“JOURNEYING INTO THE FUTURE”: AN AUDIT OF THE WRITERS’ TRUST/MCQUELLAND & STEWART JOURNEY PRIZE

by

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2018 marks the 30th anniversary of The Writers’ Trust of Canada/McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize. It is an annual short story award dedicated to highlighting the best emerging writers in Canada. Partly administered by McClelland & Stewart (M&S), an imprint of Penguin Random House Canada, the prize has launched the careers of some of the country’s most celebrated authors. It is also the highest monetary award for a single short story. Despite its impressive legacy and offering, there are issues around the diversity of Journey Prize content. There is also room to improve The Journey Prize’s visibility and reach. This report is the first extensive project to focus on The Prize and it will serve as an advisory document for M&S and other publishers looking to increase brand awareness and encourage diverse content. There are recommendations, namely a curated marketing strategy, to take The Journey Prize into the next phase of its growth.

KEYWORDS: publishing; awards; marketing; emerging writers; diversity; digital strategy; acquisitions.
I dedicate this paper to my parents. I love you.
I would like to thank Kristin Cochrane, Jared Bland, Anita Chong, Kelly Joseph, Amy Black, Beth Lockley, Marion Garner, Erin Cooper and Ann Jansen whose help I can only hope to repay one day. To Martha Kanya-Forstner, the editorial genius who never fails to remind me that there is still a lot to be done in the publishing industry. To all my colleagues at Penguin Random House Canada who have made this learning experience the best yet.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

McClelland & Stewart  M&S
The Writers’ Trust    The Trust
Penguin Random House Canada  PRHC
Penguin Random House UK    PRHUK
Masters of Fine Arts (in creative writing)  MFA
Greater Toronto Area     GTA
The Scotiabank Giller Prize  The Giller

Any use of “The Prize” refers to The Journey Prize.
INTRODUCTION

The $10 000 Journey Prize is awarded annually to an emerging writer of distinction. This award, now in its thirtieth year, and given for the eighteenth time in association with the Writers’ Trust of Canada ... is made possible by James A. Michener’s generous donation of his Canadian royalty earnings from his novel Journey, published by McClelland & Stewart in 1988.

—The Journey Prize 30 (2018) 

As far as short fiction awards go, The Journey Prize is one of Canada’s most prestigious. It has recognised hundreds of writers at the beginning of their careers including Bronwen Wallace, Andre Alexis, Yann Martel and Elizabeth Hay. 2018 marks The Prize’s 30th anniversary which provides an opportunity for reflection on years past as well as a chance to look to the future. The Journey Prize is the most considerable financial reward for a single short story in Canada. The Prize also has an accompanying anthology: The Journey Prize Stories, published by McClelland & Stewart (M&S) annually. The anthology is available in both print and eBook format and it gives emerging writers the opportunity to be published by M&S—an imprint within Canada’s largest trade publisher, PRHC.

Despite its significance, The Journey Prize is not widely known. Its reach primarily spans literary groups like creative writing programs and writing fellowships. Outside of this, however, there is limited word-of-mouth on The Prize, in-person and online.2 Fur-

1 The Journey Prize Stories: 30 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2018), ABOUT THE JOURNEY PRIZE.
2 As particularly noted between May to August 2018, the research span of this project.
thermore, The Journey Prize is not well-known within its home base of PRHC. An informal survey within the company in June 2018 demonstrated that not a lot of staff members are aware of The Prize and those who are, have more likely than not worked on The Prize directly. The visibility of The Journey Prize could be improved to reflect its stature and contribution to Canadian publishing.

It would be important to note that this lack of visibility (internally and externally) is limiting the diversity of voices coming through The Journey Prize. It is an unrelenting cycle in which the limited promotion of The Prize leads to the same contributing publications participating year-in-year-out and when these publications do not represent diverse voices, The Journey Prize has limited diverse content to showcase. In the framework of this research project, diversity alludes to the inclusion of people who have traditionally and systemically been overlooked by the publishing industry. This includes but is not limited to visible minorities, people of colour (POC), the LGBTQ+ community, disabled people and religious minorities.

The Journey Prize as an embedded part of the publishing industry has, despite its best efforts, been a part of this cycle of exclusion. McClelland & Stewart publisher, Jared Bland, acknowledges this. He states, “The Journey Prize has a reputation for being aesthetically and culturally conservative which means by and large [that] it has published white people who write epiphany based short fiction that aspires to be in The New Yorker.” This sentiment is shared prominently by a number of Journey Prize stakeholders: writers, jurors and administrators alike.

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3 Jared Bland (publisher of McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, July 2018.
This report is the first comprehensive look at or ‘audit’ of The Journey Prize. By using qualitative data from interviews and conversations, this report will assess The Prize as a whole — strengths and weaknesses. The first chapter shall present and analyse the opinions of Journey Prize stakeholders and the aspects they believe require the most improvement. Chapter One will also give a history and an overview of The Prize and it will delve into the major issues each stakeholder group faces. Chapter Two, on the other hand, will offer recommendations on how to possibly tackle the problems found in Chapter One. As previously mentioned, the problems are tied to a lack of visibility which subsequently results in limited diversity within The Prize. The third chapter will offer an alternate way of structuring The Journey Prize through a business model called ‘Write-Now.’ This chapter will make a case for remodelling The Journey Prize into an academy that specifically promotes diverse voices.

Ultimately this report aims to be a step towards bringing The Journey Prize into full cohesion with M&S’ publishing mandate: “to build a publisher of the future by becoming genuinely diverse.” The opinions of vested Journey Prize stakeholders are consulted throughout, namely, Anita Chong, Jared Bland, Joe Lee, Kevin Hardcastle, Grace O’Connell, Anna Ling Kaye, Erin Kelly, Naben Ruthnum, and Doretta Lau. Please note that the recommendations in this report are applicable to other boutique imprints and commercial publishing enterprises.

4 Jared Bland (publisher of McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, July 2018.
CHAPTER ONE: ‘AN INCOMPLETE JOURNEY’ — HISTORY TO THE PRESENT DAY

HISTORY

McClelland & Stewart is a 112-year-old Canadian icon. It has published works by Michael Ondaatje, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, M.G. Vassanji and Rohinton Mistry, to name a few. Often dubbed “the Canadian publisher,” M&S is the only large press in the country to simultaneously publish poetry and have a short fiction prize dedicated to up-and-coming writers. M&S started as an independent publisher, remaining so throughout the 20th century. It came under the joint ownership of the University of Toronto (75% stake) and Random House of Canada (25% stake) in 2000. However, in 2012, Random House of Canada bought the remaining shares in the press and became the sole owner. A year later, the merger of Penguin and Random House took place and M&S found itself part of a multinational family.

As the self-proclaimed “Home of Good Books,” M&S has published authors in the early stages of their careers as well as established household names. Canadian writer and cultural commentator, Roy MacSkimming, reports that “Jack McClelland* [was at a point the only publisher in Canada] prepared to take many risks on new and different

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5 Anita Chong (senior editor, McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, September 2018.


* Jack McClelland was the son of McClelland & Stewart founder, John McClelland. He joined the company in 1946 and was president from 1961 to 1985.
writers.” It is no surprise therefore that McClelland & Stewart became the administrator of an award such as The Journey Prize. Promoting emerging writers was always a focus. In 1985 when Canadian philanthropist and businessman, Avie Bennett, acquired M&S from Jack McClelland, Bennett took an avid stance in spearheading The Prize. Bennett also made it clear that he viewed The Journey Prize as a charitable undertaking, its aim never to make money.

Renowned publisher, Ellen Seligman, who held leadership positions in McClelland & Stewart for four decades, revitalised The Prize in the late 80s and throughout the 90s. Gifted writers such as Diane Keating (1989), Eden Robinson (1992), Liz Moore (1998) and Madeleine Thien (1998), found literary acclaim through The Journey Prize in its early years.

PRESENT DAY

In 2018, the M&S team consists of Jared Bland (publisher), Kelly Joseph (publishing manager), Martha Kanya-Forstner (editor-in-chief), Doug Pepper (publisher of Signal/McClelland & Stewart), Anita Chong (senior editor/manager of The Journey Prize), Jenny Bradshaw (senior editor), Kimberlee Hesas (managing editor), Sarah Howland (imprint sales manager), Erin Kelly (marketing manager), Joe Lee (editorial assistant), Jordan Ginsberg (senior editor), Haley Cullingham (senior editor) and a three-month rotating intern. Jared Bland became publisher in August 2016. His mandate was

8 Anita Chong (senior editor, McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, September 2018.
10 Ibid.
to bring new energy to M&S, to shape it for the future. M&S, as a legacy press, needed to find new ways to publish people from various perspectives and backgrounds. Bland recognised that he could leverage the 112-year-old literary household name to, in his own words, “publish a whole new literature.” And indeed the past two years at McClelland & Stewart have lived up to this declaration. Titles such as The Boat People by Sharon Bala, American War by Omar El-Akkad, I Have To Live by Aisha Sasha John, There There by Tommy Orange and Brother by David Chariandy, are just a few remarkable titles, published by M&S, centering diverse narratives. M&S’ publishing program is aimed at “challenging the status quo” of the traditional industry. The press has become a vital sharp-edged voice within Penguin Random House Canada and outside of it.

DIVERSITY IN CANADIAN PUBLISHING

Canada is a multicultural country — one would expect its publishing industry to be a reflection of its diverse population. The country is made up of approximately “250 different ethnic origins” and “more than 7.6 million visible minorities, a five-fold increase since 1981.” Unfortunately, the publishing industry is still infamous for being

11 Jared Bland (publisher of McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, July 2018.
12 Jared Bland (publisher of McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, July 2018.
15 Ibid.
monolithic, that is, “overwhelmingly white”\textsuperscript{16} and not representative of a variety of identities. As the national population evolves, however, the industry and The Journey Prize have a requirement to follow suit.

The Journey Prize was created a few years after the rise of Canadian-owned publishing houses in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{17} The Prize was part of a nationalist industry that was (and still is) run predominantly by white, middle class, cis-gendered, straight people.\textsuperscript{18} Diverse literature was often seen as ‘risky’ and not commercially viable.\textsuperscript{19} It mostly found its home in smaller presses too.\textsuperscript{20} Today, the publishing industry still has significant barriers to entry that feed into The Journey Prize. For instance, “80 percent of writers earn writing incomes below the poverty line in Canada,”\textsuperscript{21} a deterrent for writers from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, this low-income line continues to decrease; 27

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\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.

percent between 1998 and 2015 to be exact, which undoubtedly affects emerging writers the most — The Journey Prize’s core target.

With regards to content, there is a notion that “white writers are experts at writing and diverse authors are experts on diversity.” This notion means that the breadth of stories expected from diverse writers is limited. For example, writers from the LGBTQ+ community are expected to write about their lived experiences with social justice at the forefront of their narratives. Creative license and freedoms are rarely afforded to them in the way that they would for a straight person. These double standards are so ingrained in the industry that even the critique in this report should be careful not to point out diverse writers in a way that posits whiteness or white writers as the default.

However, what of the strides that the Canadian publishing industry has made to combat the issues mentioned above? As in the US, there is increased accountability and “countless panels, articles, and even conferences...dedicated to exploring the causes and effects of the lack of diversity” in the English-language Canadian book industry. In 2014 the diversity conversation accelerated in Canada as a result of a great stir across the border. The “We Need Diverse Books (WNDB) campaign emerged in the


United States in response to the lineup of a prominent literary festival that lacked diverse representation.”

25 The social media reach of this campaign went viral and the world paid attention to the striking lack of diversity in US publishing.

Similarly, a year later, in 2015, Spread The Word, a writing development agency in the UK released an expository report called Writing The Future. The report revealed that the publishing industry was “not diverse at all” and that this “poor commitment to diversity [was] putting [the industry] at risk of becoming culturally irrelevant.”

26 These sentiments were further reflected in 2016 when children’s book publisher Lee & Low released their statistical Diversity Baseline Survey, a compilation of the staff makeup of the publishing industry in the US, (see Appendix A). In Canada, steps towards encouraging diversity were put in place as a response to what was happening within the country and abroad.

27 The Festival of Literary Diversity (FOLD) in Brampton, Ontario, was founded to highlight the voices of diverse authors.

28 Leading industry conferences such as Book Summit made diversity a keynote topic and publishers like PRHC also made declarations to publish more diversely. At present, The Association of Canadian Publish-

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28 Ibid.

ers (ACP) which represents English-language Canadian-owned book publishers also
affirms its “commitment to the principles of equity, diversity, tolerance, and inclusion.”

The ACP are in the process of creating a baseline survey for the Canadian industry (such
as the one by Lee & Low).31

This progress in book publishing is essential to note; however, it does not take
into account the state of diversity within journals and literary magazines — the sources of
Journey Prize content. In 2012, the Canadian Women in the Literary Arts, “an inclusive
literary organization for people who share feminist values” was created to track statistics on gender representation in Canadian newspapers, literary magazines and journals. CWILA found that there were profound “gender gaps” in the space and that women
were at a definite “disadvantage in the world of literature.”34 “In their inaugural 2012
Count they found what Canadian poet, essayist, and educator Gillian Jerome calls ‘trou-
bling statistics that revealed an undeniable gender bias in Canadian literature, one that

30 Sue Carter, “ACP Affirms Commitment To “Equity, Diversity, Tolerance, And Inclu-
asion” | Quill And Quire,” Quill And Quire, 2017, https://quillandquire.com/industry-
news/2017/02/09/acp-affirms-commitment-to-equality-diversity-tolerance-and-inclusion/.

31 “ACP Launches Canadian Book Publishing Diversity Baseline Survey – Association Of
Canadian Publishers,” publishers.ca, 2018, https://publishers.ca/2018/07/16/acp-launches-
canadian-book-publishing-diversity-baseline-survey/.

32 Tiitu Vuorensola, “CWILA: Canadian Women In The Literary Arts - Canadian Lit-
erature Centre,” Canadian Literature Centre, 2014, http://www.abclc.ca/cwila-canadian-
women-in-the-literary-arts/.

33 Rachel Thompson, “Canadian Women In Literary Arts (CWILA) | Room Magazine,”
arts-cwila.

canlitguides.ca/canlit-guides-editorial-team/feminist-history-of-literature-and-culture-in-
canada/cwila-and-literary-representation/.
The CWILA reports are directly relevant to The Journey Prize because The Prize has an acquisitions strategy that is entirely reliant on journals (as shall be discussed further). The issues-at-large in the industry affect The Journey Prize and it is clearly part of an ecosystem that privileges the work of some writers over others. Only by acknowledging its position in this ecosystem can The Journey Prize begin to diversify itself.

THE LOGISTICS OF THE JOURNEY PRIZE

To reiterate, The Journey Prize is an annual short fiction award aimed at finding the best emerging writing talent in Canada. The way The Prize functions has remained consistent over the past 30 years. Submissions are sought out from literary journals and magazines, a jury looks over the submissions and chooses roughly 10–13 to feature in The Journey Prize Stories, and a winner is subsequently picked from this group. The Prize is managed by Anita Chong, a senior editor at McClelland & Stewart. Chong is an influential voice in Canadian publishing and has been for the past two decades. She primarily edits literary fiction and narrative non-fiction and is the editor behind Sharon Bala’s The Boat People, Starlight by Richard Wagamese and The Handmaid’s Tale graphic novel by Margaret Atwood and Renee Nault. As the manager of The Prize and its accompanying anthology, Chong acts as the primary link amongst all Journey Prize stakeholders and handles the step-by-step processes of The Prize.

McClelland & Stewart first approaches a curated list of journals to ask them to submit three short stories published in the previous calendar year. The journals have the

35 Ibid.
36 The term “journals” is used throughout to encompass literary magazines, anthologies and journals.
option to submit via Submittable, an online platform, or by post. The Journey Prize places no word restrictions on stories submitted and there is no entry fee either. In the past five years, McClelland & Stewart has received an average of 80 to a 100 submissions a year.\(^37\) This is slightly higher but still in the same ballpark as what it has always received. In 1989, for example, The Prize received 70 submissions. In the present day, both M&S and the Writers’ Trust of Canada collaborate to pick the jurors — they are usually past winners/ finalists who are now established in their careers. After the jurors are picked, they are asked to take a look at a master longlist of all the stories submitted. They are then encouraged to submit their own personal longlist of 10–12 stories to the manager (Anita Chong). After this, the manager assembles an aggregate of 20–24 stories. The jurors are then given the chance to reread their choices and the choices of the others on the panel too. Rereading allows each juror to reconsider any stories they may have overlooked in their initial sifting process. Everything happens anonymously, meaning neither the manager nor the jurors know which stories belong to which author. The idea to structure the adjudication process in this way came from James Davies at the Writers’ Trust.

After this initial sifting process, the jurors are given two months to come up with their final picks. They then meet in-person to decide which 10 to 13 submissions will appear in *The Journey Prize Stories*. When the final anthology stories are chosen, the manager does a (non-invasive) light copy edit to keep the stories true to their original form. The anthology is published in late September/early October and there is a ceremony in November to “crown” the winner. It is important to note that in the context of The Journey Prize, an emerging writer is one who has published not more than one book

\(^{37}\) Submission numbers to The Prize are available for the 20-year period beginning in 1998 and running to the most recent prize period, 2018.
in their writing careers. Despite preconceived notions, “emerging” does not necessarily mean “young.” It is solely based on the career stage a writer is at.

Lastly, The Writers’ Trust and M&S partner on an annual basis to run The Prize. In particular, The Writers’ Trust pays for the advertising of the anthology (they run an ad in the Globe & Mail, for example), they fly finalists to Toronto for the ceremony and organize this event too. The Writers’ Trust also releases all announcements surrounding The Prize. M&S pays to publish the anthology, provides editorial and managerial expertise (through Anita Chong) and also provides the $10 000 award money.

THE STAKEHOLDERS’ ROLE

The Journey Prize is a collaborative effort, with a number of parties contributing to its function. The primary Journey Prize stakeholders are the writers, McClelland & Stewart/PRHC, the journals, the jurors and The Writers’ Trust of Canada. The following sections will explore two groups in particular that have an immense role in shaping The Prize. These are the journals and jurors.

THE JOURNALS

The Journey Prize submissions process exclusively relies on journals for content. Relying on one content stream is risky; however, the advantage of working with journals is that they ensure submissions have been through an editorial process and are of a certain quality before they reach the jurors. The journals that have consistently submitted to The Journey Prize over the years are The New Quarterly, Prairie Fire, The Mahalat Review, The Dalhousie Review, Prism International and Grain. The Mahalat Review and
The New Quarterly have produced the most finalists thus far.38 Naben Ruthnum, winner of The Journey Prize in 2013, describes M&S’ collaboration with the journals as a “prestige lending process.”39 From his perspective, working with journals gives The Journey Prize further credibility. But what is in it for the journals? One of the biggest incentives a journal has to submit a story to The Journey Prize is the opportunity to win CAD$2000 if they submit the winning story. The Prize should also shed more light on their publication. However, because of the aforementioned issues with The Prize’s visibility, recognition is not guaranteed.

On the topic of diversity, it is important to note that specific journals, Prism, for example, make it a point to encourage those who have been “systemically marginalised”40 to submit their work. The New Quarterly which is expanding online also promotes diversity and “literary innovation” in their journal.41 Furthermore, a lot of Canadian journals are known to encourage accessibility by paying writers for their contributions.42 Despite this, it can be argued that due to the way the publishing industry has functioned historically, journals still appeal to a specific type of writer. That is one who possibly has formal writing training, is university educated and has likely been a part of an MFA program. Or simply one who has a writing style that conforms to the ‘traditional’ whiteness of CanLit.

38 Anita Chong (senior editor, McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, September 2018.
39 Naben Ruthnum (writer) in discussion with the author, July 2018.
Anna Ling Kaye, who was shortlisted for her story “Red Egg and Ginger” in 2015 addresses the cycle:

Who are the editors of the journals? A lot of times the editors of these journals are attached to universities, so who can afford to go to these programs. It’s very class based – who ends up wanting to be the fiction editor? Are the people who are doing the reading a lot of men, cis men, white men?  

Anna Ling Kaye raises an important question around the institutional biases that feed into The Journey Prize because of the reliance on “established” journals. A system that is entirely dependent not only on the judgement of the journals but on their ability to keep a steady flow of content coming in, risks excluding writers not from the back-grounds Kaye mentions. Finding inventive ways to reach a diverse group of readers’ and writers, those who traditionally have not been considered the ‘target’ demographic, should become a priority for the journals.

Explicitly encouraging diverse content could also go a long way especially at a time when journals are fighting to retain and increase readership. In addition, a renewed call for integrity and openness could be placed on the journals submitting to The Journey Prize. Despite their huge cultural impact and significance, journals need to find their place in the industry, with an assurance of high-quality content. In recent years, jurors who are reading the work the journals submit say that it is decreasing in quality. Both Kevin Hardcastle and Grace O’Connell who judged The Prize in 2017, alongside Ayelet Tsabari, said

43 Anna Ling Kaye (writer) in discussion with the author, August 2018.
that their year was not a banner year. Some of the stories were lacking in originality.

Echoing this sentiment is M&S editorial assistant, Joe Lee. Lee is concerned with the quality of content coming in but from a logistics standpoint. He worries that the journals are submitting stories to The Journey Prize late. They are also not submitting the full number of stories allocated per publication. It should be acknowledged that journals are struggling to access adequate amounts of content as they combat self-publishing platforms and other forms of media (streaming television for example). However, journals could also not be submitting to The Prize because they believe the quality of the content they have is not ‘Journey Prize’ enough. This goes back to a point raised by M&S’ publisher Jared Bland who brings up the aesthetically conservative reputation that precedes The Journey Prize. This reputation could be warding off certain submissions and limiting the range of content coming through The Prize.

Journals are cultural cornerstones and it would be beneficial to work hand-in-hand to find ways to make The Journey Prize collaboration more modern, transparent and fruitful.

THE JURY

The Journey Prize has a blind judging system in which the jurors do not know the identities of the writers throughout the decision-making process. Blind judging is advantageous because it reduces bias on the jurors part but it also leaves the jurors identities anonymous in the earlier stages of the decision-making process, which means that there is

a better likelihood of fairness even in a publishing industry as small and close-knit as the Canadian one.

Grace O’Connell is the all-around Journey Prize stakeholder and advocate of blind judging. She has worked for M&S and the Writers’ Trust, is a writer herself and has been on the Journey Prize jury before. O’Connell states that with blind judging the writers’ “bona fides are irrelevant to jury outcome. [It] is an endorsement of your writing in the most genuine way because it has nothing to do with who you are, where you’ve published or who you knew.” Even well-meaning juries can find it hard to divorce themselves if the judging process is not blind especially in a small publishing community.

On the topic of equity in judging, 2013 winner Naben Ruthnum states that most of The Journey Prize judges are receptive to all styles of writing. Grace O’Connell supports this notion with the idea that The Journey Prize as a short story award cannot help but be out of the box and contrary to Jared Bland’s argument, The Prize is in fact open to stories of an experimental nature. For Kevin Hardcastle, a former Journey Prize finalist and juror, things are slightly different. Hardcastle points out how work that does not conform to a certain ‘standard’ of CanLit is still overlooked in The Journey Prize and beyond:

Me being a poor white dude, writing about country people with no tropes that was even a really tough sell. Getting out of the slush pile even for me was very difficult because my narrative was not easily recognisable and not represented. So the uphill battle for others is even steeper.

45 Grace O’Connell, interview by Grace-Emmanuelle Kabeya, August 2018.
46 Kevin Hardcastle, interview by Grace-Emmanuelle Kabeya, August 2018.
Having a wide range of stories that can embrace but also go beyond what traditional CanLit looks like, is crucial to the success of The Journey Prize. And with this in mind, the notion of blind judging has some downsides. For example, when a story about a marginalized group of people is submitted to The Prize and there is no knowing whether the writer is from said group, complications arise. If the story is in fact written by a non-marginalized person, the story could at the very least be guilty of appropriation. In order to be as intuitive and sensitive as possible to scenarios of this nature, The Journey Prize juries need to be diverse. Meaning that an array of voices from different backgrounds need to be present at the judging table.

An example of a successfully diverse jury is the 2018 Journey Prize panel consisting of writers Sharon Bala, Zoey Leigh Peterson, and Kerry Clare. This is the first time in 30 years that an all-female jury has been at the helm of The Prize and the effect has been felt. Firstly, the public response has been extremely positive. Bala, Peterson and Clare are highly accomplished and have been credited with choosing stories that speak to numerous lived experiences. Having this diverse jury has proven beneficial for The Journey Prize and it is advisable to continue on this trajectory. Doing so could go a long way with audiences and with writers as well. In 2015, when writer Anna Ling Kaye was a finalist for example, she wondered if her story had even been understood. Anna’s “Red Egg and Ginger” is a layered tale “about a young Cantonese girl making difficult decisions about her interracial relationship.” Anna states that because the jury in her year was not racially and ethnically diverse, they likely read but did not truly understand her story. She goes on to say, “This year [2018] for example the jury is incredibly exciting

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and you do get the vibe that [they] would be able to understand the nuances of different writing styles.”

Anna advises that having a diverse jury would minimize the questions the public and the writers themselves have about the final verdicts of a non-diverse jury. In Anna’s case, she went on to “lose a lot of confidence on writing on this particular topic [romance with a non-white protagonist]” as a result of her experience with The Journey Prize. Anna decided to move away from short stories completely and towards writing a novel with more ‘popular’ appeal.

Anna’s experience sheds light on the significance of the composition of juries in making writers’ feel that their work is welcomed, valued and judged fairly. This scenario also proves that a racially representative jury could make The Journey Prize one that a plethora of writers feel comfortable enough to be in.

‘PROFESSIONAL CURRENCY’ AND THE JOURNEY PRIZE

At the heart of this report is a desire to see The Journey Prize become a tool towards creating a more inclusive publishing industry. In order to successfully carry this out, the language surrounding The Prize should reflect its stance on welcoming all writers to participate — this is not currently the case. For The Journey Prize’s 25th-anniversary, a list of authors were asked to describe their experiences with The Prize, particularly to describe the effect it had had on their careers. The general feeling most of the writers had was that The Journey Prize is a “magical entry to the tribe of Canadian writers,” it is a “proving ground for new young writers” (see Appendix B). From these sentiments, it can be deduced that The Prize is a career game changer. This language is, however,

48  Anna Ling Kaye (writer) in discussion with the author, August 2018.
49  Anna Ling Kaye (writer) in discussion with the author, August 2018.
A “tribe of Canadian writers” implies that a select few are welcome in this group and there is again the presence of the notion that “emerging” is synonymous with “young.” Promotional material of this nature also propagates the stereotype associated with The Prize, that it is as Jared Bland says, “culturally conservative.”

With this very much in mind, it is still important to consider what The Journey Prize has done, continues to do and could possibly do for writers’ careers. The Prize offers the opportunity to be published by McClelland & Stewart in a physical and digital anthology. This anthology can be found on retail platforms including but not limited to Indigo Books & Music, Amazon and Google Play. The anthology is published in the Fall Span at Penguin Random House, which is prime publishing season. Each copy contains a list of names of all the writers who have been part of the long list since 1989, theoretically offering visibility to all of the writers — past and present. *The Journey Prize Stories* also makes it a point to highlight the contributing journals at the back of every copy, with short descriptions about who they are and what they stand for. Through this, it can be said that being in the anthology offers writers and journals “professional currency,” translated simply as a valuable addition to one’s portfolio.  

*Journey Prize* manager, Anita Chong, discusses the notion of ‘professional currency’ and how agents within Canada as well as internationally wait for *The Journey Prize Stories* to be released each year so they can have their first pick of the brightest talent to come out of Canada. A practical example of this in action is with Andrew MacDonald, a four-time finalist of The Prize who has thus appeared in *The Journey Prize Stories*.  

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50 Anna Ling Kaye (writer) in discussion with the author, August 2018.  
51 Ibid.
Stories repeatedly. Chong describes how agents have been reaching out to her about MacDonald’s work for years and in September 2018, Simon and Schuster bought world rights to his debut novel. MacDonald’s success proves that on top of offering further exposure to the literary scene, M&S tries to make The Journey Prize equitable by not requiring rights of first refusal to any of the works that go through The Prize — a clear advantage for writers who want to take their work elsewhere. Of course, this is not to say that M&S does not take advantage of The Prize to find talent. The press offered a two-book deal to Souvankham Thammavongsa, an author who appeared in The Journey Prize Stories in 2016. (One of the books in the deal is a collection of short stories.) Likewise, Amy Jones who appeared in the anthology in 2014 has a novel coming out with M&S in the Fall of 2019. In these instances, The Prize exposed the writers to their more permanent publishing homes. The importance of the anthology as The Journey Prize’s ultimate value-add can therefore not be understated. Anita Chong summarises the book’s impact:

Making it into the anthology is the prize! It’s a calling card! It will get you through the door, bring you to the attention of agents. It helps with applying for grants too. [The anthology] punches above its weight in terms of the artistic validation it gives to the writers. It’s a culturally significant signifier.

With all of this success looming, former finalist and Journey Prize juror, Kevin Hardcastle points out that automatic success/publication is not the natural trajectory for


53 Anita Chong (senior editor, McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, September 2018.
everyone going through The Journey Prize. In actuality, there are writers who expected to
_gain agent attention after being in The Prize and this did not come to be, at least not for a
few years. Naben Ruthnum who is also known as Nathan Ripley is one of those writers.
Ruthnum won The Journey Prize in 2013 and is the author of _Curry: Eating, Reading and
Race_, a nonfiction collection of essays (Coach House Books, 2017) and _Find You In The
Dark_ (2018), a dark thriller published by Simon and Schuster. Ruthnum states that The
Prize was not the greatest catalyst for him commercially and that despite it being a reflec-
tion of “people writing well in this country,” The Journey Prize was not the most signifi-
cant boost to his CV. Doretta Lau, a finalist in the same year as Ruthnum, emphasizes
that visibility after The Prize is not guaranteed and that authors have to find ways to boost
their presence in the industry independently. Lau herself needed the aid of a friend who
worked in the marketing sector to leverage her brand as a writer. The anthology, as much
as it is a “cultural signifier,” is not widely visible; therefore writers might need to work
harder in order to be seen and recognized. Both scenarios (Ruthnum and Lau) raise the
question whether structured help from M&S could help emerging writers better hone in
on the advantages of being in The Prize. The following chapters shall address this concern.

54 Naben Ruthnum (writer) in discussion with the author, July 2018.
CHAPTER TWO: ‘TO NOT BE IGNORED’ — A RECOMMENDED MARKETING STRATEGY

“In an ideal world The Journey Prize would be as well known as the Giller”
– Erin Kelly, McClelland & Stewart marketing manager

VISIBILITY

In light of Chapter One, it is apparent that the 30th anniversary of The Journey Prize has brought about conversations that signal just how much The Prize is ready to step into a future that is diverse and accessible, for writers and audiences alike. The Prize’s purpose has always been to introduce people to a new wave of Canadian talent by creating a platform for the writers’ work to be seen. Along the way, The Prize’s ability to stand out has waned due to several factors including that the “cultural universe” is “super-saturated.” A marked differentiation strategy is thus needed. The following chapter works within the existing structure of The Journey Prize to address most of the issues raised in Chapter One and ask the question: What is The Journey Prize doing to stand out and make itself known to wider audiences and what could it do to continue to improve upon its current marketing strategy?

Historically, The Prize and the anthology have relied on literary reviews to make themselves known. Unfortunately, as Anita Chong points out, the book review section

55 Erin Kelly (marketing manager and associate director of Publicity at PRHC) in discussion with the author, September 2018.

in magazines is shrinking, leaving less space for The Journey Prize to be discovered through this traditional channel.\(^57\) In a similar vein, there is limited word-of-mouth on The Journey Prize around the time of major announcements despite the Globe & Mail ad sponsored by The Writers’ Trust and The Prize’s social media marketing strategy which primarily relies on Facebook. The rise of multimedia content that is accessible on-the-go is a further strike to The Journey Prize’s visibility — not only as a book fighting to retain the attention of consumers but specifically as a short story collection receiving even less visibility than other formats.\(^58\) It is imperative for The Journey Prize’s marketing strategy to evolve onto different platforms and into innovative tactics, to garner more recognition and also increased diversity.

**WITHIN PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE CANADA**

As previously mentioned, The Journey Prize would need to be a focus within Penguin Random House Canada before it can reach audiences around the country and beyond. The Prize would require the corporate backing of departments across PRHC, from Editorial to Publicity to Marketing. M&S’ marketing manager, Erin Kelly, aptly puts it this way: “we [PRHC] need to shift our approach towards The Journey Prize — it is not an obligation but an exciting chance to discover writers.”\(^59\) Kelly underlines the importance of full corporate support for The Journey Prize because it is and can further be an effective acquisitions tool to introduce PRHC to diverse writers. With this in mind, the

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57 Anita Chong (senior editor, McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, September 2018.


59 Ibid.
marketing strategy explored in this chapter will not shy away from calling upon the arms of several departments within the company.

THE SHIFTING ROLE OF THE JOURNALS

It would be amiss to ignore that one of the most obvious ways to bring about diversity would be to open The Journey Prize to the public, without the journals as gatekeepers. Doing so may encourage a broader range of people to submit to The Prize, including those who previously had not considered themselves eligible. Besides, M&S has received minimal marketing support from the journals including limited circulation of information on their writers who are involved in The Prize. It is essential to have more conversations with the journals about the role they are willing to play in the future. Despite this, however, it should be acknowledged that the implementation and coordination of a Journey Prize without journals could be strenuous for M&S as the imprint publishes approximately 45 books annually.

In the current context of The Journey Prize, the journals are the first point of contact with authors and this logistically helps M&S execute The Prize with ease. A more balanced role for the journals is, therefore, one in which they are a source but not the primary source of content/submissions. For example, M&S can open The Prize to the public as a supplement to the submissions from journals and hire professional readers to sift through the stories to save on time. The CBC Short Story Prize has effectively used this strategy to go through submissions and it has served them well thus far\textsuperscript{60} — they are therefore a working model of this process and could be consulted further. The only

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\textsuperscript{60} Kevin Hardcastle, interview by Grace-Emmanuelle Kabeya, August 2018.
caveat with this strategy is that the readers themselves need to be from an array of backgrounds so that the process is equitable and avoids some or most of the biases of the current structure.

To improve the current Journey Prize collaboration with journals, M&S could also ask the following questions: Are there journals who are choosing not to submit to The Prize and why? or Do they know about The Prize and if so what is their perception of it? M&S could also consult the Writers’ Trust journal database which is a list of over 250 journals, with up-to-date names of those new and online too. This database could be used in addition to the work that M&S already does to search for new publications.

Lastly, M&S could encourage more journals to submit by making The Journey Prize entry criteria more transparent. Currently, the entry rules state that “submissions... must come from eligible Canadian print and online literary magazines and annual anthologies…The Journey Prize reserves the right to decide whether a publication qualifies for entry.”61 Apart from being Canadian and having an editorial process, it is unclear what leads to a journal being encouraged to submit to The Prize. As mentioned in Chapter One, the list of journals who have submitted winning stories over the past three decades has been quite consistent and there is a need for a more cohesively open process — inviting more nontraditional journals such as ezines and literary blogs, for example, could diversify the submissions process. The marketing plan in this chapter takes this into account — it is primarily aimed at M&S but it will keep the journals at the front line too.

61 Guidelines for the 2018 Writers’ Trust/McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize (link available on request).
RECOMMENDED MARKETING STRATEGY

Below is a tailored marketing strategy which aims to be the first but not the only step towards solidifying The Journey Prize’s brand as Canada’s primary source of quality emerging writing. This strategy draws its inspiration from Quill and Quire’s “Ones to Watch” initiative. “Ones to Watch” was a list created by leading Canadian publishing magazine Quill and Quire to highlight the industry’s rising stars. It caused tremendous excitement within the industry as a result of its tone of expertise. Through brand strengthening, The Journey Prize can become the “Ones to Watch” in the field of creative writing.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE

It has become impossible to ignore the role of social media in reaching a wide range of audiences. The Journey Prize’s only standalone social platform is its Facebook page. The rest of The Prize’s online presence is through the McClelland & Stewart Instagram and Twitter feeds. At the time of writing, The Journey Prize Facebook page has 2700 likes. The page is the site of all major announcements. There are, however, large gaps of up to two months between posts. Bearing in mind that the frequent posting of quality original content is one of the main ways to retain and engage an audience,62 The Journey Prize is lagging slightly. An active presence on social media is just one of the ways The Prize can open itself to more diverse audiences.

Not surprisingly, “The State of Social Media in Canada [2017]” report conducted by the Social Media Lab at Ryerson University shows that Facebook is still the most important social media platform to leverage. Based on a representative sample set of

1500 Canadians, the report found that 84% of Canadian adults had a Facebook account.\textsuperscript{63} Furthermore, despite rumblings to the contrary, 95% of adults aged 18-24 used Facebook.\textsuperscript{64} A way to leverage Facebook is therefore to make The Journey Prize page interactive, with “Q&A” posts between audiences and writers for example. As the writers participating in The Journey Prize are usually lesser known, interacting with audiences (if they so choose) could build their personal brands. It could also increase the relatability of The Prize and steer it away from a reputation of being inaccessible. In a similar vein, M&S can also conduct a well shot “Behind The Scenes” video with a word from the judges on why the stories they have chosen for the anthology stand out. This strategy mimics that of The Man Booker Prize, which has a forward facing judging panel that interacts with audiences directly (at the time of announcements). Of course, the privacy of the judges is still of utmost importance. However, if they choose to take up a more forward facing stance, there could be a significant increase in public Journey Prize awareness.

To further learn how to leverage Facebook, The Journey Prize’s largest social media platform, the opinions of marketing leaders are critical. Leila Lewis, founder and CEO of Be Inspired, a successful social media and PR Agency, states that the key to nailing Facebook is to create moments exclusive to the platform that audiences need to visit one’s page to find.\textsuperscript{65} A Journey Prize specific “moment” could be conceived through a


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.

testimonial video that draws upon The Prize’s rich legacy of writers. This video would be similar to the one produced by The Writers’ Trust in 2012 featuring authors Jane Urquhart, Yann Martel and Lawrence Hill. The 2012 video was a candid discussion of the impact The Writers’ Trust had had on the authors careers. If The Journey Prize releases something similar with authors such as Madeleine Thien, Yann Martel and Eden Robinson, awareness of The Prize can indeed rise. If the video is inclusive and encompasses writers from different backgrounds who have been through The Prize, it could provoke positive word-of-mouth in the writing community. Furthermore, if the video is distributed not only by M&S but by the journals themselves, submissions from writers of all backgrounds could find their way to the journals which is a positive cyclical effect for The Prize. The video would be limited to Facebook for a period before finding its way to other channels as shall be explored below.

As previously alluded to, “The State of Social Media in Canada” is one of the most up-to-date, comprehensive records of how Canadians use social platforms. The report states that apart from Facebook, YouTube is the second most popular social media site in Canada. 59% of online adults report having an account on the platform. Furthermore, YouTube has one of the most balanced and diverse audiences with “adoption...


68 Ibid.
consistent across income groups” in comparison to Twitter and LinkedIn.\(^6^9\) It is therefore advantageous for The Journey Prize to adopt a Youtube presence which will increase its visibility amongst a wider range of people. It is also important to note that YouTube has been a kind home to literary prizes, providing a space for the prizes to share updates efficiently and concisely. The Man Booker Prize and The Scotiabank Giller Prize are some of the most popular literary prizes taking advantage of Youtube to post interviews, announcements and readings, as well as videos like the “testimonial” suggested for The Journey Prize Facebook (see previous paragraph). On average these videos can get up to 16,000 views (The Man Booker Prize) and 2,300 views (The Giller), with consistent engagement in the comment sections. The Journey Prize could benefit from having a similar visual presence that promotes discoverability and interactivity.

With this in mind, YouTube is also an ideal social media platform for The Journey Prize because of its booming BookTube scene: “BookTube refers to the group of content creators on YouTube that film videos based on books”.\(^7^0\) According to YouTube, the [BookTube] community as a whole has over 200 million views, and engagement is increasing exponentially.\(^7^1\) BookTube could be instrumental in the discoverability of the anthology, *The Journey Prize Stories*. A segment on the anthology by a widely followed Canadian Booktuber like *riney reads* or Ariel Bissett could introduce The Prize to broader but especially more diverse audiences. As The Journey Prize marketing strategy


evolves, however, having finalists of The Prize on a BookTube segment could become one of the add-ons to the prize package.

With this acknowledgement of the impact of influencers, it would be valuable to also point out that The Journey Prize jurors have their own networks that can further improve the reach of The Prize. This year, for example, Zoe Leigh Peterson, Kerry Clare and Sharon Bala have a combined total of over 6,000 followers across social media platforms: a higher following than any of the individual PRHC imprint pages. Having them as ambassadors in an official capacity, especially as one of the most diverse juries The Prize has had, could spearhead fruitful visibility. Take Sharon Bala as an example. Bala won The Journey Prize in 2017 and was published by McClelland & Stewart in 2018 for her debut novel *The Boat People*. *The Boat People* has received high praise and is one of the widest read audiobooks in Canada.\(^2\) Sharon is an active representation of what The Journey Prize can do for a career, and it could be great to have her insight and voice as a key part of The Journey Prize media strategy.

Last but not least on the topic of leveraging different social media platforms is the impact of paid ads and their ability to reach underrepresented demographics. Ads on Facebook, for example, are measurable, known to increase brand awareness and usually cheaper than those on other platforms.\(^3\) In the case of The Journey Prize, one of the most pertinent issues to address is that of geographical disparity/the Ontario-centricity of the Canadian publishing industry. Geotargeting people outside of the Greater Toronto

\(^2\) Erin Kelly (marketing manager and associate director of Publicity at PRHC) in discussion with the author, September 2018.

Area through Facebook or Youtube ads would heighten The Journey Prize’s accessibility with a ripple effect of diverse submissions. Kevin Hardcastle makes a case for why geotargetting is a necessity. He states, from personal experience, that as a writer “stuck in Alberta, writing for myself and my own, I didn’t have the benefit of going to readings and being part of a (literary) community.” However, being in contact with other finalists and Journey Prize stakeholders through Facebook (and Twitter) was a considerable way for Hardcastle to network beyond his geographical location. Using social media was a step towards finding a community.

**VISUAL IDENTITY**

In the continued quest towards an egalitarian *Journey Prize*, the words of the renowned design consultant, Alina Wheeler, are timely: “Visual identity triggers perceptions and unlocks associations of the brand.” For half of its life, The Journey Prize has had covers with images of people on them – white people (see Appendix C). It could be argued that this has propagated the exclusionary reputation Jared Bland mentions in Chapter One. Even with a long list that has included writers of colour, the aesthetic of The Journey Prize in its earlier years would easily make one assume that The Prize catered mostly (or only) to white people. With the predominantly white publishing landscape that exists in Canada, this assumption would not be far-fetched. The danger of having such a preceding reputation is that it limits the entry of different perspectives into The Prize which subsequently stunts The Prize’s growth and development. The reputa-

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74 Kevin Hardcastle, interview by Grace-Emmanuelle Kabeya, August 16, 2018.

tion of The Journey Prize could also bring about a cycle whereby journals submit stories that conform to the mould because they believe that that is what a Journey Prize story is expected to be. The functioning of The Journey Prize, its brand and its reach, therefore, hinges on the relatability of its design aesthetic.

For instance, the look of all Journey Prize marketing materials stems from the cover design of the anthology. In the past five years, the cover has adopted a minimalist style with an emphasis on primary colours (see Appendix C). This new approach has been strategically chosen to align The Journey Prize with fellow short story awards, namely, The O’Henry Award and the Best American Short Story. This is a reliable and cost-effective way of positioning The Prize, it is sometimes more beneficial to stand out from competitors even in a ‘comparables’-driven industry like publishing. The *HuffPost* post article “Yes, We Really Do Judge Books By Their Covers” expresses the necessity of having dynamic covers to generate visibility for an author, to pique audience interest and to retain that interest too.

Master of Publishing student Jesse Savage elaborates on the importance of powerful book covers this way: “One of the most important jobs of a book cover is to set the mood, preparing the reader for the story they’re about to immerse themselves in. It can easily be argued that a book cover is the first visual component that champions the story itself. As readers, we want to know what we are getting ourselves into when we pick up

76 Anita Chong (senior editor, McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, September 2018.

With the HuffPost and Savage’s opinions in mind, there are concerns that the current Journey Prize aesthetic is not telling enough of a story or giving readers a glimpse into the stories within the anthology. Therefore, a suggestion would be to assemble striking elements from each story to place on the cover of the book. Alternatively, one image that encapsulates the whole collection could be used. It is advisable to draw inspiration from short story collections that have had striking and rememberable designs, particularly Helen Oyeyemi’s What Is Not Yours and László Krasznahorkai The World Goes On (the latter in a typographical sense). Using this design strategy will keep each year vibrant, unpredictable and hopefully representative, ultimately increasing the visibility of The Journey Prize. The marketing teams at PRHC and the journals will also have interesting visuals to play around with and to translate across the different marketing channels. It could also be beneficial to play up the word “JOURNEY” in the book title, which is already slightly more boldened and intricate than the rest of the typography on the cover (see Appendix C). This word could become The Journey Prize’s identifiable motif like The Man Booker Prize’s coloured codex or the Giller Prize’s illustrated red rose.

MARKETING MATERIALS

Once the new visual aesthetic is in place, complementary Journey Prize swag can be created to further expand and strengthen the brand’s identity. Swag is vital because it allows a brand to recur in people’s minds over a long period. The use and wide distrib-


tion of swag is also a way of ensuring familiarity and eventually trust from audiences.\textsuperscript{80} Because The Journey Prize is not only a literary award, but an anthology, swag for the book could be an excellent addition to the overall marketing strategy. The most obvious swag choice that will lend itself well is a Journey Prize bookmark. Bookmarks are not only easy to distribute, but they are affordable to print. Research across stationery retailers in Canada shows that bookmarks cost as low as $87 for 1000 or $150 for 5000.\textsuperscript{81} Even those with slightly more intricate designs can be as low as two cents each. McClelland & Stewart already produces bookmarks for its key titles; therefore the framework to introduce a Journey Prize specific one is in place.

Regarding the message the Journey Prize bookmarks could convey, a suggestion would be to include quotes from emerging writers on their writing process. These could prove inspirational, quirky or both. Again, the swag’s aim is to increase the relatability and accessibility of The Journey Prize to the public. That being said, The Journey Prize bookmarks could contain a call-to-action such as “Submit to The Journey Prize or submit to <insert name of the journal>.” If there is a specific code tied to this call-to-action, M&S will be able to measurably check if the marketing strategy is leading to more submissions to The Prize. Care should be taken to distribute the swag, bookmarks in this case, to bookstores (independent and chain alike) and to writing centres across the country, with the aim of reaching a diverse group of people. There could be targetted distribution towards community centres that serve underrepresented groups of people in publishing (LGBTQ+ groups or POC communities for example). In addition, bookmarks can be

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{81} “Printing And Web Marketing Under One Roof!,” printingpeach.ca, 2018, https://printingpeach.ca/bookmark-printing/.
presented to attendees of the annual Festival of Literary Diversity in Toronto. This will emphasise The Prize’s commitment to reaching writers from diverse backgrounds. With all of this said, it should be noted that bookmarks are only a start but if their distribution proves successful, M&S could consider expanding the Journey Prize swag collection to include notebooks, tote bags and mugs, all of which could be featured in The Penguin Shop.

The PRHC offices in Toronto are home to the Penguin Shop, a retail space carrying the latest books and merchandise from the company. The shop has hosted successful author takeovers — where the retail space is revamped for weeks at a time to spotlight a writers’ work (see Appendix D). Having a Journey Prize specific takeover that showcases the work of emerging writers would be a wonderful addition to the prize package. Furthermore, Penguin Shop takeovers are historically well promoted by the authors who are the focus of the takeover; this is a very effective way to create word of mouth. Social media invitations to visit the shop can also be sent out. It is advisable to host all Journey Prize shop takeovers in the Fall around the time of significant Prize announcements.

Lastly, for another tangible way to circulate information on The Prize, The Writers’ Trust could consider creating a Journey Prize brochure similar to the one it distributes for the Bronwen Wallace Short Story Award. Brochures are a useful marketing tool because they can “hold much information in a compact space, and they can be more affordable than online marketing options.”82 Like the Bronwen Wallace brochure, The Journey Prize one will contain an introduction to the award, stories from the finalists, information on the authors and jurors too as well as a comprehensive timeline of all past

winners and participants. Writers will have the opportunity to garner exposure through this marketing strategy.

**LANDING PAGE**

A strong visual identity and brand presence will naturally lead audiences to search for The Journey Prize online. Having a landing page to welcome aspiring writers, short story readers and consumers of the anthology, is of utmost importance. Apart from its Facebook page, The Journey Prize’s online presence is on the Writers’ Trust website.\(^{83}\) Snippets of the site are pictured in Appendix E. The page has an appealing design aesthetic with information laid out including The Prize’s submissions criteria, the anthology and where to buy it, and a list of all past participants since the collaboration between M&S and the Writers’ Trust began. The opening tagline on the site is “Discovering the top short stories from Canada’s brightest up-and-coming talent” which is snappy and engaging.

When “The Journey Prize” is searched in Google, the Writers’ Trust landing page is the first result to appear which signals a good SEO rating. The only suggestion towards making the site more accessible and to hopefully garner wider and more diverse attention is to make it more interactive by including a blog section similar to that of the CBC Short Story Prize. The blog could offer insight on industry trends and a peek at what agents and editors are looking for as well as a forum for discussion.\(^ {84}\) The Journey Prize Facebook page would also lead traffic to the blog and to the rest of the site, working cohesively to create a robust digital strategy.

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PODCAST APPEARANCES

Even with a prominent online presence and visual identity, The Journey Prize needs to tap into different media forms, audio being one of them. With the rise of smartphones and the availability of Internet-friendly technologies, audio storytelling through podcasts and audiobooks has skyrocketed. According to Midroll, a leading podcast advertising network, “the podcast audience has grown to 73 million listeners a month...a 73% increase since 2014.” People are consuming podcasts voraciously and are incredibly loyal to their favourite ones. Intriguingly, short stories are finding their home in audio too. In recent years, podcasts dedicated to gripping, bite-sized short stories have risen. The episodic nature of podcasts lends itself well to the short story genre because of how concise the content is. Emma Rodero, a communications professor at the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, emphasizes this audio and storytelling synergy: “audio is one of the most intimate forms of media because you are constantly building your own images of the story in your mind and you’re creating your own production...[A] dramatised audio structure, using voice actors who tell the story exclusively through dialogue, stimulate listeners.” Taking heed of Rodero’s thoughts as well as what is known about short stories and audio, it is apparent that there is a business case for touring Journey Prize authors on different podcasts. The writers could read excerpts from their submissions and discuss them with the podcast hosts, for example. Logistically, it would only be possible to


87 Ibid.
include finalists or the winner in this plan. Despite this, the Journey Prize podcast tour is an inclusive strategy to add to The Prize because writers can participate no matter where they are based geographically. (There is often a way to call into a podcast if physical presence is not possible.) The tour is also a way to add value to the overall award package, giving writers who are shortlisted for The Prize exposure and “professional currency.” Having Journey Prize writers on podcasts provides an opportunity to promote The Prize, which will hopefully pique the interest of broader audiences and lead to the recruiting of diverse up-and-coming talent. Furthermore, The Journey Prize anthology would be mentioned in each episode, thus likely generating anthology sales.

Podcasts to approach because of their championing of new voices and their international acclaim are *The Writers Voice*, *Selected Shorts*, *Can’t Lit*, *The Next Chapter*, *The Truth* and *LeVar Burton Reads*. That being said, it is also essential for The Journey Prize to look in-house. In August 2018, Penguin Random House Canada launched a podcast called semi-prose. It explores “new Canadian books, stores of pop culture, and readerly curiosities” in a roundtable discussion with authors. Despite its recent launch, semi-prose is steadily growing in listenership. It has also gained significant exposure and was centred on the iTunes podcast homepage its first week of release. The amazing list of writers who have been featured on the podcast includes Scaachi Koul, Vivek Shraya, David Chariandy, Kerry Sakamoto and Carianne Leung with Naben Ruthnum and Esi Edugyan to come. Since its launch, semi-prose has primarily centred diverse narratives. It is the perfect podcast partner because it is part of the Penguin Random House family

89 semi-prose hosts in conversation with Grace-Emmanuelle Kabeya, May to August 2018.
(making it easier to coordinate writer appearances) but also because the roundtable discussion is relatable, informative and entertaining. All-in-all a Journey Prize podcast collaboration could be a step towards making the podcasting space more diverse too.

According to Podcast Movement, the largest annual conference for the podcasting industry, most early adopters of podcasts are white, affluent men, and serving a broader audience continues to be a challenge.90 By entering into the audio space with its reinvigorated mission, The Journey Prize could bring different voices to the waves.

EVENTS

Podcasts are an effective way to reach audiences because they are easily distributable, especially through social media. To garner an equal or higher level of interactivity, however, hosting in-person Journey Prize events could be considered. According to the International School of Communications, “even in the age of technology-driven communication, face-to-face channels like events are [still] an important part of the mix for both internal and external outreach”.91 The idea of “internal and external outreach” is particularly pertinent in the case of The Journey Prize. Not only is The Prize trying to strengthen its brand in the minds of emerging writers and diverse audiences but it is trying to invoke the recognition and collective support of its Penguin Random House family. To host an event would be to have a physical and measurable sign of the impact The Prize is having.


Thankfully, Penguin Random House Canada is a powerhouse at hosting events of all sizes and for different purposes. One exciting event the company puts on is the Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA) welcome party. The party happens annually in the PRHC offices and hundreds of industry guests including authors, agents, and even competing publishers are invited to attend. As much as the event is entertaining, it is a highly conducive networking environment: a hub to meet and recruit writers. It is also strategically the first occasion to herald one of the largest festivals of authors in Canada. The party is exclusive and is aimed at established writers.

Using this PRHC TIFA party as a general framework, a Journey Prize focused party with agents, publishers and the emerging writers from the anthology can be hosted. The purpose of this Journey Prize event would be to try to equitably share the professional benefits of being in The Prize amongst all the longlisted writers. The event would also be a way to create excitement around The Journey Prize in the industry and most importantly, the organisation of the event would require the involvement of several teams at PRHC. The Prize will, therefore, have the chance to become a collective priority in the company.

Unlike the TIFA party, The Journey Prize one will be structured as a reading — to introduce the work of the emerging writers to attendees. This means that a part of the party (most likely towards the beginning) could consist of the longlisted writers presenting their work for a maximum of two minutes. After this, the networking portion may begin. It is advisable to make this event the official book launch of the Journey Prize Stories to generate even more visibility for the anthology. Never forgetting the importance of accessibility and inclusion, writers outside of Toronto could be flown in and a video calling system could also be organised for those unable to be there in-person. And as a final add-on, a wide range of Journey Prize alumni could be invited to meet the writers.
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The incorporation of events into the overall Journey Prize strategy could lessen the feeling most of the emerging writers interviewed for this report admitted to having after being a part of The Prize; that of being “fish out of water” without a clear idea on how to jumpstart their careers. Through events, the writers are given the opportunity to meet industry professionals, which could raise their chances at publication and increase their overall career development. To continue to make The Journey Prize one of the most diverse and well-known sources of emerging talent in Canada, however, more strategic collaborations around the country could be formed.

In a special feature for The Globe & Mail, President of Paypal Canada, Paul Parisi, states that “Collaboration and strategic partnerships are fundamental to improving business outcomes...[Through them] businesses can broaden their relevance and increase their addressable market.”92 In the case of The Journey Prize “broadening relevance” means increasing people’s awareness of The Prize and making sure that diverse groups are especially not being left out of its reach. It is, therefore, advisable to form a de facto Journey Prize advisory board made up of publishers, agents, editors, teachers, and coordinators of diverse creative writing programs across Canada. This board could spread word about The Prize to its networks while signalling talent that might be flying under the radar of The Prize’s current sourcing pool. The board is an additional way to ensure that different writing styles and voices are being actively pursued and not overlooked.

To further clarify how to set up an advisory board of this nature, The Journey

Prize administrators could seek the opinions of Phoebe Wang and Dionne Brand, the two curators of the boundary-pushing anthology, *The Unpublished City*, which “brings together a collection of diverse voices, a true cross-section of Toronto’s burgeoning literary community.” Both Wang and Brand have made it a point to reach out to professors of creative writing programs during the acquisitions stage of their anthology. They have consistent intel into who the up-and-coming writers in Toronto are and this has proven incredibly successful so far.

In another vein but on the topic of partnerships, the Writers’ Trust has been instrumental in building the Journey Prize. From covering the cost of travel for writers outside Toronto to advertising the anthology in *The Globe & Mail*, the Trust is a partner to keep for years to come. However, even with them as a reliable partner, The Journey Prize still needs a few more internal (within PRHC) allies. *semi-prose*, as mentioned before, is a possible partner. *Hazlitt* is another. *Hazlitt* is a content-rich, online literary magazine created by PRHC, dedicated to “humane, diverse...stories and writers not heard anywhere else.” Since its launch in 2012, *Hazlitt* has featured numerous writers from a range of backgrounds, offering equal exposure to works of fiction and nonfiction. Not only is *Hazlitt* a refreshing source of writers and their stories, but it has a “healthy and dedicated readership.” A fixed collaboration with *Hazlitt*, where Journey Prize writers

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94 Kevin Hardcastle, interview by Grace-Emmanuelle Kabeya, August 16, 2018.

95 “About | Hazlitt,” [Hazlitt](https://hazlitt.net/about), 2018.

96 Jordan Ginsberg (senior editor of Hazlitt) in conversation with the author, November 2018.
are interviewed, could make The Journey Prize winners package even more unique and unparalleled in the industry. It could strategically make people aware of The Prize. The aforementioned partnerships alongside the rest of the marketing strategy outlined in this chapter could push The Journey Prize and its reputation towards refreshing opportunities.
“In The Journey Prize as it stands, only one person gets to be the winner. In the academy (WriteNow) approach, everyone’s a winner.”

– Anita Chong\textsuperscript{97}

The previous chapter discusses ways in which the visibility and the diversity of The Journey Prize could be improved with the help of specific marketing strategies. The marketing plan is aimed at the current structure of The Journey Prize — a structure that has been in place for three decades. In a “super-saturated” literary award environment, it is wise for The Journey Prize to evolve to ensure further longevity and relevancy.\textsuperscript{98} The marketing strategies outlined in Chapter Two are a step towards achieving that. However, what if The Journey Prize rewrote itself completely? What if The Prize became a tool towards extinguishing the institutional biases that the publishing industry has for so long propagated? The Journey Prize could actively become a platform for equity.

The following chapter shall present a different approach to effecting change within The Prize. Its \textit{entire} focus is to promote diversity. The approach in this chapter is to be considered carefully if time, resources and full company commitment are present. It could be seen as a high-risk suggestion because it upturns systems that have been in

\textsuperscript{97} Anita Chong (senior editor, McClelland & Stewart) in discussion with the author, September 2018.

place for decades; however, there are sound frames of research and reference to base the approach on. The idea in Chapter Three is to transform The Journey Prize from a literary award to a mentorship program called WriteNow Canada.

WRITENOW CANADA

The idea of WriteNow Canada is for it to be an intensive PRHC-led mentorship program open to emerging writers from diverse backgrounds. WriteNow Canada is based on a flagship Penguin Random House UK initiative called WriteNow. In 2016, WriteNow was created to “help ensure books and publishing better reflect society.” WriteNow aims to give emerging writers from underrepresented backgrounds “the tools, information and access [they] need to get published.” At the time of the initiative’s creation, PRHUK candidly announced that “there are still too many stories which are not being told” which is why WriteNow would open the application process to writers exclusively “from BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) or LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer) communities, those who have a disability or come from a socio-economically marginalised background.”


A further aspect of the initiative is that every writer who applies is required to be unpublished, making WriteNow accessible, with fewer barriers to entry.

Out of a pool of applicants, “150 of the most talented and promising are invited to attend one of three free workshops” spread across the UK — in publishing hubs such as London, Liverpool and Nottingham. The workshops feature advice from authors, illustrators, literary agents and Penguin Random House experts on how emerging writers can “navigate the publishing process to get their work noticed.” The workshops also include “learning techniques for editing your writing, developing your artwork, or getting tips on how to approach a literary agent.” Writers also have the “unique opportunity to receive one-to-one personal feedback from an editor” on their manuscript-in-progress.

After this process of getting to know the writers and their work, PRHUK asks “10 brilliant new voices to join their year-long mentoring programme.” While it is not a given, PRHUK publishes a significant number of mentee manuscripts. As of 2018, they have signed publishing deals with five writers, showing that the program is an effective acquisitions strategy for the company. WriteNow is also a focus of PRHUK’s Corporate Social Responsibility strategy: to “contribute to the welfare and interests of society, [and]

102 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
not just the organisation.”108 The company partners with numerous community writing organisations to sensitively run the program.

WriteNow’s success has been palpable. The media coverage has been vast, from the BBC to the Huffington Post and even the government bureau of The City of London. Moreover, PRHUK receives over 5000 applications annually,109 showing broad interest for the scheme. Correspondingly, at least 98% of writers who attended one of the WriteNow events in 2018 said that the initiative “made them feel more confident and positive about their future as a writer.”110 WriteNow shows that PRHUK is willing to take practical steps to ensure that they publish diversely and frankly this program is a needed addition to publishing.

At the time of this report, WriteNow does not exist at PRHC. There have been conversations about bringing the program to the Canadian market, however. This Journey Prize transition period, marked by The Prize’s 30th anniversary, could be just the time to do so. WriteNow Canada is a direct adaptation of WriteNow (UK) — to replace the existing structure of The Journey Prize.111

111 The structure of The Academy is based on the WriteNow model, created by Siena Parker, director of Corporate Responsibility at PRHUK. Her advice and knowledge about system coordination were crucial to this report.
MARKET ANALYSIS

What are the steps to bring WriteNow to Canada? The first one is to analyse the market to see the current mentorship offerings already available. The Writers’ Union of Canada lists nine mentorship schemes across the country and the only one similar to WriteNow is the Diaspora Dialogues Mentoring Program. The Diaspora Dialogues program was founded in 2005 as “an outlet for writers and artists who are new to Canada, who are under-represented and who may not have found their audience and market.” It is a free mentorship scheme to teach writers “more about their profession, namely how to get their work published or performed.” Diaspora Dialogues strategically places “writers in one-on-one [contact] with some of Canada’s best writers, including Lawrence Hill, Shani Mootoo, Cherie Dimaline [and] Andrew Pyper.” As with WriteNow, there is an open call for submissions. After an adjudication process, “a shortlist of approximately 15 emerging writers is chosen.” Some of the value-adds that Diaspora Dialogues offers, that are particularly well-tailored to the Canadian market, are monthly writer performances at various literary venues in Toronto. At these performances emerging writers are encouraged to network and display their work. Diaspora Dialogues also hosts profes-


114 Ibid.


116 Ibid.

sional development seminars and does outreaches to city high schools\textsuperscript{118} — a strategy WriteNow Canada could definitely consider. Lastly, Diaspora Dialogues has “large-scale partners such as the Toronto Public Library..., Toronto’s Luminato and Nuit Blanche, the London Literature Festival,...and Scotland’s Edinburgh Festivals.”\textsuperscript{119} Ideally, a possible collaboration with Diaspora Dialogues and PRHC could be mutually beneficial. That being said, Diaspora Dialogues is extremely Toronto-centric despite its attempts to branch out to different locations across the country, whereas WriteNow Canada would have a national reach from the beginning (afforded through backing from PRHC).

Furthermore, Diaspora Dialogues states that “when appropriate, select mentees will get the opportunity to receive targeted introductions to agents and/or publishers,”\textsuperscript{120} which is a conditional and limited offer that is not available to everyone. WriteNow Canada, on the other hand, would guarantee broad industry networking for all the selected applicants.

In a similar vein to the Diaspora Dialogues program, the CBC Short Story Prize offers writers the opportunity to attend a “two-week writing residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity,”\textsuperscript{121} successfully incorporating mentorship into their awards package. Despite the advantages of this particular offering, two weeks is hugely condensed whereas WriteNow Canada would be a year-long scheme offering more time for emerging writers to work on their manuscripts and foster relationships with PRHC. WriteNow

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
Canada would thus be a more well-rounded career experience and a needed addition to Canadian publishing.

**LOGISTICS**

If any company can bring WriteNow to Canada, it is PRHC. As the largest trade publisher in the country, PRHC could set a precedent for the industry and use its resources to encourage the fostering of diverse talent. With this in mind, the first logistical process to take into account is the creation of an online application where emerging writers can submit a 1000-word excerpt from their manuscript-in-progress alongside a 250-word synopsis, and a 250-word paragraph on their background. (It should be acknowledged that apart from the paragraph describing their backgrounds, PRHC would need to trust that the applicants are being truthful in their applications to the program).

Having an online application could allow PRHC to reach writers across Canada in a way that is quick and cost-effective. That being said, the application process would need to be accessible. For example, technical assistance could be made available to people with disabilities and other accommodations could be offered to those who are unable to apply online.\(^{122}\) The Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology states that issues to take into account when creating an accessible online application are “pages timing out, pages not being saved easily...and keyboard accessibility.”\(^{123}\)

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Collaborating with companies such as Submittable to make the WriteNowCanada online application adaptive is a recommended step.

From the seminars on how to develop their work and get published to the one-on-one feedback from experts, WriteNow Canada would be comprehensive and it would show emerging writers from diverse backgrounds that their work is valued and ready to be received. At least 20 full and part-time PRHC staff members are needed to review the submissions to the program; this includes assistants, interns, editors, marketing leads, sales reps and publishers. Making sure that the applications are appraised by people in different levels of the company and in different departments could not only increase buy-in for the idea but it could also increase the intrinsic motivation within the company. From a human resources perspective, the creation of WriteNow Canada could be a team-bonding experience and it could sharpen PRHC’s performance by introducing equitable decision making.¹²⁴

Each reviewer would be assigned 10% of the total applications. If time permits, every application should be checked by more than one person to limit ‘blind spots’ and biases. Reviewers are encouraged to score each section of the application out of 5. Scoring in this manner has traditionally been associated with sports such as skating; however, Carolyn Warren, the former manager of cultural programs at the CBC states that it is an effective and equitable way to make decisions when faced with numerous submissions.¹²⁵


¹²⁵ Carolyn Warren (Director General, Arts Granting Programs at the Canada Council of The Arts) in conversation with the author, June 2018.
Warren confirms that The Toronto Star had a scoring system for their literary competitions in the past and that they had success finding and adjudicating talent because of it.\textsuperscript{126}

Once this application framework is in place and the initial round of scoring is complete, a shortlist of applicants could be invited to submit larger samples of their work to PRHC — a benchmark is around 5000 words of their manuscript-in-progress. At this point, PRHC could organise a series of face-to-face networking meetings in three publishing hubs across Canada. Suggestions of publishing hubs for the flagship year are Toronto, Halifax and Vancouver — spread across the country so hopefully, a large number of people can attend at least one networking meeting. It should be re-iterated that face-to-face networking creates a memorable, personal impression;\textsuperscript{127} however, for those who cannot attend, video conference meetings could be set up or digital resources could be sent to them. Accessibility should always be at the forefront of WriteNow Canada.

From this networking, a total of ten writers could be chosen to advance to the next round: an opportunity to receive yearlong mentorship from a PRHC expert. WriteNow Canada’s mentorship could be structured as six one-on-one sessions; three in person and three over the phone spread throughout a year.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

It is clear from this logistical analysis that WriteNow Canada is a shift from The Journey Prize; however, the mission to be the home of Canada’s brightest up-and-coming

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
talent remains the same. The most significant change is that WriteNow Canada will only be open to people from marginalised backgrounds — something I believe is overdue.

In the case of PRHUK, they have indeed received support for their WriteNow initiative but not all the feedback has been positive. For example, famed author Lionel Shriver called PRHUK’s steps towards diversity unnecessary — the equivalent of a ‘pity party.’ She states: “Drunk on virtue, Penguin Random House no longer regards the company’s raison d’être as the acquisition and dissemination of good books” but rather political correctness governs the company’s decisions.128 What Shriver, however, does not take into account are the barriers that stop minority groups from entering the publishing industry in the first place:129 remnants of colonialism and mass oppression for centuries on end. PRHUK’s WriteNow and PRHC’s (possible) WriteNow Canada are overdue steps towards recognising the lack of diversity in the publishing industry while practically trying to rectify this. WriteNow is not positive affirmation for affirmation’s sake. It is a proven fact that companies that promote diverse initiatives perform better in business130 and after decades of the same structure, WriteNow Canada is an honourable way to replace The Journey Prize.

It is essential, however, to get the opinions of the people invested in The Prize as it currently stands. Some direct stakeholders were asked what they thought of the WriteNow Canada idea starting with Grace O’Connell, the all-around Journey Prize stakehold-

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129 Ibid.

er. O’Connell states, “The Prize as it is now is a huge benefit to all of the writers” however “offering them the equivalent of an MFA is financially a huge benefit and critically and emotionally a huge benefit.”¹³¹ Likewise, Anna Ling Kaye states that WriteNow Canada would “foster the relationship between authors and Penguin Random House because there is a growing perception that publishers are getting more and more of the cut and that authors are getting less and less.”¹³² WriteNow Canada would be an act of goodwill on PRHC’s part. Lastly, Doretta Lau sums it up by saying that to have “year-long mentorship where people can still have jobs, at no cost to them is invaluable!”¹³³ WriteNow Canada is a win towards accessibility in publishing!

OUTREACH

WriteNow Canada would need to be marketed heavily despite its widely recognised parent, PRHC. A ‘non-traditional’ approach is needed. For example, outside of marketing it in outlets such as The Globe & Mail and Chatelaine, other outlets tailored specifically to underrepresented groups should be a focus. Examples are ByBlacks magazine, an online platform specifically catering to Black people in Canada or The Shade Room, a current affairs site offering the latest in global Black news. Muskrat Magazine, an Indigenous online arts and culture magazine and Kukukwes.com, a news website dedicated to covering Indigenous news across the lands known as Canada are also compelling partners. Further outlets to be considered for outreach are Abilities Magazine and Thrive

¹³¹ Grace O’Connell, interview by Grace-Emmanuelle Kabeya, August 2018.
¹³² Anna Ling Kaye (writer) in discussion with the author, August 2018.
¹³³ Doretta Lau, interview by Grace-Emmanuelle Kabeya, August 2018.
Magazine, both publications are tailored towards creating a safe space for people with disabilities. Advertising WriteNow Canada in each of these channels could garner the interest of a beautifully diverse set of writers. WriteNow Canada could challenge PRHC to diversify its strategy when thinking of reaching potential writers and consumers in general. Equally, steps that the company has already put in place such as the creation of a Diversity and Inclusivity committee could continue to focus on finding lists of outlets that are frequented by people from underrepresented groups. As stated in Chapter Two, Facebook and Youtube could be leveraged better to reach diverse audiences. Suggested content for these social media platforms are captivating 20-second videos with gripping taglines: “DO YOU WANT TO GET PUBLISHED?,” followed by information on how to apply to WriteNow Canada.

WriteNow Canada marketing materials could be released around specific times: Black History Month and Pride Month, for example, to reach intended audiences. Also, it is important to include writers outside of the Toronto area. Therefore, geo-targeting on social media to people in and around the other publishing hubs that will host the networking events (in British Columbia and Nova Scotia) could be useful. Traditional marketing such as on-the-ground posters could also be incorporated, coupled with outreach to cultural centres, libraries and bookshops. The aim of these outreach strategies is to further ensure applications to the program.

It is logical that based on the time and resources put into WriteNow Canada, PRHC would have rights of first refusal to any work produced through it: mainly due to the length of the mentorship and the close relationship with the emerging writers’ work that PRHC staff would have at the end of each cycle. That being said, if PRHC does not pursue a WriteNow manuscript 30 days from the time of its agreed completion, the writer should have every right to take the book elsewhere. For additional support in fleshing the
idea of WriteNow Canada out, PRHC could reach out to PRH Australia who are also considering setting up a similar initiative of their own.\textsuperscript{134} It is apparent that increasing diversity is becoming a top priority in the global company but there is still a long way to go.

\textsuperscript{134} Siena Parker (head of Corporate Responsibility, PRHUK) in discussion with the author, July 2018.
CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report is to take stock of The Journey Prize to make sure that it is the most visible and accessible version of itself it can be. Part of this work’s intention is to recognize that The Prize is shaped by an industry that has historically ignored the marginalized and that The Journey Prize needs to take steps to rectify this problem to remain relevant in an evolving publishing industry. A representative Journey Prize is one that actively gears its outreach towards underserved and underrepresented writers, through curated marketing techniques such as those outlined in Chapter Two. An even more representative approach lets go of the existing model in favour of a mentorship structure such as WriteNow Canada, discussed in Chapter Three.

Fostering diverse emerging talent and breaking down the barriers to entry that keep the marginalized out in the first place is what WriteNow Canada can do for the industry, for PRHC and for the country. WriteNow Canada can go beyond what the publishing industry currently offers: it is a uniquely proactive course of action. From a business standpoint, WriteNow Canada is a strong acquisitions strategy for PRHC and there is a tried and tested framework on which to model the Canadian program. WriteNow Canada is, therefore, the primary recommendation to come out of this ‘audit.’

It should be acknowledged, however, that bringing WriteNow to PRHC is a largely radical undertaking that will require additional resources. A safer bet would be to keep The Journey Prize as is and if this option is chosen, then the relationship between The Prize and the journals should be scrutinised. At present, relying on journals for content is perpetuating the cycle of exclusion that this report is lobbying against. It is thus important to find ways to improve the relationship with the journals and to keep them more account-
able to publish and submit high-quality, diverse content. Future researchers are encouraged to look at the symbiotic relationship between journals and literary awards. Primarily so that the lack of diversity in the journals does not continue to feed into the content that is prized by the awards. On a similar note, this report also highlights the importance of having a diverse adjudication body in The Journey Prize and other literary competitions. It is vital for writers to see that their work is welcome, valued and judged equitably — representation matters.

For the most part, The Journey Prize offers ‘professional currency,’ a beneficial addition to a writers’ portfolio, but this ‘currency’ could be heightened if The Prize was even more well-known across Canada. Besides, visibility is inextricably linked to diversity. The more people know about The Journey Prize and are invited to participate, the less it will have a closed off reputation that dissuades potential applicants (journals and writers).

This 30th anniversary is a watershed time to think about the future of The Prize. Should PRHC hone in on The Journey Prize’s current structure but make it more diverse and visible or should they introduce an entirely new initiative that will address issues of inequality in the publishing industry on a grander scale? Whichever path is chosen, The Prize will be a key catalyst for change.


About The Writers’ Trust Of Canada. Video, 2012. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TJsLHsh1xg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TJsLHsh1xg).


management.


The Journey Prize Stories: 30 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2018), ABOUT THE JOURNEY PRIZE STORIES.


APPENDIX A

INDUSTRY OVERALL

RACE
79% White/Caucasian
4% Black/African-American
<1% Native American/Alaskan Native
7% Asian/Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
6% Hispanic/Latino/Mexican
1% Middle Eastern
3% Biracial/Multiracial

GENDER
78% Woman/Cis-woman
9% Man/Cis-man
1% Trans-man
<1% Trans-woman
<1% Other
<1% Intersex
1% Gender nonconforming

ORIENTATION
88% Straight/Heterosexual
7% Lesbian/Gay
4% Bisexual/Pansexual
1% Asexual
<1% Other
<1% Intersex
<1% Gender nonconforming

DISABILITY
92% Non-disabled
8% Yes
92% No

APPENDIX B

“The Journey Prize anthology has become the proving ground for new, young Canadian writers, a who’s who of the coming generation.”
YANN MARTEL

“The day I received the letter that told me my story would be included in the Journey Prize anthology was one of the most memorable days of my writing career.”
SARAH SELECKY

“A quarter century of great work has gone onto the pages of Journey Prize anthologies and into the production of these twenty-five books. Canadian Literature is flat-out lucky to have such an institution.”
ALEXANDER MACLEOD

“A great jolt of electricity startles the heart and jump-starts the writing career when you get the nod from the Journey people. It’s a thrill to find your name included amongst some of the leading new voices in short fiction.”
DENNIS BOCK

“What a thrill! A ‘yes’ instead of a ‘no.’ I had done something right, and now I would have to figure out what it was.”
ELIZABETH HAY

“I owe a huge debt to the Journey Prize. Before my nominations, I didn’t even know I wanted to be a writer.”
NEIL SMITH

“The anthology is a windfall for both writer and reader.”
DAVID BERGEN

“Like a secret handshake or the password to a speakeasy, inclusion in The Journey Prize Stories feels like the first, magical entry to the tribe of Canadian writers.”
GRACE O’CONNELL

“Being a part of the anthology was something of a landmark in my own progression as a writer.”
CRAIG DAVIDSON

“I owe a lot to the Journey Prize. An agent, a book deal. A renewed faith in my work. All signs that seem to say I’m on the right track.”
YASUKO THANH

“Its ongoing contribution is found on every page: new writers, new voices, new confidence.”
TIMOTHY TAYLOR

Image derived from from The Journey Prize 25th anniversary (final ceremony) program.
The progression of Journey Prize covers: number 1 and number 7 pictured above.
APPENDIX C

The progression of Journey Prize covers: number 16 and number 17 pictured above.
The progression of Journey Prize covers: number 20 and number 30 pictured above.
APPENDIX D

APPENDIX E

Discovering the top short stories from Canada’s brightest up-and-coming talent

Landing Page can be found at https://www.writerstrust.com/awards/writers-trust-mcclelland-stewart-journey-prize/

About the Prize

The Writers’ Trust/McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize recognizes the year’s best short story by an emerging writer first published in a Canadian literary journal or anthology. The prize is supported by James A. Michener’s donation of his Canadian royalty earnings from his novel Journey. In association with the prize, McClelland & Stewart annually publishes The Journey Prize Stories anthology, a collection of the longlisted stories. The winner is announced at the Writers’ Trust Awards in Toronto.