishers have made use of these advantages and expanded in scale and presence.

But, with the precipitative rise in the number of users, infusions of ad money and the gradual emergence of a new internet economy, there are concerns that the World Wide Web has become saturated with information. Indeed, publishers have expressed misgivings that the flotsam and jetsam of online data vying for users' attention can diminish the visibility of quality content.

But, despite existing in a digital environment overpopulated by data, many nascent literary magazines have, over the last few years, found an online readership large enough to keep them going. *The New Enquiry*, an online periodical that focuses on politics, arts and culture, and *Triple Canopy*, an online journal of literature, arts and culture, are the more conspicuous examples of fledgling publishers that have built a viable online readership.⁵⁷ What poignantly distinguishes them from legacy publishers such as *The New Yorker*, *Granta*, *New York Review of Books* is that they exist exclusively on the web—the same platform that has become heavily contested territory for established and upstart publishers.

These literary publications eschew paywalls and are financed, for the most part, by user donations—they have turned into self-sustaining magazines thanks, entirely, to online users. Given the decisive advantages (ubiquity, instant availability, vast pool of users, shareability and cost-effectiveness) of the internet over print, it can be reasonably said that these publications would have struggled to start or find a significant readership if they had been confined to the codex. As John W. Wang, editor of *Juked*, an online literary magazine, says, “One advantage online literary journals have over print journals is their ability to reach out to an endless audience.”⁵⁸

Equally important is the fact that these online magazines have found an abiding readership even as bigger content websites, flush with start-up capital, channel vast sums of money into shoring up clicks and page views by devising complex social media marketing techniques. Indeed, at a time when news publishers and legions of content start-ups aggressively pursue content strategies dictated by online metrics, these online magazines

⁵⁷ Hermione Hoby, “New York literary magazines – start spreading the news”, *The Guardian*, Jan 6, 2013

⁵⁸ Find John W. Wang’s quote on Slide 12 of 16,

Anis Shivani, “Online Literary Journals Come of Age: 15 Top Online Journal Editors Speak”, *Huffington Post*, Nov 21, 2010

stand as outliers to content that is optimized for the express purpose of generating more clicks and ad revenue.

A *New Yorker* article, titled *The Persistence of Litmags*, quotes Jonathan Farmer, editor-in-chief of *At Length*, an online literary magazine, saying that a little magazine “depends on creating a community”; the community “has to have some *raison d’être*, aesthetic or ideological or ethnic or geographic or even generational”.⁵⁹ In other words, the literary magazine acts as a point of convergence for readers who may share a common outlook—be it on culture, politics or literature. For example, in *The Guardian*, Rachel Rosenfelt, editor of *The New Inquiry*, speaks of “the simmering need to congregate” in explaining the magazine’s focus on political radicalism, espoused by “politically sophisticated young people” galvanized in the aftermath of Occupy Wall Street.⁶⁰

In this context, *The New Inquiry* and *Triple Canopy* have succeeded in engendering a community of readers who, with their donations, are committed to keeping these publications up and running. And by desisting from embedding GIFs, videos or capitalizing on popular narratives by publishing spin-offs of stories trending on social media, these publications publish work that may seem, in comparison, far removed or characteristically distinct to a large portion of stories calibrated to generate high traffic. But, with literary magazines, the work is published for its literary value alone, without being compulsively tailored or accoutred to pander to the maximum number of users. With *The New Enquiry* and *Triple Canopy*, it’s a case of allowing content to find its rightful readership from the vast pool of internet users rather than publishing a story for the sole purpose of casting the widest possible net.

⁵⁹ Stephen Burt, “The Persistence of Litmags”, *The New Yorker*, July 7, 2015

⁶⁰ Hermione Hoby, “New York literary magazines – start spreading the news”, *The Guardian*, Jan 6, 2013

As Lori Stein, editor of *The Paris Review*—one of the most eminent literary magazines of the 20th Century—said in an interview with *Publishers Weekly*, “The trick with new technologies and platforms is figuring out how they can help you—rather than tailoring your mission to match what they can do.”⁶¹ It can be surmised that *The New Enquiry* and *Triple Canopy* figured out the “trick” and found a readership by utilizing the web to express and lend expression to literature that piques their own interest, without amending their “mission” to follow best practices prescribed for generating online traffic.

Considering the way *The New Enquiry* and *Triple Canopy* have leveraged the internet, these two publications are instructive and analogous examples in considering *Line Break*, *subTerrain*’s blog of art and poetry. Like the two online magazines, it is online-only literature: *Line Break* was started on Tumblr, on the back of a \$5,000 Innovation Fund from the BC Arts Council.

Line Break expresses itself as an intersection of art and poetry, word and image.⁶² In this regard, it takes off from some of the earliest issues of *subTerrain*, which often interposed illustrations, images into textual narratives. *Line Break* publishes two weekly reading series: *Poets Among Artists* and *How a Poem Reads*.

Poets Among Artists is a series of visual and ekphrastic poems by BC poets and their critiques by contributing poets. Each of the poems in this series either incorporates some form of visual art or is an ekphrasis — writing inspired or catalyzed by a work of art. *How a Poem Reads* includes poems by BC poets and their critiques by contributing poets that encourage “diversity of interpretation” with the intention of facilitating “close-reading”.⁶³ According to Shazia Hafiz Ramji, who handled *Line Break*, this series was a

⁶¹ Gabe Habash, “Literary Magazines Adapt to the Digital Age”, *Publisher’s Weekly*, Mar 10, 2013

⁶² *Line Break*, The Subterrain Blog Of Art And Poetry, *About Line Break*

⁶³ *Ibid*

reaction to the pervasive habit of resorting to casual platitudes in book reviewing, and attempts to, instead, start “a real conversation” about poetry.⁶⁴

Each poem is followed by its critique, which is published a week later. This window of time was consciously created to give visitors a chance to read the poem, ponder over it and air their own thoughts before the critique is published. Moreover, the publication of the critique in and of itself gives *Line Break* a distinct edge: the critique, in following up on the poem, is intended at fostering its understanding and stimulating a discussion among visitors. In doing this, *Line Break* goes a step further than standard literary publications which may publish poetry but seldom make room for its explication. In fact, when critiques do appear, they tend to address an entire book of poems, which the readers do not have access to. In *Line Break*, readers have a chance to refer to the poem while reading its critique or vice versa because they are placed alongside each other. Equally important is that the critique focuses on a single poem as against an entire book, which is more conducive to deep reading.

Line Break resides on Tumblr, which, besides being one of the most popular platforms for multimedia content, has no signup fee or entailing costs. Tumblr, which seamlessly lends itself to visual art, spans large communities of artists and creatives. For Brian and Shazia, this was an added incentive as Tumblr would give *Line Break*, particularly *Poets Among Artists* with its experiments at the intersection of word and image, an opportunity to interest these communities and subcultures of artists and creatives. By tapping into these users, *Line Break* would also be able to acquaint them with *subTerrain* and potentially introduce a new readership to the magazine. There were, however, some technical glitches with the project; while Tumblr was a suitable platform given *Line Break*'s emphasis on visuals, the blog faced compatibility issues with mobile devices. Oftentimes, its

⁶⁴ The Canada Project (blog), “The Canada Project interviews Shazia Hafiz Ramji”, Aug 12, 2015

posts appeared in ill-fitting font sizes which effectively compromised the reading experience.

It's hard to say if the creation of *Line Break* has translated into more subscriptions for the magazine. But, according to Shazia, it did gain traction among art communities as was evident when *Line Break* came to the attention of Charles H. Scott Gallery which subsequently exhibited copies of *subTerrain* at Read Books, its art book shop at Emily Carr University.

As of September 3, 2015, *Line Break* had garnered 60 followers on Tumblr since it went live. Its Google Analytics reveal that it has been visited by 1,344 users and about 18% (239) of them were returning visitors which indicates that *Line Break* was successful in building an abiding interest in a portion of its visitors. *Line Break* did see some degree of success in engaging its returning users; returning users, who comprise merely 18% of the total number of visitors, were credited with over 49% (2,027) of the total number of page views (4,136) which means that when visitors did return to the website, they read multiple pages of the blog.

Within social media, Tumblr was the third most significant discovery tool for *Line Break*. However, despite bringing in fewer visitors, the average time spent by Tumblr account holders on *Line Break* was a little over six minutes which was six times the average duration of users' sessions via Facebook and Twitter. This is significant because prior to *Line Break*, *subTerrain* did not have a Tumblr account. Ergo, it's probable that Tumblr users discovered *Line Break* heuristically and on the strength of its content alone—without the help of online promotions and shares on other platforms. This is further proof that *Line Break* was able to forge an independent if small readership outside *subTerrain*'s network of readers. And the fact that Tumblr users, who likely had no prior affiliations to the magazine, spent significantly more time reading the blog than Twitter and Facebook users means that *Line Break* arrested the attention of reader's outside *subTerrain*'s radar.

While social media channels clearly canalized the bulk of the users to *Line Break*, the second highest number of visitors came via referrals from *subTerrain*'s website and those

of other literary magazines such as *Poetry Is Dead*, *The Malahat Review* and *Geist*, where *Line Break* had been cross-promoted. Of these, *Poetry Is Dead*, a Vancouver-based publication devoted to Canadian poetry, notched up the longest sessions with its users spending up to 18 and-a-half minutes on the blog. This goes to show that *Line Break* sustained the attention of seasoned poetry readers as well.

Line Break is indigenous to the online environment. Notwithstanding the added cost of using more paper, such a project could scarcely have found expression in print. More importantly, *Line Break* would have struggled to reach an audience outside of *subTerrain*'s subscribers and pre-existing readers. Additionally, it would have been deprived of the considerable advantages of comments, likes, shares which allow visitors to engage with the content, which was essential in fulfilling its mission to “start a real conversation about poetry”.

But, despite possessing an independent online identity by existing outside of *subTerrain*'s website, *Line Break* still lives under the aegis of *subTerrain*: it was inspired by *subTerrain*'s early experiments with word and image, and it publishes many of the same poets that are regular contributors to *subTerrain*. *Line Break* thus exists as *subTerrain*'s outpost in Tumblr's blogosphere, an evolution of the magazine's long commitment to BC and Canadian poetry, in the digital age. It mobilized the readers within and, more remarkably, outside *subTerrain*'s sphere of influence to convene a community of readers around Canadian poetry. *Line Break* sought to utilize the web in order to realize a publishing vision that couldn't have easily transpired in print. Indeed, it follows Lori Stein's dictum — “figuring out how they [new technologies and platforms] can help you rather than tailoring your content to match what they can do”.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

In Chapters 2 and 3, this paper had highlighted the problems that confronted literary magazines after James Moore, the minister of Canadian Heritage scrapped the Publishing Assistance Program (PAP) and Canada Magazine Fund (CMF) in 2009, and introduced, in their place, the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF). In 2011, poet Michael Lista wrote a column in the *National Post* in which he endorsed Canadian Heritage's decision to make magazine selling less than 5,000 copies ineligible for CPF funding.⁶⁵ Lista explained his rationale in the following words:

*But some (magazines) are going to fold. And while that may be a bad thing for the affected literary journals—and their brave staff who work tirelessly and often thanklessly at their tasks—it may not be a bad thing for our literature...It may well be that the “market disadvantage” plaguing their sector, a market disadvantage that the CPF is set on correcting, can only be reversed by the culling of a supersaturated market...A culling will improve quality on both sides of the editorial table; the quality of submissions will increase as places to publish become more scarce, as will the calibre of the editors.*⁶⁶

In arguing that the CPF would purge Canada's literary market of smaller, as it were, non-performing magazines, and effectively elevate its editorial and literary standards, Lista makes an overbearing assumption: smaller literary magazines stay small for want of quality. From Lista's premise, it would follow that *Descant*, which consistently fell short of selling 5,000 annual copies, was producing work of insufficient quality or that *Brick*, with

⁶⁵ Michael Lista, “On Poetry: Why literary magazines should fold”, *National Post*, March 25, 2011

⁶⁶ Ibid

an annual circulation of 3,000 copies, ought to do better work to be more deserving of the taxpayer's dollar. The same argument could be applied to *subTerrain*, which failed to qualify for CPF funding in 2011-12, or to other reputable magazines which have fallen short of selling 5,000 copies.

Clearly, Lista's argument fails to add up because he uses a quantitative standard for making a determination of a magazine's quality. Brian echoes this sentiment—"In the film world, it would be like setting a bar that would instantly deem most foreign films, documentaries, animated shorts, art films, etc. ineligible for funding/awards. We want to encourage the fringe, the marginal pursuits, the experimental. That's where the new developments bloom."⁶⁷

What is manifestly clear is that there exists a dissonance between literary publishers and funding bodies—a fund, such as the CPF, measures the success of a magazine on the basis of the scale of its popularity or its resonance with the public, which may be gauged by the volume of the magazine's sales. However, literary magazines are dedicated to putting out work that is, by its very literary and artistic nature, not amenable to this sort of measurement.

Doubtless, Canadian literary magazines will continue to rely on government grants to continue publishing; but as explained in Chapter 4, even though most literary magazines publish content that appeals to a very small niche, they can find optimal avenues in the online sphere to reach discerning readers that they haven't discovered yet. And in doing so, they can boost their readerships, create a broader cultural impact and acquire a certain degree of independence from the imperative demands of granting bodies such as the CPF. *subTerrain*, in particular, is on course to upgrading its web presence and is perfectly

⁶⁷ Brian Kaufman, Personal Interview, July 2015

poised to harness its 27 years of cultural capital. Additionally, *Line Break*, *subTerrain*'s experiment with online poetry, has already found fertile ground online.

The digitization of reading and the changing landscape of publishing may have offered a general antidote to the gloom and doom of the literary industry. Indeed, SEO best practices, content marketing chicanery and the large body of online strategies foreign to the traditional model of publishing are steadily acquiring currency across the industry. But, nevertheless, a fundamental question remains unaddressed.

In *Persistence of Litmags*, his article in the *New Yorker*, literary critic Stephen Burt wonders why anyone would want to run a literary magazine.⁶⁸

*You won't get rich, or even very famous...Once your journal exists, it will wing its way into a world already full of journals, like a paper airplane into a recycling bin, or onto a Web already crowded with literary sites. Why would you do such a thing?*⁶⁹

Why, indeed? Why does a literary magazine exert intractable efforts towards an artistic ideal when, in all probability, its efforts will be acknowledged by only a discerning few? How does it endure despite living under the constant shadow of “market disadvantages”?⁷⁰

In his interview with *Toro*, Brian had said that *subTerrain* will endure so long as “there is a desire amongst those involved to put out a quality literary product.”⁷¹ As chronicled in Chapter 1, *subTerrain* has, over the last 27 years, undergone a metamorphosis—from being a vision, conceived by a handful of precocious readers and writers, to an esteemed

⁶⁸ Stephen Burt, “The Persistence of Litmags”, *The New Yorker*, July 7, 2015

⁶⁹ *Ibid*

⁷⁰ Michael Lista writes that CPF's goal is to aid magazines in overcoming “market disadvantages”.

⁷¹ Salvatore Difalco, “Strong Words For A Polite Nation”, *Toro*, Sep 23, 2008

publication, and to finally evolving into a community of editors, writers, poets, illustrators, and readers.

subTerrain is more than just a magazine—it is a refuge for underground writers. It is a cultural institution that has mobilized generations of creators, and catalyzed thousands of aspiring writers. And it endures because its community members have a shared interest in creating and consuming a quality literary product.

Hal Niedzviecki, founder of *Broken Pencil*, once called *subTerrain* the “best lit-mag in Canada...”⁷² After 27 years of fulfilling its editorial mandate, *subTerrain* has proven itself to be a distinctive and sustainable literary enterprise. Over the years, it has faced daunting challenges in ensuring a steady supply of funding. But, it has repeatedly overcome these challenges and continues to stay true to its origins and intents. Given the magazine’s expanded presence in the US market, its ambitious plans to transform its online presence and the soaring popularity of its writing contests, *subTerrain* is poised to take its literary project to greater heights. In the years to come, *subTerrain* will be both a crucial and innovative space for experimental and emerging voices.

⁷² Magazines Canada (website)

Works Cited

ABC Bookworld, Brian Kaufman's interview,
http://www.abcbookworld.com/view_author.php?id=2885

Advertising section of *Grain Magazine's* website,
<http://www.grainmagazine.ca/advertise/>

Anis Shivani, "Online Literary Journals Come of Age: 15 Top Online Journal Editors Speak", *Huffington Post*, Nov 21, 2010, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anis-shivani/online-literary-journals-_b_785793.html

Arc Poetry Society, *We All Begin in a Little Magazine: And the Promise of Canada's Poets 1978-1998* (Carleton University Press, 1998)

Brian Kaufman, "A Few Thoughts On *subTerrain's* Origins and Intent", *subTerrain*, Feb 15, 2008, <http://subterrain.ca/blog/70/a-few-thoughts-on-subterrain-s-origins-and-intent>

Brian Kaufman, "Defending Literary Contests", *Magazines Canada*, 2006,
<http://www.magazinescanada.ca/uploads/File/files/DefendingLiteraryContests.pdf>

Brian Kaufman, personal interview, July 2015

Broken Pencil (blog), "US needs help selling mags in Canada",
<http://www.brokenpencil.com/issue-5/us-needs-help-selling-mags-in-canada>

Canadian Magazines (blog), "Postal subsidy and mag fund in serious jeopardy", Sept 20, 2006, <http://www.canadianmags.blogspot.ca/2006/09/postal-subsidy-and-mag-fund-in-serious.html>

Chris Powell, "Changes Coming For Canadian Magazine Funding", *Marketing Magazine*, Jan 28, 2008, <http://www.marketingmag.ca/brands/changes-coming-for-canadian-magazine-funding-13014>

Deborah Dundas, "Descant literary journal folds after 44 years", *The Toronto Star*, Dec 11, 2014,
http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/books/2014/12/11/descant_literary_journal_folds_after_44_years.html

Dennis Browne, "Canada's Culture/Trade Quandary and the Magazine Case", *Canadian Parliament Review*, Vol 23 no 28, 1998,
<http://www.revparl.ca/english/issue.asp?param=68&art=110>

Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers: List of recipients*, 2010-2011,
<http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1283974447909>

Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers: List of recipients*, 2011-2012,
<http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1321969859505>

Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers: List of recipients*, 2012-2013,
<http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1344868568577>

Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers: List of recipients*, 2013-2014,
<http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1377024010329>

Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers: List of recipients*, 2014-2015,
<http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1413377795581>

Department of Canadian Heritage, *Aid to Publishers - Applicant's Guide 2015-2016*,
<http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1289317991726/1313089558031#spc>

Department of Canadian Heritage, *Summative Evaluation of the Publications Assistance Program*, June 22, 2005, <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CH44-103-2005E.pdf>

Dwight Garner, "Paris Review Editor Frees Menagerie of Wordsmiths", *The New York Times* (website), Oct 22, 2010,
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/23/books/23interview.html>

Elizabeth Hay, Lisa Lynne Moore, Michael Redhil, editors, *The Journey Prize Stories: From the Best of Canada's New Writers, Volume 16* (McClelland and Stewart, 2005), ,
https://books.google.ca/books?id=nluIrO0ZUwwC&pg=PR7&lpg=PR7&dq=craig+davidson+subterrain&source=bl&ots=9MX6fI9ujB&sig=vuwMV9xpQITEsEGmLMye27QFh40&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CDkQ6AEwBWoVChMIu5Ofz_eCyAIVIE-ICCh2sOQYO#v=onepage&q=craig%20davidson%20subterrain&f=false

Eric Veillette, "The Feds' new grant that's actually a cut", *The Toronto Star*, May 2, 2010,
http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2010/05/02/the_feds_new_grant_thats_actually_a_cut.html

Gabe Habash, "Literary Magazines Adapt to the Digital Age", *Publisher's Weekly* (website), March 10, 2013, <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/digital/content-and-e-books/article/56283-literary-magazines-adapt-to-the-digital-age.html>

Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, *Guidelines, Applying for a Community Gaming Grant*, August 2014, <https://www.gaming.gov.bc.ca/grants/docs/guide-cgg.pdf?>

Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, *Gaming Grants Paid to Community Organizations - 2010/11 Year-End Report*, <https://www.gaming.gov.bc.ca/reports/docs/fin-rpt-grants-year-to-date-payments-2010-11.pdf?>

Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, *Special One Time Grants to Community Organizations - 2009/10 Report*, <https://www.gaming.gov.bc.ca/reports/docs/fin-rpt-special-one-time-grants-2009-10.pdf?>

Grain Magazine, “*Grain Magazine's 28th Annual Short Grain Writing Contest*”, September 8, 2015, <http://www.grainmagazine.ca/short-grain-contest/>

Granta's website, <http://granta.com/cage-of-you/>

Hermione Hoby, “New York literary magazines – start spreading the news”, *The Guardian*, Jan 6, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2013/jan/06/new-york-literary-magazines-publishing>

Joseph Lichterman, “How Esquire built Esquire Classic, a new standalone digital archive”, *NiemanLab* (website), September 25, 2015, <http://www.niemanlab.org/2015/09/how-esquire-built-esquire-classic-a-new-standalone-digital-archive/>

Justin Ellis, “After the archive came down: The New Yorker’s revamped paywall is driving new readers and subscribers”, *NiemanLab*, Mar 11, 2015, <http://www.niemanlab.org/2015/03/after-the-archive-came-down-the-new-yorkers-revamped-paywall-is-driving-new-readers-and-subscribers/>

Line Break, “About *Line Break*”, The *subTerrain* Blog Of Art And Poetry <http://subterrainblog.tumblr.com/linebreak>

Lizzy Karp, “Progressive, Provocative & Edgy: subTerrain Magazine”, Vancouver Is Awesome, Aug 18, 2010, <http://vancouverisawesome.com/2010/08/18/progressive-provocative-edgy-subterrain-magazine/>

Magazine Association of BC’s website, <http://www.bcmags.com/magazines/subterrain>

Magazines Canada, <http://www.magazinescanada.ca/consumer-old?id=167>

Magazines Canada, “How to Start a Magazine”, http://www.magazinescanada.ca/uploads/File/files/How_to_Start_a_Magazine_FAQ.pdf

Magazines Canada, “CMPA Advocacy Efforts Pay Off With Canada Post”, Feb 24, 2004, <https://www.magazinescanada.ca/uploads/File/files/Public%20Affairs/cmpaPR.feb24.postal.pdf>

Magazines Canada, “Canada Post Strategic Review Submission”, https://www.magazinescanada.ca/uploads/File/files/submission%20CPC%20review%20aug%2025%202008_final.pdf

Magazines Canada, “subTerrain’s Brian Kaufman Receives Lifetime Achievement Award”, Sept 15, 2014, <http://www.magazinescanada.ca/membership/pub:3007/subTerrains-Brian-Kaufman-Receives-Lifetime-Achiev#.VfzYH-ull-U>

Magazines Awards (blog), “Farewell, *Descant*”, December 2014, <http://blog.magazine-awards.com/2014/12/10/farewell-descant/>

Mark Medley, “Literary journals: The writers' sandbox”, *National Post*, Jan 24, 2009, <http://www.nationalpost.com/arts/story.html?id=1211887>

Media Kit, *Brick*, 2014, http://brickmag.com/sites/default/files/brickmediakit_2014.pdf

Michael J. Fox, “PAP Attacked! Prepare for the impact”, Magazines Canada, Oct 19, 2005, <https://www.magazinescanada.ca/uploads/File/files/Public%20Affairs/PAPAttacked2005.pdf>

Michael Lista, “On Poetry: Why literary magazines should fold”, *National Post*, March 25, 2011, <http://news.nationalpost.com/afterword/michael-lista-on-poetry-why-literary-magazines-should-fold>

Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, *Publications Assistance Program, 1998-99 Activity Report, 1999*, <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CH44-4-1999E.pdf>

Natasha Sanders-Kay, personal interview, August, 2015

Paris Review's website, <http://www.theparisreview.org/poetry/6408/sonnets-so-far-geoffrey-g-obrien>

Salvatore Divalco, “Strong Words For A Polite Nation”, *Toro*, Sep 23, 2008, <http://toromagazine.com/culture/in-print/20080923/strong-words-for-a-polite-nation>

Simon Houpt, “Giller Prize short list announced”, *The Globe And Mail* (website), Oct 8, 2013, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books-and-media/giller-prize-short-list-announced/article14741107/>

Squarespace's website, <http://www.squarespace.com/customers/>

Stephen Burt, "The Persistence of Litmags", *The New Yorker*, July 7, 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-persistence-of-litmags>

subTerrain, "Nice Things Other People Have Said", <http://subterrain.ca/about/106/nice-things-other-people-have-said>

The Canada Project (blog), "The Canada Project interviews Shazia Hafiz Ramji", Aug 12, 2015, <https://thecanadaproject.wordpress.com/2015/08/12/interview-shazia-hafiz-ramji/>

The Editors, "A Note to Our Readers", *The New Yorker*, July 28, 2014, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/07/28/note-readers>

The New Quarterly (blog), "What is the Canadian Periodical Fund trying to accomplish?", Aug 9, 2009, <http://tnq.ca/blog/what-canadian-periodical-fund-trying-to-accomplish>

Will Self, "The novel is dead (this time it's for real)", *The Guardian*, May 2, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/may/02/will-self-novel-dead-literary-fiction>