

## **In Electromagnetic Waves: Judith Merrill's Speculative Work and Political Activism in 1970's and 1980's Toronto**

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### **Abstract**

After witnessing the police brutality and intensified conflict between war resisters and the State at the 1968 Democratic Convention, the science fiction writer, essayist and critic Judith Merrill decided to join those who, as a form of law resistance, renounced their American citizenship and immigrated to Canada, where they would help draft and military resisters cross the border. This was the biggest wave of migration from the United States to Canada over political reasons since the American Revolution, but more than that it particularly resulted in a massive influx of young American intellectuals and artists to downtown Toronto. Judith Merrill, as many others, kept her political activities going and engaged in Canada's growing cultural industries, taking part in the production of many television and radio shows. Thus, the current research aims to investigate Judith Merrill's activism in 1970s and 1980s Toronto, as well as the relationship between her work and her political engagement within the growing field of Canadian science fiction. To this end, concepts, categories and debates presented by authors such as Pierre Bourdieu, Jean François Sirinelli, Angela de Castro Gomes and others, were deployed to collect, categorize, and interpret a vast variety of primary sources, as well as to comprehend the writer within her intellectual and political network, enabling an analysis of the positions she took in her field, the symbolic and political power she held and what it was used for, in other words, which representations, debates and agendas she moved forward and how.

**Keywords:** immigration, intellectual relationships, science fiction, social movements, Vietnam War