The Lever Initiative

DALIA CORKRUM
WHITMAN COLLEGE
Average Copies per Title Published by University Presses

- 1,500 copies in 1970
- 1,000 copies in 1985
- <500 copies in 2010
- <200 copies in 2015

Raym Crow, SPARC.

Book Prices

![Graph showing Book Prices and CPI from 2002 to 2014. The graph illustrates the increase in book prices and CPI over time, with book prices consistently higher than the CPI.]
Books from Commercial Presses are Expensive

- Rome's Eastern Trade, 2011
  - $155.00 (€136.83, £119.82)

- The American Vice-Presidency in the last half of the Nineteenth Century, 2007
  - $219.95 (€194.17, £170.03)

  - $140.00 (€123.59, £108.22)

- The Public Order and the Sacred Order, 2009
  - $228.00 (€201.28, £176.25)

- The Philosophical Thought of Tasan Chong, 2010
  - $204.20 (€180.14, £157.76)
ELECTED

Term ending December 31, 2019
- Marjorie Hassen (Bowdoin College)
- Jonathan Miller (Williams College)

Term ending December 31, 2020
- Marta Brunner (Skidmore College)
- Alexia Hudson-Ward (Oberlin College)
- Jennifer Nutefall (Santa Clara University)
- John Tombarge (Washington and Lee University)

Term ending December 31, 2021
- Mark Christel (Grinnell College)
- Dalia Corkrum (Whitman College)
- Bryn Geffert (Amherst College)
- Irene Herold (The College of Wooster)
- Michael Roy (Middlebury College)

STANDING

- Mark Edington, Director, Amherst College Press
- Charles Watkinson, AUL for Publishing and Director, University of Michigan Press
The Editorial Board

The Editorial Board is responsible for overseeing the acquisition, review, and development process through which individual titles have progressed, and to assure by its imprimatur both the scholarly quality of a work and its alignment with the editorial program of the Lever Press. The Board consists of eleven faculty nominated from Lever Press pledging institutions and selected by the Oversight Committee. The chair of the Oversight Committee holds an ex officio position on the Board and two representatives from Michigan Publishing and Amherst College Press hold non-voting positions. The board meets as needed based on the burden of work to be done.

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PROMISSORY NOTES

ON THE LITERARY CONDITIONS OF DEBT

By Robin Truth Goodman

Professor and Associate Chair of English
Florida State University

LEVER PRESS
DURABLE
CHAPTER 2

DEBT'S GEOGRAPHIES
Inequality, or Development’s Dance with Dead Capital

It had become his business to get up the subject, and then discuss with his principal, Lord Cantrip, the expediency of advising the Government to lend a company five million of money, in order that this railway might be made. It was a big subject, and the contemplation of it gratified him. It required that he should look forward to great events, and exercise the wisdom of a statesman. What was the chance of these colonies being swallowed up by those other regions,—once colonies,—of which the map that hung in the corner told so eloquent a tale? And if so, would the five million ever be repaid? And if not swallowed up, were the colonies worth so great an adventure of national money? Could they repay it? Would they do so? Should they be made to do so?

—Anthony Trollope, Phineas Finn (160)

This chapter traces a “Third World” narrative of debt. The previous chapter investigated literature’s involvement in creating a belief in something not there that had value for the incipient world of finance; the financialization of the “Third World” also requires a set of abstractions, borrowing from literature, where the narrative object of debt appears as “something else” (Clover, “Autumn” 45) and as somewhere else. In fact, it might be said that the “Third World” comes into appearance as such a negative category of representation—a “Third World”—through a sort of debt where the object that is not there gets transposed onto a space of negative difference. This chapter argues, therefore, that literature creates a “Third World” identity as fictional in modes that parallel debt as fictional value.

The choice of the term Third World is very deliberate here—I don’t intend it to refer to a nonaligned Cold War entity subordinated to a conflict between superpowers or a pretechnological region playing catchup in a world of technological progress, though I realize that those types of meanings have been granted to the term historically and criticized appropriately as monological, racist, primitivist, and supremacist. Rather, what I mean by “Third World” is a particular structural position within the geopolitical globe that, in a world systems sense and because of its continued disempowerment through histories of colonial and other geopolitical subordinating relationships, is vulnerable to exploitation in current schemes of economic accumulation. As such, “Third World” does not exist in any other form but by its fictional usage, and yet it allows for global power relations to be seen as having similar effects in multiple sites—effects worth thinking about in their similarities even as they interact with different local cultures. Because of its history, the “Third World” carries activist claims, sympathies, and coalitions, as well as a critique of the normative economic order. As Ella Shohat remarks, “The term ‘Third World’ contains a common project of linked resistances to neo-colonialisms. Within the North American context, more specifically, it has become a term of empowerment for inter-
THANK YOU

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