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Globalization and International TV and Film Co-productions: In Search of New Narratives

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International TV and film co-productions reflect the continuing integration of cultural and economic activities on a global scale. Co-productions have been on the increase since the early 1990s, coinciding with convergences—political, economic, technological and content—in the film and television industries. Co-productions provide a means to pool financial, creative and technical resources from participating countries for the production of film and television programs. Governed by official treaties they allow access to various public funding mechanisms and, therefore, increased production budgets.

Co-productions were initially perceived to enhance collaboration between countries with small production industries which would be able to pool resources and compete in an international market (Taylor, 1995, p. 414). In Europe, co-productions were also seen as an opportunity to create culturally specific materials for local markets, and to prevent an increase of foreign programs. However, today co-productions are less about culturally relevant materials, but focus exclusively on popular genres, often simulating Hollywood productions, such as adventure series, science-fiction programs and shows that contain hybrid elements drawn from a variety of genre. Consequently, co-productions represent a dominant trend in international television and film production which is increasingly global in orientation—to the demise of locally relevant issues and their representation.

Co-productions have the potential to reflect upon globalization processes, such as the hybridization of cultures and their diversification; however, due to their commercial focus, they target international audiences as consumers rather than citizens. This is especially problematic in a context where public service broadcasting and independent productions are increasingly challenged by privatization, government

cut-backs and market fragmentation. Locally and independently produced programs, in many instances, remain primary outlets for critical reflection on political, economic and cultural issues on a local as well as global scale. However, collaboration between producers from different countries on certain topics, such as the environment, economic reforms, the WTO and minority rights, could provide fascinating insight into these issues, highlight different perspectives and encourage debate on a global scale. The potential of co-productions as an innovative and critical media form needs to be further explored, encouraged and developed. This demands a conscientious effort by policy makers and funding agencies to provide an independent film and television production sector with the means to create bridges with other like-minded producers from around the world. Furthermore, producers from countries with less developed industries need access to this production mode to facilitate development of film and television programs.

In the following analysis, three main trajectories guide the discussion: (1) a definition of co-productions, their funding mechanisms, application and history; (2) a focus on co-productions and globalization; and (3) a narrative analysis of feature films and television programs, highlighting differences in the construction, foci and development of co-productions in comparison to locally produced programs. In conclusion, a recommendation is advanced to promote and develop collaboration between independent producers to allow for critical treatment and exposure of topics relevant to contemporary globalization processes.

Co-productions—an overview

International film and television co-productions are increasingly used to create programs for a global market. Co-productions are governed by official treaties which are negotiated between countries for the joint creation of film and television programs. Canada is one of the most proficient co-producers in the world, with over 55 co-production agreements world-wide (Telefilm, 2001, pp. 24–25). It is followed by France with over 30 treaties (Salter, 2002). In comparison, the US has no co-production agreements, but nonetheless works collaboratively with other countries, like Canada, on films and television programs under unofficial agreements called co-ventures (Telefilm, 1999b).

Co-productions are based on the collaboration between two or more producers from different countries for the creation of film and television programs. To qualify for a

treaty co-production in Canada, co-producers have to commit to at least a 15–30% financial participation in a project. Treaty co-productions count towards domestic content for quota purposes and are therefore eligible for public funding (Telefilm, 1999a, pp. 16–17). Co-productions entail financial and creative commitments, and the pooling of technical expertise, as laid out in the official co-production agreement between participating parties (Ferns, 1995). The goal is the production of cultural programs—nationally relevant to all countries involved—which allows producers access to funding mechanisms such as tax incentives, grants and investments. The model is predominantly used for big budget productions in the drama, animation or documentary genre. However, these ‘big budget’ productions still only range between US\$2–7 million (Mandate Review Committee, 1996, p. 210; Strover, 1995, p. 108), which is substantially lower than many Hollywood productions with budgets often in excess of US\$30 million (Hoskins et al. 1997, p. 64).

In Canada, co-productions receive public funding support in the form of the Canadian Television Fund or provincial tax credits (St. Arnauld, interview, July 5, 2000). In Europe co-producers can access EU funding, such as the EURIMAGES initiative, which supports the development and distribution of co-productions (Council of Europe, 2002). In England, legislation permits a 100% tax relief on the acquisition costs of qualifying films. This has resulted in the use of ‘Sale and Lease Back’ transactions, which enables producers to sell a production to a film partnership or individuals with a higher tax rate liability, and then lease it back over a fifteen year period (Salter, 2002). British lease back companies are establishing offices in Canada and other countries to encourage co-productions for film and television projects with budgets of at least \$4 million (Yaffe, 2001, p. 11).

Canadian producers collaborate predominantly with European producers, especially English and French (St Arnauld, interview, July 5, 2000). However, Canadian producers are also creating linkages to producers in Asia. Vancouver filmmaker, Michael Parker used Canada’s co-production treaty with Hong Kong to produce the much acclaimed film *Lunch with Charles*. According to Parker (interview, March 15, 2002), the concept of the film—a Chinese immigrant to Canada tries to maintain a long distance relationship with a spouse in Hong Kong—lent itself to be co-produced because the narrative unfolds naturally in Canada as well as Hong Kong. This kind of “natural co-production” is based on scripts that creatively combine storylines that occur in more than one location.

Parker notes that the opportunity to work with Asian co-producers greatly enhances the exposure and distribution of films in Asia. One of the difficulties he encountered was a difference in professional practices. Hong Kong producers are much quicker in launching a project from pre-production to post-production, in comparison to Canadian producers whose production time-lines tend to be less condensed. Some Chinese producers also showed little interest in participating only partly in a production rather than fully financing and then owning the film for the local market.

One of the disadvantages of co-productions lies in the amount of paperwork that inevitably accrues when two production companies collaborate with another and their respective governments (Kennedy, interview, June 22, 2000). Another disadvantage is the potential of losing creative control over a project due to making compromises in the treatment of a script (Hoskins and McFadyen, 1993, p. 105, Adair, interview, June 8, 2000). However, in the case of so called 'natural' co-productions these problems tend not to arise, because the storyline reflects circumstances that are global in scope (such as immigration). British producer, Nick Powell (2000) (*Little Voice*, *The Crying Game*) would not consider transferring a storyline from one English city to another if the script does not naturally lend itself to such an action. Indeed, the necessity to make co-productions fit its financial and creative model, creates a bias for particular genres such as science fiction, adventure films, and television programs which are neither spatially nor temporally bound, but occur in a fictitious place.

Co-productions are, hence, suitable for 'global stories' which transcend cultural boundaries. According to Robert Wong from British Columbia Film (interview, June 29, 2000), producers who utilize international treaty co-productions are looking for global stories which may be set in Canada or outside of Canada, but the location itself does not matter all that much. Co-productions are also ideal for utilizing dramatic scripts which feature storylines on close human relationships and emotions (Strover, 1995, p. 111). Co-produced drama features predominantly adventure series, science fiction, fairy tales, and hybrid program genre, containing a mix of these elements. Co-produced documentaries are mainly about nature, sports, international celebrities or common histories (Binning, 1998). Consequently, co-productions focus less on local stories relevant for local communities which remain the domain of locally and independently produced programs.

Co-productions have the *potential* to explore globalization processes such as the diversification and hybridization of cultures. They “could be a very positive device for addressing the new politics of identity but this potential is unlikely to be realized because of the way co-production is organized economically” (Murdock, 1996, p. 107). Within the paradigm of an emerging international public—a ‘global civil society’—comprised of different movements (human rights groups, non-governmental organizations, women’s groups, etc.) (Sreberny, 1998, pp. 219–220), co-productions offer an opportunity to focus on a ‘global public sphere’ in which ideas and opinions are exchanged and circulate freely. However, co-productions are used predominantly to compete in a global market and, therefore, focus on popular narratives that sell audiences to advertisers. In most instances, they neither reflect current global developments nor critically assess contemporary changes in the polity, economics or culture.

Co-productions are not very different from other film or television programs which are produced and marketed for global audiences. They differ, however, in their specification as ‘local content’ in the vocabulary of government regulated culture industries. The support for co-productions and their designation as content programs is especially problematic in a context where local and independent productions are increasingly challenged by lack of funding and reduction in government spending for public service broadcast institutions—the prime outlet for independent productions.

Globalization and Co-productions

Co-productions have increased exponentially since the early 1990s. In Canada co-productions have quadrupled from 28 co-productions in 1993–1994 to 135 in 1998–1999 (Telefilm Canada, 2000). Canada’s first co-production dates back to 1963, a feature film that was collaboratively produced with France. Then, between 1974 and 1983, Canada co-produced an additional thirteen films (Pendakur, 1990, p. 198). Co-productions, initially, promised to enhance and strengthen indigenous film industries and protect cultural interests from the dominance of foreign programs, especially from the US. Co-productions also seemed to offer an opportunity for small producers in countries with less developed culture industries. However, co-productions, now predominate between countries with strong economies and large media production centers (Taylor, 1995, p. 414).

Co-productions reflect an increasingly interconnected global economy and cultural forms of expression. They are produced for global media markets, often simulating Hollywood type productions which have “been generalized and adapted in a global model for commercial media” (Straubhaar, 1997). This content convergence is also evidenced by the development of other new program formats which are produced for global distribution—reality television shows, hybrid programs comprised of different genre elements, and format transfers, which are promoted at international trade forums and markets. The creation of new media formats is linked to increasing market fragmentation—due to new technologies, such as satellite, cable and computer/internet—and the resulting need for new programs; declining public funding for film and television productions; and an increasing emphasis on commercial television which places advertising and a global ‘promo-culture’ in the forefront of its activities (Barker, 1997, p. 209).

New program formats and genres hybridization are linked to an increasingly fragmented and competitive film and television market. Reality-television shows contain elements of documentary and game show genres, and are popularized through tabloid-style television (Kilborn and Izod, 1997, pp. 74–75, 160–161). Format transfers have become an alternative to program acquisition. They entail the purchase of ideas or formulas of popular programs, and their adaptation to new cultural contexts in another country. The practice is cost-effective since no original concept development is necessary (Moran, 1998, p. 20). As in the case of co-productions, policy makers and cultural critics make no distinction between ‘home-grown’ programs and format transfers; thus, emphasizing the lack of official response to the potential impact of globalized, cultural production (ibid, pp. 22–23).

International television markets and trade forums serve as venues for concept development, information exchange and business deals. Television executives, producers, distributors and government agents convene at international trade forums—such as the *Marché International des Programmes de Télévision* (MIP) in France, National Association of Television Executives (NATPE) in the U.S. and MIP-Asia in Hong Kong—to acquire new products or concepts. These markets are yearly events at which business contacts and deals are being forged, integrating a vast global network of commercial cultural producers and government agents, responsible for developing cultural policy and subsidy schemes (Arthur, 1991; Cunningham, Jacka and Sinclair, 1998; Perlmutter, 1993, *Telefilm*, 2000, pp. 10, 20–21, St. Arnauld, July 5, 2000).

Global media commercialization is paralleled by public funding reductions which threaten the survival of public service broadcasting and the financing of independent productions. In the case of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), this is evidenced by a 30% reduction in its operating budget (Gurd, 1998, p. 47; Mandate Review Committee, 1996, p. 130; Posner and Bourette, 2000), and a 50% reduction in the annual parliamentary appropriation for Canada's film and television funding agency, Telefilm Canada, over the past decade (Mandate Review Committee, 1996, p. 241; Telefilm Canada, 1999a, p. 18). These developments have introduced a strong commercial bias in formerly predominantly public institutions, evidenced by a statement by Telefilm that the "international market is a strategic priority for Canada", and that co-productions are a tool "to finance high-quality products for distribution in the global marketplace" (Telefilm, 1999b). This presents a challenge to Canada's independent producers who need support—in the form of access to broadcasting venues and funding—for their films and television productions. Co-producing is not necessarily an option for these producers due to their focus on local subject matters; co-productions entailing collaboration and compromise in content development; and lack of funds and/or status to attend national and international trade forums where business contacts with co-producers are established.

Globalization is not an even process, but occurs on many levels simultaneously and with different levels of intensity and effects. Appadurai (1990) emphasizes the notion of 'multiple worlds', which underscore the fluidity and changeable nature of globalization processes marked by disjunctures between the political, economic and cultural spheres. Within this paradigm, globalization is marked by dynamic, multi-directional flows which are no longer geographically bound. However, differences in the control and initiation of these flows remain (Massey, 1994, p. 150). This is evidenced by cultural production centres in Europe, North America and Asia who dominate the global information and cultural production flow. These flows are creating a 'new communication geography' which is increasingly "detached from the symbolic spaces of national culture, and realigned on the basis of the more 'universal' principles of international consumer culture" (Morley and Robins, 1995, p. 11). In contrast, local programs aimed for domestic distribution express their own styles, techniques and narratives which reflect local issues of concern as well as local culture; thus, contributing to a viable public sphere in which political as well as cultural issues can circulate.

In a global economy, cultural development can be defined from different vantage points such as the economic development of culture industries; or the development of national culture, which in most cases is based on economic incentives rather than social ideals. Cultural development can also be defined within a social paradigm, and as a “process by which human beings acquire the individual and collective resources necessary to participate in public life” (Raboy, Bernier, Sauvagenau and Atkinson, 1994, p. 292). Within this paradigm, cultural development is closely linked to citizenship and democracy where media play an important role for channelling debate through a public sphere which is essential for the formation of public opinion. The public sphere, as defined by Habermas (1997), is a forum which is free and accessible to all citizens for the exchange of ideas, information and debate; a space of social life determined neither by market forces nor by the state; and a “major societal mechanism for the production and circulation of culture which frames and gives meaning to our identity” (Dahlgren, 1995, p. 23).

Cultural development within a social paradigm requires a broad range of cultural institutions, the development of community access media, non-profit organizations, and public participation in cultural policy processes. Furthermore, stable and committed funding for public service broadcasting—based on decentralized communication networks—and independent productions are essential in maintaining an accessible cultural infrastructure. Most important of all, cultural development has to restrict monopolistic tendencies in media which limit diversity and plurality. Public policy, therefore, should “seek to promote cultural development because it is essential to democratic public life” (Raboy et al., 1994, p. 310). Implementation and adherence to these guidelines would ensure a balance between local programs and commercial productions, and consequently allow for a public discourse informed by dominant, alternative and oppositional points of view.

In Search of New Narratives

Co-productions are defined by narratives that are not bound by space or time. Co-produced narratives tend to unfold in more than one location, are often set in fictitious places, and more than one temporal dimension. They tend to be limited to specific genre, such as science fiction, adventure programs or hybrid programs which contain different genre elements, because cultural idiosyncrasies, such as humour, are

difficult to translate for different audiences (ibid; Parker, March 15, 2002). Co-productions tend to be shot in studio locations, especially when they are produced for television (Powell, 2000). The production mode is primarily used to increase production budgets and to create programs with an international appeal. The commercial focus of co-productions limits their potential—to reflect upon current globalization processes and issues of international concern. In comparison, locally and independently produced programs are more critical in their focus on current issues which in many instances have implication for the international community as well.

In a comparative study of the two production modes, several key points were investigated to gain an understanding of the relationship between production methods and narrative construction (Baltruschat, forthcoming). The aim of the study was to discern how production methods impact on the development of narratives and genre. The study consisted of a content analysis of films, television dramas and documentaries which was triangulated with narrative analyses, and interview evidence from producers. It became evident that co-productions tend to be constructed of narratives that transcend time and space. Hence, certain genres such as science fiction, adventure programs and hybrid programs, combining a variety of elements of the fantastic, lend themselves to be co-produced because they do not need to adhere to one specific cultural framework. In comparison, locally produced programs, intended for a local audience, focus on local stories which are, in some instances, relevant to global issues. In these programs, topics receive an often thorough and critical treatment. They allow insight into historical and contemporary issues, and offer a reflective stance on social questions.

The study also showed that co-produced documentaries focus on topics with an emphasis on entertainment values, such as nature, international celebrities and shared histories. In contrast, locally and independently produced documentaries place greater emphasis on a critical reflection on contemporary issues in society. Differences between the media film and television were also established. Feature film productions, even when co-produced, maintain a more critical and local dimension, whereas co-produced television drama is exclusively comprised of adventure, science-fiction and fantasy genre.

The narrative analyses of co-produced programs highlight complex narrative constructions consisting of sub-plots which tie story lines together that occur in several

spatial and temporal dimensions. The analysis of *The Red Violin*, a tri-part co-production between England, Canada and Italy, reveals a multi-layered narrative. Here the story about a musical instrument allows for a multitude of spatial and temporal shifts. The red violin travels through time and space—from 17th century Italy to 20th century Canada. One sub-plot involves the violin’s secret—the instrument is imbued with the soul of the violin maker’s wife, Anna Buscotti. Another sub-plot is interwoven with the predictions of a tarot reading which anticipates the unfolding of future events. The main narrative ends in Montréal, Canada and it is here where the tarot sub-plot comes to a close and the story concludes in the present (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Co-produced feature film: *The Red Violin*—narrative breakdown

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| 17th century Italy; narrative present | 18th century Vienna; narrative future | 19th century England; narrative future | 20th century China; narrative future | 20th century Montreal; narrative future; conclusion in present |
| Sub-plot I. : The Tarot Reader reveals the future to Anna Buscotti. | | | | |
| Sub-plot II. : The Red Violin embodies the soul of Anna Buscotti. | | | | |
| <p>1. Seventeenth century Italy; Anna Busscotti consults a tarot reader about her future. 1 a. The tarot reading underscores the unfolding of subsequent events—Sub-plot I . begins. 1 b. Anna dies and her husband varnished the violin with her blood, imbuing the instrument with her soul—Sub-plot II. 2. The violin travels to 18th century Vienna and is played by a young prodigy of master George Poussin. 3. The violin is played by a 19th century virtuoso, Frederick Pope, in Oxford, England; a romantic triangle ensues. 4. The violin appears in China where it becomes part of the dramatic unfoldings during the cultural revolution. 5. The violin is sold at an auction in Montréal. Art expert Charles Morritz reveals its secret—Sub-plot I . ends.</p> | | | | |

In this example, the co-produced narrative reflects cultural components of each participating co-producer; hence, satisfying content requirements of the participating countries. Because music entails cross-cultural resonance, *The Red Violin* can be considered a natural co-production. Its narrative development is tied to the journey of a musical instrument through the ages and across continents, transcending spatial and temporal dimensions.

Locally produced films tend to focus on one particular place. In the feature *The Hanging Garden*, a small town in rural Nova Scotia remains a cultural anchor for the duration of the film. Celtic music, the idiosyncrasies of community and familial relations are all key elements in conveying the story. *The Hanging Garden* has a complex

narrative construction, and contains elements of magic realism and sub-cultural motives (Figure 2). However, in spite of sub-plots and multiple narrative developments, the focus on one specific location is essential to the story and its characters.

Figure 2: Locally produced feature film: *The Hanging Garden*—narrative breakdown

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| past narrative; flashback | past narrative; flashback | present narrative | present narrative—magic realism | present narrative | past narrative—magic realism; flashback | past and present narratives fuse into one | present narrative |
| <p>Sub-plot 1. —A garden used as a metaphor for a small town community, and family unit, describing seasonal changes, growth and death.</p> | | | | | | | |
| | | | <p>Sub-plot 2. —William's past and his emerging identity crisis, expressed in the form of flashbacks and magic realism in the present narrative.</p> | | | | |
| <p>1. William as a young boy in the garden with his father, studying the name of different flowers and plants. 2. William as a teenager, watering the plants in the garden. 3. Scene titled: "The Lady in the Locket"; William returns, after a 10 year absence, to attend his sister's wedding. 4. William first visualizes himself as a young boy, and then as growing teenager—use of magic realism. 5. William's mother leaves the family after the wedding is over. 6. Scene: "Lad's love"; William as a teenager; his first sexual experience with Fletcher. 7. William suicide attempt. He awakes with an asthma attack—past and present narrative fuse into one, underscored by elements of magic realism 8. Scene "Mums"; William's family become aware of William's flashbacks and psychological trauma. He leaves his family to return to Toronto.</p> | | | | | | | |

In comparison to television productions, co-produced feature films are less tied to specific genre, and tend to be situated in clearly defined locations. Television productions, on the other hand, are less defined by place and location, especially when they are co-produced, because of the medium's increasingly commercial focus in a global market. Co-produced television narratives tend to be defined by movement through time and space to facilitate greater cross-cultural appeal. Television narratives are also circular in order to keep audience attention beyond a daily or weekly episode (Newbold, 1998). In addition, they are increasingly underscored by genre hybridization and new program formats which are developed for specialty channels and target audiences.

In the co-produced television drama series *The Secret Adventures of Jules Verne*, a Canada–England co-production, a group of adventurers travels across continents and through centuries in a helium balloon combating the 'League of Darkness'—a conspiracy of powerful aristocrats dating back to the Middle Ages. Based

loosely on the adventures stories by Jules Verne, the series borrows from a variety of genre—horror, adventure, and science fiction. From the outset the producers sought to appeal to global audiences by retaining creative control over the production process rather than involving a broadcaster: “We wanted to keep it international, because as soon as any one jurisdiction gets a hold of it they turn it into their product and it kills it for the rest of the world” (Rice-Barker, 1998). This international marketing strategy affects the series’ narratives, filled with hybrid elements and digital effects.

In the episode ‘Southern Comfort’, the adventurers are thrown into the heart of the Civil War where they prevent ‘The League of Darkness’ from perpetuating slavery. Based on Todorov’s (1977, p. 111) equilibrium formula, the narrative breakdown shows that they succeed in their quest for liberation and are restored at the end (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Co-produced television drama series:
The Secret Adventures of Jules Verne—narrative breakdown**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Telegraph message disrupts equilibrium | League of Darkness poses oppositional force | The Aurora crashes, causing further disruption | Verne et al. on a quest to restore equilibrium | Prometheus attacks; further disruption | Prometheus fights Aurora and Union army; disequilibrium | Quest to rescue Brown fails | Prometheus is damaged—new equilibrium |
| | | Episode sub-plot 1. —Fogg's and Brown's doomed love affair. | | | | | |
| Series sub-plot 2. —the struggle between good and evil forces; Jules Verne, the Fogs and Passepartout against the League of Darkness. | | | | | | | |
| <p>1. U.S. Civil War; Union Lieutenant telegraphs Washington for additional troops. The message is intercepted by Jules Verne, the Fogs and Passepartout who are on their way to the southern U.S.. They travel in a helium balloon called the 'Aurora'.</p> <p>2. The League of Darkness is also heading towards the battle grounds of the Civil War—in a flying war machine called 'Prometheus'. They intend to aid the southern troops and perpetuate slavery.</p> <p>3. The Aurora crashes on a southern estate, called 'Arcadia', owned by Saratoga Brown; Phileas Fogg falls in love with her.</p> <p>4. Verne, the Fogs and Passepartout meet with Union General Steel to warn him about the Prometheus.</p> <p>5. Prometheus first attacks the Union Camp, then The League of Darkness change their plans to fight their adversaries Verne and Fogg instead; the Prometheus attacks the estate 'Arcadia'; Brown is taken hostage.</p> <p>6. The Prometheus, Aurora and the Union army engage in battle.</p> <p>7. Fogg seeks to rescue Brown and enters the Prometheus; Brown is killed during their escape.</p> <p>8. The Prometheus is damaged; all convene around a camp fire; Fogg is holding the deceased Brown.</p> | | | | | | | |

In contrast to co-productions, locally produced programs tend to focus on issues pertinent to a society, its history and collective memory. *Milgaard* is a docudrama about the wrongful conviction of David Milgaard who spent 23 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. *Milgaard* establishes a local focus from the beginning, through highlighting locations throughout Western Canada. The story is part of Canada's history and *Milgaard's* critical stance adds a new viewpoint to the collective memory of Canadians.

The narrative's opening scene depicts David Milgaard dancing as a free man outside a diner in British Columbia, anticipating the final scene in the same location—a circular construction typical for television. The narrative then looks back at the different stages of Milgaard's life: his arrest, his time in prison and, finally, the reopening of his legal case leading to his release (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Locally produced television docu-drama: *Milgaard*—narrative breakdown

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| narrative present | narrative past; flashback | narrative past perfect; flashback | narrative past; flashback | narrative past; flashback | narrative past; flashback | narrative past; flashback | narrative present |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Milgaard in British Columbia in 1992 outside a diner, dancing in the rain. He is a free man again. 2. Milgaard back in 1969 in Saskatchewan. He has been arrested for the murder of Gail Miller. 3. Milgaard at the police station; he tells his story through flashbacks. 4. Milgaard in prison, the years go by. 5. Joyce Milgaard, his mother, tries to prove his innocence, initial attempts fail. 6. Joyce Milgaard, approaches lawyers Hersh Wolch and David Asper. Through their work together and growing media attention surrounding the issues, the case is re-opened. 7. Milgaard is back in court, and his name is cleared. 8. Milgaard in British Columbia in 1992, dancing in the rain | | | | | | | |

Television dramas for local markets tend to identify place, visually and verbally, from the beginning and develop a narrative anchored in that particular location. They are more likely to feature narratives based on local topics which reflect critically on historical or contemporary issues of concern. They also tend to be based on more 'realistic' themes and are spatially and temporally bound, rather than featuring genre from the science-fiction or adventure category.

The comparative content analysis of co-produced and local productions yielded a spectrum of results which highlighted differences between the production modes, such as narrative construction, genre preferences, as well as discrepancies between the media film and television. The study showed that co-produced films and television programs are more 'global' in orientation, whereas locally produced television programs tend to address local and culturally specific issues.

Conclusion

Since the early 1990s, international TV and film co-productions are increasingly used for the financial and creative development of new programs. Their popularity coincides with the emergence of other commercial production modes such as genre hybridization, reality-television and format transfers which all result from changes in the regulatory, economic and technical environment of media industries. Co-productions are linked to the globalization of the economy and culture, and are paralleled by declining

government support for cultural production. Co-productions are, hence, part of a broader trend of redefining culture along market rather than social terms. This trend is inevitably of concern to local producers, who increasingly lack funding for the successful completion of their projects, as well as citizens who face the diminution of a viable public sphere for the mediation of an informed discourse.

Local media are especially important since trade liberalization reduces shared communicative spaces (Dahlgren, 1999, p. 507) and undermines the aim of democratic societies to provide access to media for the presentation of cultural diversity. Increased media commercialization challenges public speech and replaces it with corporate speech, 'infotainment' and 'tabloid'-style television which address audiences as consumers rather than citizens. Public service media and local, independent media are, therefore, necessary to reflect common experiences. They are also needed for expressions of diversity and plurality, especially in the face of continued pressures to liberalize trade of cultural goods, such as reductions in foreign investment restrictions and content quotas (CFTPA and APFTQ, 2000, p 11).

Co-productions have the potential to explore contemporary globalization processes. Collaboration between producers on programs about global issues, such as questions on diversification and the hybridization of cultures, could provide insight into the changing nature of society. New narratives could offer a window to discussions about the environment, media commercialization, the WTO and other issues of concern to the international community. The development of new technologies, such as digital video and web-casting provide accessible venues for production and dissemination. Official commitment to support and fund different media channels is, therefore, essential for developing new critical narratives in film and television which reflect upon globalization processes and their impact on cultural diversity.

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