

EDITORIAL

This issue of the *Literary Cultures* journal focuses on Culture within Canada and its presence in Canadian Literature. The writers of this issue aim to answer questions such as: How is culture portrayed in Canadian Literature? How is it interpreted? And what can we, as readers, learn from it? The main inspiration for the works included in this issue is an experimental, collaborative online poetry work based on a novel by a Chinese Canadian writer Fred Wah: *High Muck a Muck: Playing Chinese*. ‘This collaboratively created website explores historical and contemporary tensions surrounding Chinese immigration to British Columbia, Canada. It is the work of many artists, writers, designers, developers, community members and funders’ (The *High Muck a Muck: Playing Chinese* website).

Like *High Muck a Muck* this journal issue is a collaborative piece, with Canadian students from Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, Canada contributing to the content. With the journal being a collaborative piece with students of Canadian heritage it better equipped to provide a varied and personal perspective on the influence culture has both *on* and *in* Canadian Literature.

The inspiration for the title of the journal, *The Land of Hope and Toil*, comes from a line in the Canadian National Anthem: ‘Thou land of hope for all who toil’. The accuracy of this line has lost its credibility over time. The idea of having a haven to escape to is what attracted many immigrants to Canada but sadly with that came issues of racism, xenophobia, discrimination and many more. There is much that has changed in recent years, however there is still much more that needs to change in order to account for the actions of the past.

At the beginning of this project the students involved at Nottingham Trent University discussed the implications of students writing about a culture which they are not part of and how that could impact the overall influence of this journal. The hope is that with the inclusion of Canadian students’ voices we are able to add to the journal’s overall integrity and informative intentions.

This journal issue is host to articles and reviews based on or influenced by Canadian Literature. These sources vary from books to films to documentaries and so on. The research conducted by the students involved was done so with the intention to educate and enlighten readers. The topics vary as much as the sources do.

Articles

The inspiration for three of the articles are works of poetry by Canadian writers; however, contrastingly in one article, written by Katherine McGuigan, the author focuses on the imagery within Indigenous culture, namely the influence it has on their beliefs and fears. In another, the author, Amy Barlow, aims to highlight the injustices of the residential school system and in the final poetry inspired article the author, Isabel Berry, will explore the coming together of two separate cultures.

In keeping with the theme of Residential schools, Megan Sprouss uses the novel *The Diviners* written by Margaret Laurence to highlight an erasure of Indigenous culture through the exclusion of its teachings in residential schools and the impact that has on future generations. The exclusion of Indigenous Culture is evident in *Sunshine Sketches of a Little*

Town, which is the inspiration for Ella Greenwood's article. Greenwood is able to shatter the illusion of perfection in Stephen Leacock's town of 'Mariposa' through exposing its flaws.

Conflict and trauma are at the epicentre of Izzy M. Pleasance's and Ollie M's articles, respectively. Pleasance is able to draw on a feminist understanding of the conflict which shaped Canada into how we know it today. Ollie M uses a film adaptation of Richard Wagamese's, *Indian Horse*, to highlight how the trauma experienced by Indigenous children at residential schools added to an erasure of native languages. Through the use of a similarly creative source Katie Halls discusses the 'development and the value of comic books' when considering literary work relating to Canada. Her article, 'Comics in Canada' showcases the influence comics have on people and how that could potentially be used as a means of educating a broader audience.

Reviews

The journal additionally showcases reviews written by NTU and KPU students. Antonia Stassi explores culture shock experienced by first generation immigrants through a review of Albert Kish's short film, 'This is a Photograph'. The film is benefited by the use of black and white imagery and the, at times, unsettling soundtrack as it puts the viewer in a state of discomfort in an attempt to relate the viewer to the horrors immigrants faced. Similarly, Megan Sproul reviews the documentary, *From C to C*, and states how it uses 'beautiful cinematography to tell a harsh truth'. *From C to C* is not the only piece to use imagery to convey a message, an integral part of Indigenous culture is the ability to use storytelling as a way of ensuring the continuation of the imagery important to Indigenous peoples. Wolf MacDonald discusses storytelling from a native perspective and the weight that carries culturally in his review of *The Truth About Stories*.

Brook Lowery and Emily Hardy aim to highlight issues faced by Indigenous women. Respectively, Lowery reviews Jessica McDiarmid's book *Highway of Tears* which aims to raise the volume on the drowned-out voices of the young Indigenous women going missing on the highway of tears and how this is a systemic issue in dire need of resolving. Whereas, Hardy's article focuses on the illustrated book, *If I Go Missing*, and how it tackles the issues faced by Indigenous women through the use of comic like imagery and intense colour.

The film *Holy Angels* centres around the erasure of Indigenous language and culture through the residential school system and the inevitable effect that has on future generations. Harvinder Singh evaluates how accurately this is achieved in the film through her review.

John Oberholzer reviews a collection of poetry written by Indigenous poet Billy-Ray Belcourt titled: *This Wound is A World*. Oberholzer analyses the language used and the events being described within the poems to showcase an unorthodox way of dealing with queerness as an Indigenous person. In a review of the documentary, *Jordan River Anderson: The Messenger*, conducted by Kareena, the author discusses the implications the lack of a healthcare system can have on communities when these communities are excluded due to a belief that the Indigenous peoples living on reserves should not be the governments responsibility. Finally, like many other authors Tae is using *Indian Horse* as inspiration for their writing, only this time Tae is choosing to use the novel which inspired the film.

This year's journal received an incredible amount of work, providing us with the opportunity to create a special issue. The special issue showcases an article written by Kai

Northcott, as well as a selection of reviews on books, films, documentaries, and poems written by students from both Nottingham Trent University and Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

As a final ode to the individuality of people, beliefs and cultures each article in this issue has a different designated colour. This was done to highlight the differences in the articles and provide the reader with a means of finding their way back to certain articles in the midst of all this content.

In addition to this journal and the special issue, the students from NTU and KPU have produced a conference, multiple podcasts, a blog and multiple social media accounts on twitter and Instagram respectively. The cover art for both the Journal and Special Issue was commissioned by an external graphic designer - [@jaydehankins](#).

Abbegail de Wit
Editor-in-Chief

Links to External Sites

Special Issue – [The Land of Hope and Toil](#): Special Issue

Twitter – [@LHT_NTU](#)

Instagram – [@lht_ntu](#)

Conference – Can be found on YouTube: [‘Conference: Land of Hope and Toil’](#)

Blog – [Land of Hope and Toil](#)

Podcast – [Land of Hope and Toil Podcast](#)