

Prof. UAM dr hab. Dagmara Drewniak
Canadian Literature Research Unit
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland
dagmarad@amu.edu.pl

Eye/I on Canada: Exclusion and Inclusion
Voix/Voie du Canada: Exclusion et Inclusion

The 9th Congress of Polish Canadianists / 9^{ème} Congrès des Canadianistes Polonais
21-23 September 2022 / 21-23 septembre 2022
University of Białystok, Poland / Université de Białystok, Pologne

In Exile or at Home?
Writers of Central-European Descent on Canadian Literary Scene

Canadian writers of Polish and Eastern European origins have decided to publish their works entirely in English (or French) for at least two recent decades. The analyses of texts published in the last ten years also confirm the writers' need to establish their position on Canadian and North American literary market. Some of them refer to the country of origins offering migrant narratives and life stories, others, in turn, publish fiction and poetry alluding only vaguely (or not at all) to their roots. It is known that in a country such as contemporary Canada, migrants, and migrant writers in particular, are no longer pressed to choose allegiances. At the same time "[w]e all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always 'in context,' *positioned*" (Hall 2008: 234, emphasis in original). Therefore, this presentation aims at delineating the most important trajectories in the contemporary Polish/Eastern-European-Canadian literature in order to examine how these authors explore their status of migrancy as a space of questioning one's identity, constructing one's Self on a deeper level than struggling with the everyday process of adapting to living conditions in Canada. Since the identity of a migrant writer is no longer concerned "with being but with becoming" (Mardorossian 2002: 16) there is a significant departure from literature examining the process of immigration and adjustment to the target culture towards writing which discusses more universal problems, and, above all, reshapes the culture and language of the majority while also challenging the concept of national literatures, a process clearly visible in Canada. The analysis of selected works by and interviews with contemporary Canadian writers of Polish and Eastern European extraction will allow for a range of conclusions. Many of the writers in question discuss their identity and, while doing so, they examine and determine their conceptualization of home, roots and routes that have shaped their self-identification. Simultaneously, the authors are fully capable of finding their place in Canada and through their narratives demonstrate their understanding of *loci communes* they have created.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, edited by Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, Blackwell Publishing, 2008, pp. 233–46.

Mardorossian, Carine M. "From Literature of Exile to Migrant Literature." *Modern Language Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2002, pp. 15–33.