

FUTURES OF CANADIAN STUDIES
L'AVENIR DES ÉTUDES CANADIENNES

An Emerging Scholars' Perspective

Comme le domaine de recherche des Études canadiennes est non seulement vaste et diversifié, couvrant une variété de disciplines différentes telles que les études littéraires et culturelles, la géographie, les sciences politiques ou l'ethnologie, pour n'en mentionner que quelques-unes, mais aussi souvent non institutionnalisé et déchiré entre d'autres disciplines établies, la question de savoir vers où les Études canadiennes se dirigent et quels défis elles doivent relever est à la fois indispensable et complexe. Lorsque nous avons demandé à nos collègues en Études canadiennes du Forum de la relève académique de la GKS et de son réseau international nouvellement établi de nous donner leur avis sur le(s) avenir(s) des Études canadiennes, nous n'osions pas espérer des réflexions aussi larges que celles que vous trouverez dans cette collection. L'éventail des contributions est particulièrement large en ce qui concerne le point de vue à partir duquel le Canada est étudié, ce qui servira d'élément structurant. Commentant les études canadiennes de l'intérieur, Emma Croll-Baehre se penchera sur les luttes auxquelles sont confrontés les chercheuses et chercheurs canadiens en Études canadiennes sur fond de la consolidation, de la décolonisation et de la pandémie de Covid-19 avant que Samantha Stevens n'adresse les questions de responsabilité et d'agence en considérant les développements récents. Sara Casco Solís offre sa perspective espagnole tout en appelant à l'interdisciplinarité et à la transnationalité, dont les avantages sont également soulignés par Marilyne Lamer à travers l'étude des littératures québécoises et canadiennes. Manuel Sousa Oliveira fait le point sur la situation des Études canadiennes au Portugal avant qu'Yvonne Jende ne se penche sur les Études canadiennes en Allemagne. Bien que ces contributions soient diverses, elles entament un dialogue. Notre objectif n'était ni de dépendre ni de représenter l'ensemble du paysage des Études canadiennes, mais de présenter un échantillon représentatif de perspectives personnelles de la relève académique.

This collection of individual contributions is embedded in general structural challenges within the system academia, which are certainly effective (or which sometimes even exacerbate) in the field of Canadian Studies. Inequality, precarious working conditions as well as insecurities do not provide attractive job perspectives for emerging scholars, not to mention the multiple global crises that have shaped our lives during the last years. Additionally, obstacles specific to Canadian Studies, such as the abolition of the *Understanding Canada* program, sharpen systemic difficulties.

These factors often require long-term strategic career decisions in terms of research content and, additionally, regarding living situations. Do I need to pursue a comparative approach in my PhD project because exclusively focusing on Canadian matters might lower my chances of receiving a post-doc position? How can my family and I handle the mobility required from a researcher, especially from a European researcher in the field of Canadian Studies? Moreover, general developments with regard to content(s) provide further challenges, surely not limited to emerging scholars, though. The recent debate about the purpose and the utility of the field of area studies (see the last two issues of the *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien*), which Canadian Studies forms a part of, is one example. How can I consider the complexity of a globalized network in a field with a focus on a specific geographic region?

Challenges, however, also provide chances. These contributions are a case in point as they go beyond a mere identification of these challenges: they provide food for thought and means for dealing with struggles, difficulties, obstacles, and – very often – loneliness, both on the level of content and structure. Furthermore, they illustrate the need to establish and cultivate a solid network among emerging scholars to voice these issues, to start a debate. We, as the Emerging Scholars' Forum with its newly established international network, hope to provide a space for this and many further discussions.

Isis Luxenburger and Diana Thiesen

Isis Luxenburger and Diana Thiesen are spokespersons of the Emerging Scholars' Forum of the Association of Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries (GKS).

Isis Luxenburger is a doctoral researcher at the chair of North American Literary and Cultural Studies at Saarland University, where she also teaches classes on industrial film, industrial aesthetics and industrial culture. She is the speaker and translator of the Emerging Scholars' Forum. Isis Luxenburger is currently working on her interdisciplinary dissertation project on the mediation of industrial culture in films on the heavy industry in the Canadian province of Quebec and the Greater Region SaarLorLux, which was awarded the research prize "Interregionale Forschungsförderung/ Soutien interrégional à la recherche" of the Greater Region.

Diana Thiesen is a doctoral researcher of the International Research Training Group "Diversity" at the University of Trier. Her PhD project is about the negotiation of social inequality in contemporary Chinese Canadian novels. Besides her research, she teaches courses in literary studies for both students and elderly at the University of Trier.

EMMA CROLL-BAEHRE

Canadian Studies in a Crisis of Identity?

I believe that so-called 'Canadian Studies' is experiencing a crisis of identity as the field is having to reckon with its complicity in consolidating colonial narratives of nationhood, amidst a growing call to 'decolonize' the Academy and to trouble the violent and exclusionary boundaries of 'Canadianness'. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified this reckoning, exposing further what renowned Canadian writer and scholar Dionne Brand (2020) describes as an "endoskeleton" or the systemic conditions of inequality which have disproportionately afflicted Black and Indigenous people, but which prior to the pandemic were buried by settlers from mainstream view beneath a crust of false-innocence. Brand's reflection foreshadows the exhuming of literal bones of residential school children beginning in 2021, which continue to be uncovered throughout so-called Canada. A 'return to normal' means a problematic erasure of these violences that the country continues to reproduce. It is the work of Canadian Studies, particularly of settler scholars including myself, to interrogate these living histories and to refuse such a return. Artist and cultural theorist Jackson 2bears (2014) observes how objects that are ensouled with living histories of colonial violence have political potential in that they can be repurposed to confront these violences.

In this spirit, my work on Emily Pauline Johnson, the late nineteenth-century poet and performer of mixed Mohawk and European ancestry, which draws on settler performance reviews of Johnson from McMaster University's William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, offers a counter-history by considering how Johnson was framed for and in opposition to a heteropatriarchal settler public. By employing a queer theoretical framework to analyze these archival objects, in concert with the influential works of Indigenous scholars including Chris Finley (2011) and Qwo-Li Driskill (2004), I seek to demonstrate how Johnson was 'queered' within settler discourse which often positioned her in opposition to white heteropatriarchal conceptions of gender and sexuality. My work endeavours to underscore Johnson's agency in 'queering' these gender and sexual norms, and cast light on the endoskeleton that is colonialism as it was and continues to be imbricated in settler discourses of gender and sexuality. In an age of Canadian homonationalism, wherein Canada's sexual exceptionalism serves to invigorate its identity as a colonial nation-state, this work is all the more relevant. Canadian Studies lends itself to interdisciplinary research such as this that has the critical potential to destabilize Canada's mythologized past by locating the past in the present.

Emma Croll-Baehre is a queer settler doctoral researcher at McMaster University located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the "Dish With One Spoon" wampum agreement.

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SAMANTHA STEVENS

Canada at the Crossroads?

Trigger warning: mention of residential schools and unmarked graves

When I think on the future of Canadian Studies, I feel as though there is a lot at stake. Questions of how to effectively address rising right-wing narratives and fanatical nationalism dominate conversations among young Canadian Studies scholars in Ottawa, as does how we can best confront systemic racism, rising hate crimes, Indigenous rights, houselessness, gender discrimination, and all forms of inequality in Canada. Even the so-called “Freedom Convoy” during the winter of 2022 showed us the fragility and dangers of blind devoted nationalism. While examining such tensions is perhaps not new in Canadian Studies, in the wake of the continued discoveries of unmarked graves at former residential schools, many Canadians are learning for the first time that the history they were taught is wrong. For non-Indigenous Canadians, guilt is running rampant alongside denial and even hatred. But if settler colonialism, the system that permits so many of these inequalities, festers through ignorance and divisiveness, then we find ourselves at a crossroads. This is an important moment for Canadian Studies scholars.

Therefore, when I think on the future of Canadian Studies, and what it means as a Canadian Studies scholar who also works collaboratively with First Nations communities, I have questions that I hope time may give answers to. What responsibilities do Canadian Studies scholars have towards the betterment of society? How can we contribute to societal growth without recreating the patriarchal and colonial status quo? How are scholars who go on to work in the government, law, and private sectors working to unsettle these institutions and what resistances are they encountering? Finally, given our shared histories, present struggles, and trajectories, what can we learn from collaborations with our colleagues from Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand studies?

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SARA CASCO SOLÍS

The Future of Canadian Studies: A Spanish Perspective

Although the field of Canadian Literature (CanLit) has faced significant challenges in Spain, the valuable work of researchers and professors has facilitated the study of Canada's cultural and literary production in Spain. In the last decades, Spanish Canadianists have opened new ways of approaching Canadian writers and their texts that go beyond national frameworks. Innovative theoretical approaches such as feminism, postcolonialism, ecocriticism or diaspora and migration studies are included in CanLit courses taught at university level. Young researchers and post-graduate students are adopting these theoretical perspectives in order to address, interrogate, and reflect on current topics of Canadian studies. The rapid rise of interest in these new and interdisciplinary perspectives has also facilitated the study of minority authors in Canada who had long been excluded from the canon of CanLit.

These potential trajectories within the field of Canadian studies bring together students and researchers from all over the world. It is worth highlighting that the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the development of the field through the establishment of international networks of specialized researchers in the field of CanLit. In addition, the expansion of virtual spaces where scholars can exchange their ideas has led to a step forward in the development and visibility of Canadian studies. Spanish scholars are also promoting the research and study of CanLit through the establishment of scholarly associations and academic journals. I would like to highlight the important role of the scholarly peer-reviewed journal *Canada and Beyond: A Journal of Canadian Literary and Cultural Studies*,¹ which provides a space of critical reflection on transcultural and transnational issues related to Canadian studies. Our role as instructors and scholars in the field of literary studies of Canada is to contribute to the development of these spaces of dialogue and to encourage students and early-career researchers to explore new topics in the field of Canadian studies and to establish connections among scholars interested in the study of CanLit.

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1 See also <https://revistas.usal.es/index.php/2254-1179/index> (accessed 25 November 2022).

MARILYNE LAMER

Pleins feux sur l'avenir des Études littéraires canadiennes

Depuis le tournant des années 2000, le champ des Études littéraires au Canada a connu des bouleversements qui découlent principalement de l'abandon des théories structuralistes et des paradigmes formalistes. Sur la scène québécoise, une transformation majeure s'est simultanément produite : on assiste à un vaste mouvement de relecture du corpus romanesque québécois qui vise à le sortir de la perspective nationale, longtemps dominante au sein de la critique littéraire. Ainsi que l'a montré l'étude de Robert Dion dans *L'Allemagne de Liberté*, les travaux récents de Dominique Garant sur les fictions de l'exotopique et de Jean Morency sur l'ipséité états-unienne de romanciers québécois, l'art romanesque québécois partage des affinités avec des traditions littéraires variées. Ces chercheurs ont grandement contribué à décloisonner le champ des Études littéraires québécoises.

Ce décloisonnement des Études littéraires canadiennes profite particulièrement, en mon sens, aux /chercheurset chercheuses qui détiennent un bagage interculturel riche, aux québécois d'origine étrangère ou encore aux chercheurs.euses en échange interuniversitaire (par exemple *Erasmus*). Leur connaissance de cultures étrangères leur permet de mettre au jour un réseau d'intertextes insoupçonné et de valider des hypothèses qui ne s'appuyaient tout au plus que sur des présentiments. Mon expérience personnelle consacrée à l'étude des points de contact entre les traditions littéraires allemandes et québécoises m'incite à soutenir qu'une perspective comparatiste de la littérature québécoise constitue une approche prometteuse pour le jeune professionnel en formation. Elle permet d'intégrer des centres de recherches consacrés aux Études québécoises (par exemple en Pologne, en Italie et en Russie) et d'échapper aux pièges de la surspécialisation en maîtrisant plusieurs corpus romanesques. Cela aura été, à tout le moins, mon expérience.

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The Future of Canadian Studies in Portugal¹

To speculate on the future of Canadian studies in Portugal one must first briefly look at the past and present of the field. In the past decade, we have seen a decline in the presence of Canadian studies in Portuguese academia. The latest information available at the website of the Embassy of Canada to Portugal is from 2013, and as far as I have been able to determine many of the scholars, programs, courses, and awards there listed are not active anymore. It can be confirmed, however, that there are (at least) five courses at three different Portuguese institutions in which Canada is addressed to some degree. Still, only two of these are Canada-focused, while the other three include the study of Canadian literatures and cultures as part of courses on larger subjects² – not to mention that besides Canadian anglophone and francophone literary and cultural studies no other disciplines are represented. Moreover, there is no Portuguese association or research center for the study of Canada,³ and when it comes to emerging scholars there are only two that I know of (including myself).⁴

It appears to be safe to claim, then, that Canadian studies does not exist as a field of study in Portugal. If we are to change this, however, I believe that the future of Canadian studies in Portugal depends on two main factors. First, that there be a strong and sustained cooperation with international scholars and organizations focused on Canada in contexts in which the institutionalization of Canadian studies is at more developed stages – such as in German-speaking countries. Second, that we

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- 1 I am grateful to José Domingues de Almeida (University of Porto/ILCML), Teresa Casal (University of Lisbon/CEAUL-ULICES), Mary Fowke (University of Lisbon/CEAUL-ULICES), Isabel Inacio (Embassy of Canada to Portugal), and Cecilia Beecher Martins (University of Lisbon /CEAUL-ULICES) for the long email exchanges helping me to determine the presence of Canadian Studies in Portugal.
 - 2 First, at the University of Lisbon, Cecilia Beecher Martins teaches a BA course on Canadian Literature and Culture, and at the University of Coimbra, John Henry Havelde teaches a BA course on Anglophone Canadian Studies. Second, at the University of Porto, José Domingues de Almeida teaches two BA courses that study Canada in the context of Francophone Literatures and Cultures, and Fátima Vieira teaches a single Canadian novel – Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) – as part of an MA course on cultural studies, and in the context of utopian studies.
 - 3 Even though, one must add, at the University of Lisbon's research center CEAUL-ULICES, Ana Raquel Fernandes and Margarida Pereira Martins coordinate a research group on "Other Literatures and Cultures in English" that includes the study of Canada.
 - 4 The other ECR being Mary Fowke, a PhD candidate at the University of Lisbon/CEAUL-ULICES.

as Canadianists in Portugal – both emerging and established – come together and organize ourselves to promote the study of Canada in Portugal.

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YVONNE K. JENDE

The Future of Canadian Studies: On Plowing a Lonely Furrow

When I began my work as a research associate and lecturer at Paderborn University in late 2020, the Department of English and American Studies' curriculum was almost entirely devoid of Canadian Literary and Cultural Studies. A brief mentioning of Margaret Atwood here, a reference to Northrop Frye there, Canadian Literature was – and continues to be – a minor literature taking a back seat to the frontrunners of British and U.S.-American literatures. As the university focuses on the education of future teachers, most classes favor the classics of British and U.S.-American literatures and examine the materials taught in German schools. With neither a Center for Canadian Studies at Paderborn University, nor a chair for Canadian literature and culture, or merely another colleague specializing in Canadian matters, I was plowing a lonely furrow writing my dissertation on contemporary Canadian memoir and teaching Canadian and Indigenous literatures and cultures to a student body whose main knowledge of Canada seemed to consist of stereotypes learned from U.S.-American TV shows.

The forecast seemed to call for foul weather all season, and my expectations for any seeds to sprout, grow, and ripen were low at best. However – as always – things happen when you least expect them, and so they did. Critically considering Canadian life-writing genres from the colonial travelogs of Richard Hakluyt to Beverley McLachlin's autobiography, systematically examining Canadian artistic expressions from Indigenous petroglyphs to the paintings of the Group of Seven to the Haida Manga art of Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, and engaging with the representations of police brutality, anti-black racism, and systemic discrimination in activists' writings, students showed great interest in Canadian Studies overall. Re-evaluating learned binary oppositions such as local/global, contemporary/traditional, subjective/objective, or national/indigenous, engaging with Canadian Studies enabled the students not only to rethink spatial imaginations but also to challenge universalistic and essentialist representations, and deconstruct the political and ideological values involved in the conflation of people(s).

Since then, some seeds seem to have sprouted and bloomed, and the forecast seems to call for a much sunnier season now; a season in which Canadian literatures begin to catch up with the frontrunners of British and U.S.-American literatures, and a season in which area studies, in more general terms, begin to be recognized as

having much to contribute to both the transcultural turn of a diverse regional community *and* our understanding of issues of global concern.

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