

Edited Collection. Call for Submissions

CBC Radio and the Rise of CanLit

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While CBC radio has a long history of promoting the arts in general, it has been an especially active sponsor of literature in Canada through such post-war programming as “Anthology,” and subsequent programs like “Gabereau,” “Book Time,” “Between the Covers,” “Morningside,” “The Next Chapter,” and “Canada Reads,” among others. However, its contribution to Canada literature is not restricted to the broadcast and discussion of literary texts. CBC Radio commissions as well as broadcasts literary texts; develops an audience for literature; publishes; liaises and advocates with private sector publishers and donors; runs literary competitions and offers prizes; and encourages active discussion and critique. In these and other activities, CBC Radio has arguably served a seminal role in the establishment of what we now call CanLit and made a significant contribution to the creation of a national literary culture.

Recent assessments have been published examining the role played by Robert Weaver in creating CBC Radio as a literary sponsor. Alice Munro has written that she sold a story in 1951 to a program called “Canadian Short Stories” and that Robert Weaver, its producer, was just about the only person she knew at that time who was connected with the world of writing. She indicates that his interest was in good writing, not in the production of “Canadian” writing. Yet what resulted from the first decades of CBC Radio sponsorship was a cadre of writers and a collection of work that represent a defining component of what is now recognized as a national literature.

No comprehensive look at the overall contribution of CBC Radio to the development of Canadian literary life, nor assessment of that contribution, now exists. This collection of essays seeks to explore and assess CBC Radio as a public sponsor of literature in Canada, taking into account the perspective of scholars, writers, and former and current CBC employees.

Suggested topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Radio and the professionalization of writing
- Radio audiences and expectations
- Forms of publishing and dissemination
- Literary programming and the role of public radio
- Marketing CanLit
- Prizes and Competitions
- Taking stock of CanLit
- Changing Roles and Turning Points

We welcome abstracts of 250–500 words (for chapters of 6,000–8,000 words), along with a CV, sent to Evelyn Ellerman at evelyne@athabascau.ca and Fil Fraser filf@athabascau.ca by Aug. 1, 2011. The collection will be published by Athabasca University Press, an open access scholarly press whose publications are available both in print and online. The deadline for completed essays from accepted abstracts is Dec. 31, 2011.

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