

An international conference “Indigenous Expressions of Culture in Storytelling, Drama, Theatre and Performance –Traditional and Contemporary Canadian and Polish Upper Silesian Perspectives” will be taking place in April 26-28, 2017 at the University of Silesia, Sosnowiec campus. The first of the intended series of conferences dedicated to the exploration of complex Indigenous cultures of North America and minor cultures of Eastern/Central Europe is a joint project of Canadian Studies Centre and Department of American and Canadian Studies at the Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, the University of Silesia interdepartmental Research Group Theatrum, and the Department of English and Indigenous Affairs Office, University of the Fraser Valley, Canada.

Our aim is to explore the richness of Indigenous expressions of culture in storytelling, drama, theatre and performance (DPT) in Canada and Polish Upper Silesia. The exploration of Canadian scholarship on Indigenous literatures and cultures, and especially the work of Indigenous playwrights, artists, performers, scholars/critics and educators is of great interest to the critics of minor/ Indigenous literatures and cultures in Europe. We believe that in spite of many differences between Indigenous cultures of America and minor cultures of Eastern/Central Europe, critical insights and analytical tools offered by Indigenous research methodologies, epistemologies and pedagogical theories can provide instructive, alternative ways of approaching the under-studied and under-theorized works of European minor/Indigenous writers, performers and artists.

The keynote speakers:

- Tomson Highway, (Cree), playwright, novelist, musician, composer and social activist; one of Canada’s most influential aboriginal voices who has shaped the development of Aboriginal theatre in both the country and around the world. *Maclean's* magazine named him one of the 100 most important people in Canadian history
- Jo-ann Archibald, (Stol:lo). University of British Columbia, Indigenous scholar, pioneer in the advancement of Indigenous education, author of *Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*
- Zbigniew Kadłubek, University of Silesia, classical philologist, comparatist, essayist, author of *Bezbronne myśli. Eseje i inne pisma o Górnym Śląsku* [Vulnerable Musings. Essays and Other Writings on Upper Silesia] (2016) and translator of Aeschylus’s *Prometheus Bound* (2013) into Silesian language

Presentations in various formats will be addressing such aspects of the conference theme as:

- Re-reading and re-writing of history in DTP
- Poetics, aesthetics and politics of identity construction in DTP
- Storytelling, drama, theatre and performance as tools of decolonization and pedagogy
- Storytelling as a repository and archive of Indigenous knowledge
- Indigeneity of Upper Silesia
- Performing history and re-visioning of community memories DTP
- The role of the storytelling and DTP in the cultural revival of Canadian and Upper Silesian cultures
- (De)Construction of cultural identity in storytelling and DTP

- Performance of identity and language recovery and revitalization
- Diversity of the traditional Indigenous forms of cultural expression in the contemporary
- The poetics of place and aesthetic values
- Poetic auto-creation and mythologizing of Indigenous cultures and landscapes

With a comparative project in mind, we are initiating new avenues of research related to the marginalized local/ indigenous/minor cultures of Eastern/Central Europe studied in the context of Indigenous cultures of North America. We hope this pioneering venture in will lead to a greater understanding of the Indigenous and minor cultures functioning within major dominant national narratives of Canada and Poland.

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