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# 'Reincarnated in a New Type': Global Citizenship in Sui Sin Far's Oeuvre

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## Abstract

Asian-North-American writer and journalist "Sui Sin Far" had multiple allegiances: She considered herself British, because of her English birthplace; Chinese, because of her mother's ethnicity; Canadian, because of her Montreal childhood; and American, because of her 15-year career as a writer and journalist in the US. Sui Sin Far's fiction, journalism, and travel writing repeatedly reflect on the ways in which narrow understandings of belonging—particularly those outlined in turn-of-the-century immigration legislation—were out of step with the more complex subject positions produced by colonialism, imperialism, global trade, miscegenation, cultural exchange, mobility, and mass migration. My paper, "Reincarnated in a New Type': Global Citizenship in Sui Sin Far's Oeuvre," discusses Sui Sin Far's efforts to represent more expansive understandings of citizenship produced by late-nineteenth-century migration. In particular, it will focus on "Born a Britisher" (1896), a pithy unsigned journalistic piece that I recently discovered in which Sui Sin Far contemplates the ethnically illegible figure of Yen Moy. Yen Moy is a Chinese-speaking Albino born in Australia, to British-citizen parents, and raised in China, whose language, skin colour, clothing, birthplace, and parents—not to mention features, religion, name, occupation, "temperament", and "moral texture"—confound North American immigration officials intent on restricting the immigration of "Chinese". Like the gender- and race-bending characters in Sui Sin Far's work, Yen Moy enjoys his freedom of mobility and self-invention at the same time that he experiences "doubt," "fear," "helplessness," and isolation—the side effects of feeling global.

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