
State of Canadian Scholarly Journal Publishing: *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*

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Abstract

A description of the current mandate, state of operations, and strategic direction of the quarterly journal *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* based at McMaster University.

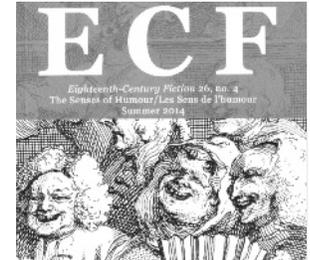
Keywords

Fiction; Eighteenth century; Literary studies; Cultural studies; Humanities

Introduction

As of fall 2017, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (*ECF*) is in its thirtieth year of operation. The only quarterly devoted to the topic of eighteenth-century fiction, *ECF* leads international publication of peer-reviewed scholarship on the early novel and the culture of the “long eighteenth century” more broadly. Published by the University of Toronto Press (UTPress), the journal presents between 22 and 24 articles per year, and each volume year usually includes one illustrated special issue.

Founded in 1988 by David Blewett of the English Department at McMaster University, where the journal remains, *ECF* builds on the university’s legacy of prominence in eighteenth-century studies. McMaster University library, which houses Canada’s strongest collection of eighteenth-century books and periodicals, participates in the Library Fellowships program offered by the American Society for Eighteenth-Century



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Studies. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* was founded to act in tandem with the collection as a primary tool for fostering intellectual debate and inquiry in this area of research and to serve as a centre for scholarly exchange. It continues to serve this function, not only by gathering the field's highest-quality work in its pages but also by organizing networking and professionalization events at international meetings and hosting the McMaster Symposium for Eighteenth-Century Studies at its home institution.

In 2009, the Department of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University hired Dr. Eugenia Zuroski, a specialist in eighteenth-century studies, to support the journal. Dr. Zuroski came to McMaster with editorial experience with the journal *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, and she earned tenure and promotion in 2014 on the strength of her well-reviewed Oxford University Press book, *A Taste for China: English Subjectivity and the Prehistory of Orientalism* (Zuroski, 2013). She is currently the editor of *ECF*. She is joined in the day-to-day running of the journal by the managing editor, Jacqueline Langille, who has served full-time in this position since 2002.

Eighteenth-Century Fiction publishes articles in both French and English. While most submissions focus on British or French literature, the journal welcomes scholarship on any cultural tradition corresponding to the period of the long eighteenth century. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* has received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) since 1988 and actively involves Canadian scholars in various roles – some as members of the editorial board (one-third of whom are scholars working at Canadian universities) and associate editors, others as authors (both French and English), peer reviewers, and book reviewers. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction's* editorial board also reflects its international commitment, and the journal follows through on that commitment by soliciting work from around the globe. The journal has published articles and book reviews written by scholars from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., the U.K., France, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Spain, Italy, South Korea, and Japan. Canadians working on eighteenth-century fiction and cultural studies are thus able to publish their work alongside the best articles from around the world in a Canadian publication.

Eighteenth-Century Fiction's operations are maintained through a combination of subscription revenues; Project MUSE and other royalties; SSHRC grants; and substantial support from the McMaster University Faculty of Humanities, including an annual grant when required, personnel in the form of a full-time managing editor, and a course release for the editor. Through these means, the *ECF* operating budget was solvent for all of the past 12 fiscal years.

The evolution of *ECF's* mandate

Since the journal's inception, *ECF* has focused on publishing the best scholarship on fiction of the eighteenth century. In its early years, *ECF* published mostly formalist scholarship on canonical authors. In 2003, in consultation with the editorial board, the journal expanded its editorial vision to reflect changes in the discipline. Since then, it has invited scholarship that conceives of "fiction" broadly, in the sense of cultural narratives not confined to a particular genre or even medium, and that expands the frameworks of discussion – critical, historical, and theoretical – in order to address the

myriad ways such narratives were formed, contested, revised, and reproduced across different areas of eighteenth-century culture. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* has also stayed current with shifts in periodization, and now includes work ranging from the Restoration through the Romantic periods – roughly 1660 to 1830, or what specialists call the “long eighteenth century.”

The journal actively solicits and strives to publish a variety of methodological approaches on a wide range of cultural materials, and encourages interdisciplinary projects. The broadened mandate is particularly evident in the journal’s recent special issues. For example, the 2012 special issue “Exoticism and Cosmopolitanism” engaged with the latest cultural theory on the global flows of people and commodities that distinguish modernity, including articles on material culture (garden design, porcelain figurines) as well as literary texts. The 2015 special double issue on “Georgian Theatre in an Information Age: Media, Performance, Sociability,” guest edited by Daniel O’Quinn (English and Theatre Studies, University of Guelph) and Gillian Russell (Irish Studies, University of Melbourne), brought together some of the best-known scholars in the field to consider questions and problems at the intersection of literary, media, and performance studies. The journal’s next special issue, “Material Fictions,” which is currently being compiled by co-editors Eugenia Zuroski and Michael Yonan (Art History and Archaeology, University of Missouri), seeks to forge interdisciplinary connections and open up new lines of inquiry between the fields of eighteenth-century literary criticism, art history, and material culture studies. In response to the journal’s open “call for papers,” it received more than forty submissions to this special issue from scholars of various disciplines.

The editors continue to broadcast the *ECF* mandate to the academic community at international meetings, through social media, and via other avenues of promotion (described in more detail below). The journal’s success in reinventing its scope of interest is evident in the high volume and wide variety of quality scholarship that is submitted to it throughout the year.

The *ECF* editorial team

The *ECF* editorial team comprises the editor, the managing editor, five associate editors (two in English and three in French studies, to assist with French submissions), three book review editors (two for English books and one for French books), and an 18-person editorial board. In addition, the journal employs graduate assistants from McMaster’s MA and PhD programs and recently appointed a graduate student liaison to facilitate the journal’s relationship to the graduate student community. The editor reports to the Dean of Humanities at McMaster University.

The *ECF* editor vets all submissions, assigns peer reviewers when a submission is being considered for possible publication, and writes all publication decision letters. In cases of an initial rejection prior to outside peer review, she relates the reasons the work is not selected for peer review and frequently offers her own brief feedback on the submission. (The French associate editors aid in the initial vetting of French submissions.) In making and relating decisions based on reports by external reviewers, the editor is responsible for ensuring that the reports are fair and respectful before

relaying them to authors, and, if the feedback is extensive or varied, for clarifying the journal's preferences for revision. Additionally, the editor copyedits and proofreads all accepted articles and book reviews with an eye to ensuring the quality of writing and logical flow of argument. Together these activities maintain the focus of the editorial process at *ECF*, which includes (1) recognizing the value of the submitted work through initial, in-house vetting; (2) ensuring the quality of article content through a carefully managed peer review process; and (3) maintaining quality control by improving the readability and argumentative coherence of published articles. The editor's work is recognized and supported by the university in the form of two three-unit course releases per academic year.

The managing editor, who is counted among McMaster University full-time, unionized personnel, reports to the editor and is in charge of daily operations. Her responsibilities include the daily management of workflow and publishing timelines; the coordination of correspondence among authors, reviewers, editors, publishers, and readers; the management of contracts, copyright, permissions, society memberships, and other business; the running of social media feeds; journal copyediting, formatting, layout, and cover design (using images located through research in McMaster's library holdings as well as online collections); spearheading initiatives to promote the journal online and at academic meetings; and overseeing the hiring and ongoing training of graduate employees and assistants, reviewers, and editors including herself, in order to keep the journal current with shifts in the scholarly publishing landscape. Where the editor is tasked with developing a vision for the journal's contribution to the profession, the managing editor is tasked with figuring out how to materialize this vision. The importance of the managing editor to *ECF*'s accomplishments to date and strategic direction cannot be overstated; the effect of her cumulative experience and expertise is felt in all aspects of *ECF*'s operations.

The *ECF* editorial board is composed of international scholars who are asked to serve a two-year renewable term. To fill the board, the editor chooses scholars studying eighteenth-century literature and culture who have recent, topical, and respected publications in the field. She strives to maintain a balance in the following categories: French and English; gender; mid-career and well-established professors; and nationality (while ensuring that one-third of the board are scholars who work at Canadian universities, as required for SSHRC funding eligibility). The editor is also committed to an ongoing effort to see that Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) scholars, who are generally underrepresented in eighteenth-century studies, find representation on the editorial board as well as throughout the journal's operation, for example as authors, reviewers, and guest editors of special issues.

Board members are involved in many aspects of the journal's work: they are canvassed about proposed changes to the journal, such as the broadening of the mandate; they agree to vet a minimum of two submissions per year, and most vet significantly more than that; and they promote the journal as a venue for publication to colleagues and scholars at conferences. When possible, the editor meets with members of the board at the annual meetings of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (CSECS) and the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS). In addition to

servicing as journal advisors and submission reviewers, many of the board members over the years have helped *ECF* by writing book reviews, and several have taken on additional responsibilities, such as serving as associate or book review editors.

Eighteenth-Century Fiction remains committed to supporting and training graduate students as part of its editorial mission, and to this end it incorporates graduate assistants in a number of capacities. The field of eighteenth-century studies at McMaster continues to have a national profile, with a large graduate student cohort (currently six PhD and two MA students engaged in research in the field). These students are involved in the journal as volunteer proofreaders and, in the case of advanced doctoral students, as occasional book reviewers. With the last round of SSHRC support, the journal was able to hire two to three doctoral students per year to work on a part-time basis, to assist with pre-vetting submissions, copyediting, proofreading, fact-checking, translation, and building an online archive for the journal. This ongoing web project makes the back issues of *ECF* even more accessible online and promotes the cross-referencing of *ECF* articles. In recent years, the editor has also expanded her role as a professional mentor to graduate students in the field at large by offering workshops and speaking on professionalization roundtables devoted to questions about academic publishing and peer review (in 2017, she was invited to present in this capacity by four associations/institutions, in Canada, the U.S., and the U.K.), and by hosting mentoring luncheons at academic conferences. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* recently added to its masthead the position of graduate student liaison, held by a PhD candidate in the field who assists in fostering dialogue between the journal and graduate students and encouraging early career scholars to submit their work.

Peer review

Ensuring the high quality of each *ECF* research article is a primary concern of the editorial team. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* follows a policy of double-blind evaluation of submissions selected for peer review. Each essay is read by at least two external readers. The journal's rigorous assessment process is designed to select only the best material from among the essays submitted; *ECF* accepts an average of 30–35 percent of submissions for publication annually. The journal uses the online reviewing system Open Journal Systems (OJS), on a platform maintained by UTPress. This system provides a central hub from which the reviewers can download essays and upload their reports, and where the *ECF* editor and managing editor have access to all this material at any time. While some automation is included, such as time-saving automated reminders to reviewers and to editors, the system is operated on a daily basis by the managing editor. Within the system, review requests and publication decision letters are personalized and sent out individually by the editors. The system provides protected anonymity to the reviewers and ease of access for submitters to their anonymous reports.

The editor—sometimes with the assistance of associate editors, the managing editor, or graduate assistants—selects referees from numerous sources: *ECF* board members; the pool of previous *ECF* peer reviewers and authors; databases such as ABELL and MLA Bibliography, which list recent, pertinent publications; and colleagues known to the editors who study and publish on the essay's topic. The journal has maintained an

expansive base of assessors, with 260 scholars reporting on essays over the past two years. It strives to find assessors who are not only familiar with the material addressed in the essay but also fully conversant in the methodology adopted by a particular author. Reviewers are asked to evaluate submissions with an eye to the following criteria:

- Originality. Each article must make a markedly new contribution to current criticism of the subject, and must be clear in establishing that originality. To this end, the editors insist that authors engage fully with relevant scholarship. The journal frequently rejects articles that do not display a strong command of the critical field.
- A fully coherent, logical, and focused argument. Each article must take a clear stand and defend it convincingly by adducing appropriate evidence. The methodology and theoretical approach that informs this argument must be thorough, justified, and relevant. Articles must have a single, coherent argumentative arc and an organization that moves the reader clearly through a logical sequence of ideas.
- Breadth of interest. The journal looks for submissions that, even if they are specialized in their particular subject matter, engage with ideas that are of wide interest to *ECF's* readership and contribute to the most vibrant current debates in eighteenth-century studies.
- Calibre of writing. Not only during copyediting, but also at the submission stage, the editors assess articles for clarity and eloquence of expression, looking for lucid and intellectually provocative prose.

The journal asks assessors to state a clear preference for or against the publication of the specific manuscript, and to make recommendations for improvement. In the event that the two reports are divergent in their assessment, the editor seeks a third review. The final decision about publication is based on all the readers' reports and is made by the editor.

This assessment procedure has been instrumental in establishing *ECF's* reputation as a journal that publishes only first-rate material, while being open to both well-known and emerging scholars, and that encourages innovative topics and approaches. As a recent author put it in a description of his experience publishing with the journal, *ECF's* review process sustains scholarly rigour while "allowing authors to take intellectual risks." From issue 27.3-4 (Spring/Summer 2015) through 30.2 (Winter 2018), *ECF* has published peer reviewed articles by authors distributed across academic ranks: 10 PhD candidates; 11 assistant professors; 13 associate professors; 24 full professors (a high number owing in part to the two large special issues covered in this time period, which included many distinguished scholars in their respective fields); and 15 from the category comprising postgraduates, postdoctoral fellows, lecturers, adjunct and sessional instructors, and emeritus and independent scholars.

The personal involvement of both the editor and managing editor in routine correspondence with authors and reviewers alike ensures that the journal's expectations are communicated clearly at every stage, that reports and revisions are submitted within appropriate timeframes, that helpful feedback is provided to authors regardless of the publication decision, and that productive working relations are

maintained among the ever-growing pool of involved scholars. The editorial team also prioritizes providing a decision to its authors promptly – in almost all cases within four months of submission. This timely response helps make *ECF* a publishing venue of choice for authors in the field; many scholars who have submitted their work to *ECF* have commented to the editors on their positive experience of the journal's peer review and editorial procedures.

As part of the journal's peer review mission, the *ECF* editors remain committed to addressing the broader problem of diversifying the field of recognized experts in eighteenth-century studies. The journal has seen substantial progress recently in its efforts toward gender parity in the pool of active peer reviewers, where it has maintained a slight to strong majority of women reviewers since 2015. Looking forward, the editors embrace the ongoing imperative to incorporate and centre the expertise of BIPOC and disabled scholars in the journal's appraisal of vital work in the field.

Publication and distribution processes

The journal adheres to its publication schedule rigorously: issues are consistently published on time, within the specified season (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer). The collaborative labours of the managing editor and the team at UTPress are essential to maintaining this strict schedule.

Publishing electronically, to which *ECF* is fully committed, has dramatically increased the journal's readership numbers and reach (for more details, see the Readership section below). There are multiple forms of electronic access to the journal's content. In October 2001, the journal was first made available online through the research database hub of EBSCOhost, which reaches more than 50,000 libraries worldwide via institutional subscription. In October 2006, *ECF* began publishing on Project MUSE, which provides full-text, online access via institutional subscriptions to more than 600 humanities and social sciences journals from in excess of 120 publishers. Since 2008, *ECF* has been available for both individual and single institutional electronic subscriptions through UTPress. While many of the journal's online North American readers choose to access *ECF* at Project MUSE, the benefits of offering the e-subscription venue at UTPress (via MetaPress currently) are substantial in terms of professional support and the generation of useful metadata. These benefits include providing easy access to *ECF* content for Scopus and other major indexers; establishing a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) for each *ECF* article published online; offering e-tokens that are linked to *ECF* content to all our contributors; employing e-tokens for access to published content as a promotional tool; having our own online niche at the high-profile UTPress (highly ranked in Google searches); and enjoying the support of experienced and knowledgeable online publishers. The high annual costs of offering electronic subscriptions directly through UTPress/ MetaPress are not yet being recouped by subscription monies, despite promotional efforts by the editorial team and by UTPress over the past six years. Currently, the substantial royalties from Project MUSE cover the UTPress e-publishing fees.

The journal embraces the SSHRC goal of sustainable open access, and now offers a free-to-read archive of volumes 1–20 of *ECF* on the McMaster Humanities server. To maintain the subscription revenues from Project MUSE and EBSCO, which provide

more than one-half of the *ECF* operating budget, the journal does not make its most recently published issues available on this archive. In accordance with one of the options in the latest Tri-Agency Open Access Policy, all *ECF* authors are allowed to post the full text of their *ECF* articles on their own institutional repository immediately upon publication.

Because some faithful subscribers still value print, *ECF* continues to be made available in printed form. Some major university libraries now subscribe to *ECF* in both media. Along with the annual SSHRC grant, subscription revenues do cover the costs of the print version and its mailing.

Readership and promotion

Through the means described above, *ECF* articles are made widely available and accessible to readers. Both the editorial team and UTPress rely on various forms of marketing and promotion, including social media, to ensure that the journal reaches the people who will be impacted by the research it presents.

Owing to the reach and profile of Project MUSE, *ECF* has successfully expanded its readership, and in the years ahead the journal will focus on continuing this trend. The journal's online usage report from Project MUSE for January through October of 2016 showed 36,210 downloads; five different *ECF* articles were each downloaded more than 300 times in that 10-month period. Like its contributors, *ECF*'s subscribers and readers come from all over the world: Project MUSE shows downloads from more than 40 countries. A large number, both individual and institutional subscribers, are in the U.S., but *ECF* has considerable presence in Great Britain, the rest of Europe, Japan, and South Korea, also reaching Australia, New Zealand, and the Middle East.

The journal's initiatives around electronic publication and delayed open access, aided by UTPress, have also contributed to its radically broadened readership. An important aspect of e-publication is ensuring that readers can easily find the article that matches their online search. In response to UTPress's advice that journal articles with abstracts receive substantially more hits than those without, since issue 21.1 (Fall 2008), *ECF* has provided clear 170-word abstracts for every published article. UTPress online readership statistics indicate that the archive of *ECF* articles continues to enjoy very high readership, seeing growth year after year: 42,502 article downloads in 2015; 47,386 article downloads in 2016; and in the first half of 2017, already 29,232 article downloads. UTPress projects more than 50,000 article downloads by the end of 2017. The journal's online visibility and accessibility is a primary concern of both the editorial team and the press. World Wide Web search engines consistently return *ECF* as a top-ranked site: the top three hits on Google.ca and Bing.com searches for "eighteenth-century fiction" usually include the *ECF* McMaster website, *ECF* on Project MUSE, and the UTPress *ECF* webpage (search conducted August 24, 2017). This visibility, combined with the journal's reputation in the field, also sustains a consistent inflow of submissions: over the past ten calendar years, *ECF* received an average of 69 submissions per year.

The editors also remain committed to promoting the journal in other ways, especially interpersonal outreach. The journal sends at least one editorial representative—sometimes the managing editor, sometimes a graduate assistant—to every annual meeting of both CSECS and ASECS to set up a journal display table and engage with delegates. The editor also attends each of these major meetings every year in order to solicit promising scholarship from papers presented at the panels, promote upcoming special issues, run professionalization and networking events on behalf of the journal, and field questions from those interested in submitting or subscribing. She has focused particularly on using her presence at these meetings to increase the journal's visibility among emerging scholars, who represent new ranks of authors, readers, and reviewers—for example, by replacing an annual lunch exclusively for members of the editorial board with networking luncheons that put members of the board in touch with early career researchers working in related fields. In recent years, the *ECF* editor has also represented the journal at other major North American, British, and European conferences, including the Modern Language Association, the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism, the British Association for Romantic Studies, the Defoe Society, the Aphra Behn Society, and the Society for Novel Studies. The editors promote *ECF* remotely at international meetings to which no representative is sent (such as the British Association for Eighteenth-Century Studies) by displaying calls for articles and other printed materials, and throughout the year by arranging exchange ads with other scholarly journals. In combination, these different forms of contact keep the journal in the forefront of the minds of potential contributors, potential subscribers, and regular readers who promote *ECF* to their institutional librarians.

Over the past few years, the editor and managing editor have increasingly promoted the journal via an active and multifaceted online presence, including participation in two online list-servs (1,200-plus international members), a dedicated Facebook page (currently at 698 followers), and a Twitter account (currently at 3,169 followers). Social media has proven a particularly effective way of reaching out to early career researchers: calls for submissions and announcements about professionalization events are effectively amplified by our graduate liaison, for example, and the editor occasionally fields questions about journal submissions, editing work, and scholarly publishing via Twitter exchanges. Combined with the opportunity to meet scholars in person at conferences and workshops, *ECF*'s social media presence has allowed the editors to cultivate a distinct personality for the journal—to “put a face” on its editorial operations—which allows readers and contributors to experience their involvement with the journal as being part of a distinct scholarly community.

Impact, professionalization, and future directions

Similar to most humanities journals, *ECF* is not adequately assessed by third-party impact factor generators. The editors therefore look to other measures of professional impact, including those mentioned above: subscription numbers; readership statistics; online indexing; submission statistics and demanding acceptance rate; online followers and engagement statistics; invitations for the editor to speak on behalf of the journal; and, crucially, personal feedback from submitters, authors, reviewers, and readers. They also look to sources of commentary such as the Humanities Journals Wiki and

Princeton University's graduate student-authored Reviews of Peer-Reviewed Journals in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The editors strongly believe that *ECF*'s reputation for excellent scholarship, timely publication of the highest editorial quality, and responsive interactions with authors, reviewers, and readers alike is due in large measure to the professionalization of the journal's operations – specifically, having a full-time, highly skilled managing editor; an institutionally supported course release for the editor; the resources to pay graduate assistants the equivalent of a teaching assistantship or research assistantship, including benefits; and publishing partnerships with established organizations such as UTPress, EBSCO Information Services, and Project MUSE. The journal is the product of many combined efforts, and its professionally organized and justly compensated distribution of labour ensures that the myriad tasks and responsibilities that go into producing and distributing the highest quality scholarly content are delegated fairly, to those best qualified to take them on. The journal's multiple forms of material support, in other words, afford the editorial team the time, training, experience, and infrastructure to operate as expertly as possible. For a more detailed account of the responsibilities that are collectively covered by the editors and the publishing partners who work together to produce *ECF*, please see the list compiled by Kent Anderson (2016) at the Scholarly Kitchen.

Eighteenth-Century Fiction has embarked recently on several initiatives to expand the journal's role as a platform for scholarly discussion. Looking to diversify the kind of content offered in the journal's pages, the editors have begun to invite editorial board members, past contributors, and other recognized experts in the field to contribute "Reflections" essays: pieces shorter than a research article (around 4,000 words), not peer reviewed, that are on topics of professional interest but more personal in tone, relaying insights drawn from particular experiences in research, teaching, or professional development. Through these essays, the editors seek to engage a range of issues around the processes of scholarly research, writing, and pedagogy – material challenges, conceptual quandaries, questions about how scholars define or negotiate fields, and how they commit to or transform methodologies. To date, we have published three "Reflections" pieces, with another forthcoming in the Winter 2018 issue, and several more in process for future issues. The journal also includes occasional non-peer-reviewed "Images" essays, especially in special issues: shorter pieces (again, around 4,000 words) that present a close engagement—formal, historical, or some combination of the two—with a particular image or object, or set of them. These pieces are designed to emphasize our expanded definition of "fiction," which includes fine art and material culture, and to model methods of engaging such objects as forms of cultural narrative.

In order to invite more readers to use the public archive of articles published in *ECF*, and to link this content to current conversations, the journal has also begun to organize "virtual issues": clusters of articles from the archive gathered around particular themes of scholarly and popular interest, and presented online. The editors generate topics (the first set, compiled during summer 2017, included America, Privacy, Propaganda, Women's Sexuality, Utopia, Race and Racism, French Women Writers) and make a list of eight or nine articles in the archive potentially relevant to each topic.

They then identify potential “guest editors” from the pool of scholars with demonstrated expertise in that area and ask them to write critical introductions of around 1,500 words that frame the topic, with an appended “List of Further Reading” (books, essays, chapters, journal articles, more recent *ECF* articles). Guest editors are invited to use the list of essays generated by the editors, to curate their own list, or to combine the editors’ suggestions with their own selections. Through these freely available virtual issues, which are promoted on social media with the name of the guest editor prominent, the journal aims to use the free-to-read *ECF* archives to help guide researchers interested in these topics, to give a sense of both the depth and breadth of the critical conversation, to provide a framework for thinking about how scholarship in eighteenth-century studies speaks to present concerns, and to engage a public readership. The first virtual issue is on “Utopia” (Pearl, 2017).

A final initiative in the first stages of development is an *ECF* podcast, hosted by the editor, which will feature conversations with scholars and other professionals associated with academia (such as editors and publishers) on topics related to the journal’s published articles as well as more broadly relevant to eighteenth-century scholarship. The podcast format will allow the journal to combine the broadcasting reach of online media with the personalized voice of the editor and other members of the scholarly community to expand the way it speaks to and engages its audience. Some topics in development are “Why and How Do We Teach Richardson’s *Clarissa*?”; “The Materiality of Fiction, and the Fictionality of Material” (to tie in with the “Material Fictions” issue); “Indigenous Studies and Eighteenth-Century Studies” (to tie in with a future guest-edited special issue); and “What Do Editors Want?” (with other editors of journals and book series in the field). UTPress has enthusiastically offered to provide support for producing, hosting, and distributing the podcast, including developing ways to link it to relevant content from the published journal online.

Moving forward, the journal also aims to continue doing the things it has been doing well. It will continue to solicit and publish the highest quality scholarship across multiple fields of scholarship on eighteenth-century culture, and it will continue to encourage scholars to expand the field’s understanding of cultural fictions – how they are generated, how they operate, and how they are reproduced and revised. It will continue its successful series of high-profile special issues with “Material Fictions” (Fall 2018), followed by more special issues directed by distinguished guest editors (one per volume). It will continue to grow its readership through varied, ongoing promotional activities and online presence, and it will continue to develop its role as a hub of mentorship, professionalization, and community-building with particular outreach to early career researchers. It will also continue to model and advocate for professional standards of support for scholarly journals in the humanities, including ongoing attention to developing and implementing best practices for peer review and other labours associated with scholarly publishing, and remaining centrally involved in discussions of how to move toward fuller open access in a way that is sustainable and professionally rigorous. Through these efforts, the editors look forward to upholding *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*’s multiple roles—mobilizing groundbreaking scholarship in the international field of eighteenth-century studies; fostering a sense of professional

and intellectual community among all participants in this field; and lending its vision to discussions of strategic directions in Canadian scholarly publishing.

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