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“The Dynamics of Communication(s) in Multi/inter/trans/cultural Canada”

5th Unconventional Conference of Young Canadianists

Baia Mare, Romania, 19-20 September 2013

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This year’s Unconventional Conference of Young Canadianists event took place on 19-20 September, and the organisers (Crina Bud and Adrian Oțoiu) focussed on the dynamics of communication(s) in multi/inter/trans/cultural Canada – a current subject of interest in fields ranging from politics and sociology, to culture of all types. The conference began with two talks about security concerns and the sometimes tense partnership between Canada and the United States in the fight against terror.

In a subsequent paper, Oana-Meda Păloșanu pointed out the possibilities Japanese-Canadian authors exploit in their texts in linguistically manifesting themselves in their English-language works and thereby not entirely giving many white readers access to their. As Păloșanu, a speaker of Japanese, showed, the aim of using Japanese words and expressions in English-language works is to make many readers feel “othered.” Meanwhile, Ana Olos presented conference attendees with a humorous prelude to poet George Elliott Clarke – namely, her Wallace-Stevens-inspired consideration of thirteen reasons to read the Canadian poet, who presented his work the next day.

Because there were parallel sessions throughout, conference participants were faced with difficult choices. Indeed, for those researchers who regret having missed sessions, it might have been better if the conference had lasted longer! A few examples of papers given: Mihaela Topan spoke about Ghyslaine Côté’s film *Elles étaient cinq* and Professor Dana Puiu emphasized the uncommon features of Louise Dupré’s plays. Alitea Bianca Turtureanu stressed that representations of transculturality in Nancy Huston’s works result from the collaboration between the writer and personalities from other domains, such as photography or painting. Jana Marešová exemplified and commented upon contexts from modern society which affect the communication abilities of the characters in Joseph Boyden’s novel *Through Black Spruce*, Anamaria Fălăuș concentrated on the obstacles of communication in Stephen Hennigan’s *The Places Where Names Vanish*, while Andreea Gianina Bera referred to constructions of masculinity and femininity in Margaret Atwood’s and Carol Shields’s novels. Other



papers included (besides my own reflections on forms of communication within art symposiums in Canada) Oleh Kozachuk's academic plea for improving the quality of life of the First Nations, as well as several focussing on film: Raluca Ghimbulut's paper on Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses*, Georgeta Moarcas's analysis of two documentaries by Pierre Perrault, and Adrian Otoiu's exposé about communication in four Canadian puzzle films, which are characterised by time loops and ambiguities. Silvia Branea centred her presentation on the communication of Romanian emigrants with the Founding Nations as well as with the First Nations, and Sorina Gheorghe from the same university reminded us of the sad legacy of aboriginal residential schools.

This conference was “unconventional” in terms of the rich cultural offerings. A special moment on Thursday was the projection of two films by the affable and open-hearted filmmaker Dan Schlanger: the documentary *Death in the Forest* and the black comedy *The Bar*. *Death in the Forest* deals with perils of working in forestry, as well as the tradition of this occupation within families. Another special moment was Crina Bud's presentation of Kim Thuy's biography, followed by a conference via skype with the Canadian author of Vietnamese origin. Later, Florin Oncescu – “a part time writer and a full time engineer” – read some of his humorous texts based on his experience in both Canada and the USA, Horea Naşcu spoke in a comical way about a novel by Mordecai Richler, and later the audience could also enjoy the projection of the film *Canadian Smile* realized by Diana Manole from Trent University. After the reception sponsored by the Canadian Embassy in Bucharest, an intellectual feast was offered by George Elliott Clarke in the form of a performance.

