

Mary Chapman

Canadian Literature 8.0

In July 2025, I became the eighth editor of *Canadian Literature*, following in the footsteps of Christine Kim, Laura Moss, Margery Fee, Laurie Ricou, Eva-Marie Kröller, W. H. New, and George Woodcock. I'd like to use this editorial space to introduce myself and to sketch out some of my vision for "*Canadian Literature 8.0*."¹

I was born in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, a few miles from the US border, and that border figures in much of my research. During my BA and MA at Queen's, one of the best courses I took was an innovative night course on francophone and anglophone Canadian literature designed by Douglas Spettigue and Annette Hayward; we spoke English before the break and French afterward! My first research assistantship involved working on a project on Canadian women writers directed by Wendy Robbins. Although my doctoral study at Cornell University focused on US literature, my subfields in women's literature and Indigenous literatures drew on methodologies and scholarship relevant to both US and Canadian contexts.

My earliest publications focused on US literature. In *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture* (1999), co-editor Glenn Hendler and I, along with contributors, demonstrated the centrality of masculine sentiment in American literary and cultural history from the early republic to the progressive era. *Making Noise, Making News: Suffrage Print Culture and US Modernism* (2014) charted a relationship between modern suffragist print-cultural "noise"—"loud" fonts, boisterous authorial voices, attention-grabbing banners—and what literary modernists understood by "making it new," asserting that the experimental tactics of US suffrage print culture anticipated the formal innovations of literary modernism. That

book complemented *Treacherous Texts: American Suffrage Literature, 1848–1948* (2011), an anthology I co-edited with Angela Mills.

More recently, my research has returned to Canadian literature and to considerations of the significance of the Canada-US border to the field. In *Becoming Sui Sin Far: Early Fiction, Journalism and Travel Writing by Edith Maude Eaton* (2016), I explore how that border influenced the writerly career of a turn-of-the-century author often credited for founding both Asian American literature and Asian Canadian literature. My current project is a biography of Edith Eaton that situates her in the global *fin de siècle*.

Eaton's citizenship and national identity are complicated. She was born in England, to a Chinese mother and a white father, and spent the first seven years of her life pivoting between the US and England before her family settled in a largely working-class francophone neighbourhood of Montreal in 1873. Over the course of her life, Eaton migrated by steamship from England to the US to Canada to Jamaica, and by railroad from Montreal to California and the Pacific Northwest and back east to Boston and Montreal. "So I roam backward and forward across the continent. When I am East, my heart is West. When I am West, my heart is East," she wrote in her "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian" (132). Although her extreme border-crossing career might seem unusual, it was typical for that historical moment, as Nick Mount has demonstrated in *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York*. Eaton and many other family members migrated across the border for work; her father, Edward Eaton, was even arrested twice for helping Chinese men cross the border into the US during the Exclusion Era when immigration from China into the US was seriously limited.

The texts that Eaton wrote also migrated across a complex late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century media ecology that included local Canadian, American, and Jamaican newspapers, experimental *fin-de-siècle* "little magazines," railway-sponsored magazines, conservative women's magazines, Christian missionary publications, mainstream middlebrow periodicals, and nationally syndicated columns of both children's stories and sensation fiction. Arjun Appadurai notes that migration, combined with the rapid flow of mass media, promotes a "new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities" (4). This instability of identity, however, is not undesirable; indeed, it is the exact opposite. For Appadurai, this

instability creates productive diasporic public spheres, “space[s] of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern” (4). For Eaton, both her border-crossing travel across North America and her writing for different audiences of mass print culture encouraged her metaphorical migration away from prior fixed identities towards identities characterized by improvisation, self-transformation, and expanded empathy. As she declared in “Leaves”—and repeated verbatim in stories and other essays—“I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality” (132).

One could certainly make the case that Eaton is a Canadian author, but one could just as easily resist the temptation to pigeon-hole her. The examples of her flexible citizenship and flexible authorship inspire me to work to make *Canadian Literature* a hospitable space where a variety of scholars can define what they understand as “Canadian” and define which methodologies and topics continue to challenge and complicate the field.

I’m excited about—and feel honoured by—the prospect of shepherding *Canadian Literature* through the next two years. Previous editors-in-chief consolidated *Canadian Literature*’s status as the most prestigious peer-reviewed journal in which to publish scholarship on Canadian literature. Going forward, I welcome submissions on literary and cultural objects produced in or about the lands known as Canada—the mandate described on the journal’s website—particularly in areas that haven’t received much attention in the journal recently. The essays in this issue, for example, focus entirely on literary works written in the past three decades. At a moment when history and historical precedents are being erased, when we are striving to decolonize and to expand the range of voices at the table, I also welcome essays that engage and analyze the archive to help us all understand the importance of history. I also welcome submissions of essays on the “bigger picture,” that is, essays that go beyond close reading a text or set of texts.

Canadian Literature publishes about twenty-four peer-reviewed essays per year, in both general and guest-edited issues. You may have seen recent calls for papers for special issues on “Authoritarianism, Anti-fascism, and Literary Resistance,” guest-edited by Laura Moss and Anna Branach-Kallas, and on “Studying Contemporary Canadian Publishing: Politics, Futures, Interventions,” guest-edited by Julie Rak.

Please consider submitting to either or both of those special issues or to a general issue soon. *Canadian Literature* also publishes forums and interviews, both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed. If you are interested in guest-editing a special issue or in curating a forum, I would love to hear from you!

This issue features some wonderful content that was already in the pipeline before I joined *Canadian Literature* and that I am very excited to share with you now. Alex Prong's "'We Are Full of (Literary) Things': Thingful Fabrication, Narrative Embalming, and *Little Blue Encyclopedia (For Vivian)*" is a playful and theoretically rich exploration of the materiality of Plante's novel in relation to its trans subject, that draws on Adorno, Benjamin, Baudrillard, Brown, and other theorists of "literary things." Drew McEwan's essay explores how contemporary Canadian poet and artist bill bissett's "lunarian narratives" synthesize his late-career concerns and innovation as a project of a poetic and autobiographical self, made and remade in utopic scales of time and space. Joey Mauro's "Meeting on the Shoals: Survivance in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and *Soucouyant*" argues that Tomson Highway's and David Chariandy's novels engage Cree and Trinidadian knowledge systems, respectively, in order to resist the representational mechanisms of Western humanism and to activate ways of knowing beyond humanism, disrupting colonial epistemologies and creating spaces for alternate socialities. Christine Campana's "'Talking to' and Creating Coresistances with Diasporas in Lee Maracle's *Talking to the Diaspora*" explores Maracle's iconoclastic definition of *diaspora* and what different diasporas may glean from Maracle's "talk." Campana demonstrates how Maracle, while speaking to and critiquing white settlers, is also in creative conversation with people of colour rendered diasporic by settler colonialism, including Black people on Turtle Island and Palestinians. "'The Spirits Write the Story': Smaro Kamboureli in Conversation with Norma Dunning" is a peer-reviewed interview that gives Dunning an opportunity to discuss her recent book, *Kinauvit? What's Your Name? The Eskimo Disc System and a Daughter's Search for Her Grandmother*, a formally hybrid text that shows how her search for her cultural roots is inextricably interwoven with colonial forces. Julie Rak also contributes a response to Sara Minogue's recent *Canadian Literature* essay, "Margaret Atwood, #BelieveWomen, and the Limits of Literary Criticism," which Minogue

described as a rebuttal to Rak's *Canadian Literature* article "Margaret Atwood and Sexual Assault." Rak's response is followed by reviews and review essays of poetry and poetics by Nicholas Bradley, Scott Inniss, and Shoshannah Ganz, and poetry.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Please feel free to let us know what you think of it or of anything else—and what you would like to see in your journal in the future. To share your thoughts, please email me at Canlit.Editor@ubc.ca.

Please also follow us at fb.com/CanadianLit, [@canadianlit.bsky.social](https://canadianlit.bsky.social), and on X [@CanadianLit](https://twitter.com/CanadianLit).

Notes

1. Here I ring changes on a phrase Laura Moss uses in "Canadian Literature 6.o."

Works Cited

- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. U of Minnesota P, 1996.
- Chapman, Mary, editor. *Becoming Sui Sin Far: Early Fiction, Journalism, and Travel Writing by Edith Maude Eaton*. McGill-Queens UP, 2016.
- Chapman, Mary. *Making Noise, Making News: Suffrage Print Culture and US Modernism*. Oxford UP, 2014.
- Chapman, Mary, and Glenn Hendler, editors. *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture*. U of California P, 1999.
- Chapman, Mary, and Angela Mills, editors. *Treacherous Texts: American Suffrage Literature, 1848–1948*. Rutgers UP, 2011.
- Dunning, Norma. *Kinauvit? What's Your Name? The Eskimo Disc System and a Daughter's Search for Her Grandmother*. Douglas & McIntyre, 2022.
- Eaton, Edith [Sui Sin Far]. "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian." *The Independent*, vol. 66, no. 3138, 21 Jan. 1909, pp. 125–32. *ProQuest*, <https://proquest.com/magazines/leaves-mental-portfolio-eurasian/docview/90572700/se-2>.
- Minogue, Sara. "Margaret Atwood, #BelieveWomen, and the Limits of Literary Criticism." *Canadian Literature*, no. 260, 2025, pp. 37–58, <https://doi.org/10.14288/cl.vi260.199845>.
- Moss, Laura. "Canadian Literature 6.o." *Canadian Literature*, no. 225, 2015, pp. 6–9, <https://doi.org/10.14288/cl.voi225.187916>.
- Mount, Nick. *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York*. U of Toronto P, 2006.
- Rak, Julie. "Margaret Atwood and Sexual Assault." *Canadian Literature*, no. 250, 2022, pp. 79–111, <https://doi.org/10.14288/cl.vi250.195655>.