

## Leonard Cohen: A Retrospective

At the time of his death in November 2016, Leonard Cohen had published two novels, eight poetry collections, and several volumes of selected works. In his better-known role as a singer, he had produced fourteen studio albums (which he once claimed to be hardly different from his books of poems), including *You Want It Darker*, released in October 2016 just before his death. Beloved by fans around the world for his “golden voice” and its signature mixture of the holy and the profane, Cohen was mourned at the moment of a perceived shift in global politics. Cohen died on the eve of the 2016 presidential elections and did not see Donald Trump’s victory. Nevertheless, in the week of his death, the poet’s “Hallelujah” marked his passing and expressed resistance to Trump’s conservative plans to “make America great again,” as Kate McKinnon, dressed as Hillary Clinton, opened *Saturday Night Live* with Cohen’s famous hymn.

Cohen’s reputation has only grown in esteem since his passing. In April 2017, he was awarded four Junos (Canada’s music awards), including Artist of the Year and Album of the Year. In September, the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal opened *Leonard Cohen: Une brèche en toute chose/A Crack in Everything*, the first art exhibit inspired by Cohen’s work and its contexts. In January 2018, the title song from Cohen’s final album, the critically acclaimed *You Want It Darker*, brought home Cohen’s first ever Grammy, for Best Rock Performance. *The Flame*, Cohen’s last book, will be published in October of this year.

Along with these new achievements, Cohen’s death inspires new questions and renewed retrospection about his extensive body of work. We invite paper proposals for contributions to an edited collection on Leonard Cohen’s corpus, cultural contexts, and legacy.

Topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Cohen and religion, especially Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism
- Cohen and war, e.g., the Vietnam War, the Yom Kippur War, and the Six-Day War
- Cohen and politics, e.g., its contexts and his study of “authoritarian psychology”
- Cohen and representations of sexuality, e.g., sex, sexual orientation, sado-masochism
- Cohen’s celebrity, e.g., its persona and reception, nationally and internationally
- Cohen’s intertexts and influences, especially his influence on other authors
- Cohen’s ageing and the creative life, e.g., his predictions, his comeback, late style
- Cohen’s visions of history, whether religious, revolutionary, or imperial, etc.
- Cohen and Canadian identities, including (if we may) Québécois(e) identities
- Cohen in translation, e.g., to French, and in multi-lingual texts, e.g., *Beautiful Losers*
- Cohen’s movement between genres and media, including covers of his songs
- Cohen and popular culture, e.g., mass-market paperbacks, fandom, films about Cohen
- Cohen in the archives, e.g., his extensive fonds at the University of Toronto
- Cohen’s sense of humour, e.g., in poems, novels, songs, interviews
- Cohen’s “homes”: Montreal, Hydra, New York City, Mount Baldy, L.A.

Interested contributors should send proposals of no more than **500 words** for papers of 6000-8000 words and a C.V. to Kait Pinder and Joel Deshaye at [kpinder@mta.ca](mailto:kpinder@mta.ca) by **March 31**.