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PACS AND CANADIAN STUDIES IN POLAND

The history of Canadian Studies in Poland starts with a number of enthusiastic scholars, who—while working in other, though often related disciplines—engaged in Canada-related research and introduced the Canadian component into their classes. As a result, by the beginning of the 1990s quite a few Canada-focused or Quebec-focused courses were offered in several university centers all around Poland. Today, the fields represented by the majority of the Polish Canadianist community reflect the interests of these first enthusiasts: literature, history, political science and sociology. In the past two decades more universities started to teach Canada-related courses, and several Canadian Studies Centres have been established all over Poland. The Centers, though focused mainly on research and teaching carry out a wide range of activities that include also outreach events. The scholars who helped to create these centers play a major role in spreading knowledge of Canada and popularizing Canadian Studies among successive generations of Polish students. In 1998 the enthusiasm of Polish Canadianists and their passion resulted in the foundation of the Polish Association for Canadian Studies (PACS) – a non-profit, purely voluntary body which coordinates and provides information on Canadian studies in Poland, brings together Polish and foreign academics, researchers and students doing work related to Canada, and supports their activities.

Canadian Studies centres in Poland¹

The first Canadian Studies Center in Poland was established at the University of Warsaw. The center traces its roots to the foundation of the Re-

¹ Based on: Branach-Kallas, Anna. „Kanada w oczach polskiego środowiska akademickiego.” *Obraz Kanady w Polsce*. Ed. Mirosława Buchholtz. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2003. 291–300.

search Centre in French-Canadian Culture and Quebec Literature in 1982, initially chaired by a respected French and Quebec Studies Professor, Jerzy Parvi. Today the Research Centre is supervised by the world-famous specialist on Quebec literature Prof. Józef Kwaterko, whose numerous publications on Quebec literature and French Canadian culture are well-known to Canadianists all over the world. One of his books: *Le Roman québécois de 1960 à 1975 : idéologie et représentation littérature* was selected as one of the thirty most notable books in Canadian Studies ever published. Prof. Kwaterko is also the author of the first history of Quebec literature in Poland and the recent *Dialogi z Ameryką: O frankofońskiej literaturze w Quebecu i na Karaibach* (2003). His Centre offers courses and lectures on French-Canadian literature and civilization, invites guest lecturers and maintains links with many foreign universities.

Another Canadian Studies Centre in Warsaw was opened in 1994 at the Institute of English Studies, Warsaw University. The idea of the center was first devised by Prof. Nancy Burke, a Canadian poet and scholar, professor of literature at the University of Warsaw, who actively contributed to its creation and was director of the Centre till her death in 2006. Through her Canadian literature courses at the University of Warsaw she was instrumental in shaping careers of numerous doctoral students, academics, translators and poets. Her knowledge, her energy, her devotion to the study of Canadian literature inspired the rise of Canadian studies in Poland and the foundation of the Polish Association for Canadian Studies. Nancy Burke passed away unexpectedly in February 2006, but she will remain in the memories of Polish Canadianists as a devoted scholar, a great poet and most of all as a doyenne of Canadian studies in Poland. Her scholarly activities encouraged the foundation of other Canadian Studies Centres across Poland.

While Warsaw university was originally the first and most active Polish academic center promoting the study of Canadian literature, the Jagiellonian University in Kraków has been the leader in the study of the history, culture and society of Canada. The Chair of Canada constitutes today part of the Institute of American Studies and Polish Diaspora of the university. The head of Canadian Studies Centre, Prof. Anna Reczyńska, is one of the most prominent experts in Canadian history and diaspora studies in the region. Today the Institute of American Studies and Polish Diaspora offers a wide variety of regular and often inter-disciplinary courses on Canadian topics, including Introduction to Canada, Canadian History, Society of Canada, Quebec Issues, Canadian Political System, Canadian Higher Education System, Canadian Film, and courses on Canadian Suffrage Movement, First Nations and literature. The institute library has an extensive collection of books on Canada. Academics and doctoral students do their research in Canadian history, women's rights, multiculturalism, Canadian-American and Canadian-British relations. The Institute of American Studies and Polish Diaspora at

the Jagiellonian University also serves as the statutory office of the Polish Association for Canadian Studies.

In 1999 Canadian Studies Centre was founded at the Philology Department of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń due to the efforts of dr Ewa Wełnic, who was the first director of the Centre. The Centre, undoubtedly still one of the most active ones in Poland, is also the only one in the country that brings together English- and French-Canadian literature specialists and linguists. In 2002 it organized the second PACS conference entitled *Exploring Canadian Identities/Vers L'Exploration des Identités Canadiennes* and published selected conference proceedings (edited by Ewa Wełnic, Anna Branach-Kallas and Jakub Wójcik). The current director, Prof. Mirosława Buchholtz, is one of the few experts in children and youth literature in the region. Her interests include also Canadian diasporic literature, as evidenced by her recent book *Canadian Passwords: Diasporic Fictions into the Twenty-First Century* (2008), reviewed in this volume. Apart from coordinating the activities of the Center and organizing many Canadianist events, Prof. Buchholtz is also the general editor of the only "Canadiana" series in Poland, published by the Publishing House Adam Marszałek. Another scholar engaged in the activities of the Center, dr Anna Branach-Kallas focuses in her research on ethnic and racial minority writers. She has published, among others, a monograph *In the Whirlpool of the Past: Memory, Intertextuality and History in the Fiction of Jane Urquhart* (2003); and co-edited, with Piotr Sadkowski, a collection of articles on *Dialogues with Traditions in Canadian Literatures/ Dialogues des traditions dans les littératures du Canada* (2005).

The Quebec-studies scholars engaged in the work of the Toruń Canadian Studies Center are dr Piotr Sadkowski and dr Renata Jarzębowska-Sadkowska. Dr Piotr Sadkowski does research in ethnic *Québécois* literature, while dr Renata Jarzębowska-Sadkowska focuses on linguistic issues, examining French as spoken in Canada. They have actively participated in the organization of the numerous activities of the Canadian Studies Centre in Toruń. Besides, each year they organize *Days of Francophone Culture* – an outreach event which brings together scholars, students and non-academic audiences of different age. It is designed to promote the cultures of French-speaking countries with particular emphasis on the culture of Quebec. In December 2005 the student circle supervised by dr Jarzębowska-Sadkowska organized the conference *Québec-Pologne: échange des réflexions et des expériences des québécois*, which aimed at promoting the exchange of research ideas and experiences among students and professors from different Polish institutions conducting research on Quebec. The conference included also the showing of Pierre Perrault's movies.

Since October 2000 integrated and independent programs have been running at University of Silesia in Sosnowiec, where dr Eugenia Sojka – a valued and respected Canadian Literature in English specialist, and Prof. Krzysztof

Jarosz, French-Canadian literature and translation studies expert, contribute significantly to the development of Canadian Studies in Poland by fostering young generations of future Polish Canadianists. The University of Silesia holds a major outreach event organized in Poland each year – *Days of Canadian Culture*—devised and organized by dr Eugenia Sojka. This interdisciplinary symposium and workshops aim at exploring and celebrating the uniqueness, complexity and diversity of Canadian culture. The event constitutes invariably an unprecedented opportunity for Polish academics, students and general public to attend lectures, presentations, performances and film showings which debunk old stereotypes about Canada and foster recognition of and regard for Canadian culture. The most recent event in 2007 gathered many First Nations scholars, artists and activists (Tomson Highway, Dan and Mary Lou Smoke, Armand Ruffo, Jo-Ann Episkenew, among others) who addressed cultural, literary as well as social and political issues of vital importance to First Nations communities.

Prof. Krzysztof Jarosz organizes regularly another important Canadianist event hosted by the University of Silesia – *Days of Quebec*. This seminar designed to promote French-Canadian literature gathers students of the French Department of the University of Silesia as well as wider, non-academic audience. In October 2006 Prof. Jarosz organized in Katowice an international conference on intertextuality in Quebec literature. In October 2008 Prof. Jarosz and his team (dr Zuzanna Szatanik and dr Joanna Warmuzińska-Rogóż) are planning an international conference *De la fondation de Québec au Canada d'aujourd'hui (1608–2008): rétrospectives, parcours et défis* to celebrate 400 years of the establishment of Quebec City. The research of the Chair of Canadian Studies and Literary Translation headed by Prof. Jarosz focuses on contemporary novel in Quebec.

Canadian literature and culture courses have also been taught in the Department of English of Adam Mickiewicz University since the late 1980s, first by dr Jarosław Sokół and then, since the mid-1990s, by dr Agnieszka Rzepa. Currently, the Department offers regularly M.A. seminars and elective seminars on contemporary Canadian literature. The French Department of Adam Mickiewicz University is the only Polish institution conducting research into language, culture and literature of French-speaking Canada beyond Quebec (Prof. Teresa Tomaszewicz and dr Alicja Zuchelkowska).

Apart from the above mentioned major Canadian Studies Centres, courses on a variety of Canadian topics are also taught and research on Canada is conducted at Marie-Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin, University of Łódź, Casimirus the Great University in Bydgoszcz, State Professional College in Konin and at a few other universities and colleges all over Poland. A Łódź scholar, Prof. Dorota Filipczak, has recently published an important book on Margaret Laurence: *'Unheroic Heroines': The Portrayal of Women in the Writings of Margaret Laurence* (2007).

Hard work and enthusiasm of Polish Canadianists resulted in 1998 in the First Congress of Canadian Studies in Poland organized at the University of Warsaw by Prof. Nancy Burke and Prof. Józef Kwaterko. Over twenty papers were delivered during the conference by established scholars as well as graduate and postgraduate students, which proved a growing interest in Canada among young academics. The conference proceedings *Visions of Canadian Studies: Teaching, Research, Methodology/Visions d'études canadiennes: enseignement, recherche, méthodologie* illustrate the variety of topics covered during conference sessions. Apart from articles related to Canadian history, literature or culture, the volume contains also methodological reflection on teaching Canada in Poland. The most important fruit borne by the Congress was, however, the creation of the Polish Association for Canadian Studies

Polish Association for Canadian Studies: brief history

Polish Canadianists started to come together as a community and cooperate more closely at the beginning of the 1990s, partly as a result of grass-roots effort. However, the first meetings, convened by prof. Nancy Burke, were also facilitated and sponsored by the Canadian Embassy in Warsaw, which over the years has provided Polish Canadianists and PACS with substantial support. Besides, much encouragement came at the time from the European Network for Canadian Studies, which suggested that Central European Canadianists, including Polish scholars, could work towards an establishment of a Central European Canadian Studies network, a coordinating body that would facilitate research contacts among Canadianists in the region.

After a few years of more or less official meetings of Polish Canadianists, the Polish Association for Canadian Studies was established on April 17th, 1998 by 27 founding members. Prof. Anna Reczyńska of the Jagiellonian University, an eminent historian of Polish diaspora in Canada, was elected the first PACS President. The mission of the Association, according to its statute, is to encourage activities in the field of Canadian studies in all scholarly disciplines, promote the spreading of knowledge and information on Canada and develop links among Polish Canadianist community, as well as forge links with Canadianists abroad. Thanks to the growing interest in Canada among students and researchers, PACS has managed through the years to support a number of important Canadianist ventures including conferences, publications, lecture tours, and research trips.

From 1998 till 2003 PACS closely cooperated with other Canadianists in the region and was part of the Central European Network for Canadian Studies, a body coordinating some of the Canadianist activities in the region, convened by Prof. Don Sparling. PACS representatives twice a year participated in the meetings of the Central European Steering Committee for Canadian

Studies headquartered in Brno, and contributed, among others, to the creation of the yearly *Central European Journal of Canadian Studies*. When in 2003 the Network transformed into the Central European Association for Canadian Studies, PACS decided to remain an autonomous organisation, but cooperate with CEACS. Polish scholars actively contribute to the CEJCS and serve on its Advisory Board. Besides, they also actively participate in Canadianist conferences held in Central Europe.

PACS, in cooperation with Polish universities and Canadian studies centres, organizes triennial congresses, which have successfully served as forums of scholarly debate on Canada-related issues and on the condition of Canadian studies in Poland. These are international events, gathering also Canadianists from abroad, though the majority of the participants are always Polish Canadianists. During each congress PACS General Assembly gathers and elects the new Executive. In 2001 the Second Congress of Polish Canadianists was organized by dr Ewa Wełnic, dr Anna Branach-Kallas and Jakub Wójcik at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. The leitmotif of the conference were the controversial issues of Canadian identity as seen from the literary, political and historical perspective. The General Assembly of PACS members elected the new PACS Executive, with dr Ewa Wełnic as the new PACS President.

Three years later a similar congress was organized at Jagiellonian University, Kraków, by Prof. Anna Reczyńska in co-operation with PACS and Central European Canadian Studies Network. The conference examined the complexity of the notions of place and memory in various Canadian discourses in view of critical approaches offered by political, cultural, gender, Native, and globalisation studies. It was a huge event – 160 scholars from all over the world took part in the conference, over 100 presented papers at the conference. Conference debates were summarized in the extensive volume of selected conference proceedings titled: *Place and Memory in Canada: Global Perspectives/Lieu et Mémoire au Canada: Perspectives Globales*. The Kraków Congress also resulted in the election of the new PACS Executive with dr Agnieszka Rzepa as the new President of PACS.

The most recent Congress of the Polish Association for Canadian Studies was held in Puławy in April 2007 by the Canadian Studies Center of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (Prof. Joanna Durczak and Prof. Maciej Abramowicz). This time the conference was dedicated to exploring continuities between Canada's past and the present. The interdisciplinary nature of the conference encouraged many contributors from a variety of scholarly disciplines, such as history, sociology, law, political sciences, literature and film studies, psychology, and gender studies to offer their unique perspectives upon the relationship among history, values, and the future. The Congress resulted also in the election of the present PACS Executive under the presidency of Prof. Krzysztof Jarosz.

The activities of the Association itself and of the Canadian Studies Centres in Poland, as well as the individual programs run at many Polish universities made it possible for PACS to apply for an associate membership in the International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS), which was granted to PACS in 2002. ICCS-CIEC is a non-profit federation of Canadian studies associations from 39 countries. The organization promotes and supports research, education and publications in all fields of Canadian Studies and in all member countries. The organization is based in Ottawa and acts as administrative agent of Foreign Affairs Canada for most of the Department's Canadian Studies Programs. It is estimated that the ICCS-CIEC network links over 7,000 academics and researchers. These Canadianists publish hundreds of scholarly articles and books on Canadian topics; organize colloquia, seminars and conferences on Canada; and through their teaching and seminars reach over 150,000 students². PACS associate membership in the ICCS-CIEC remarkably widened opportunities for Polish Canadianists making them eligible for numerous grants, scholarships and awards offered to those who wish to spend some time in Canada doing their research in the field of Canadian Studies.

However, the membership in the ICCS-CIEC neither limited PACS own programs for Canadian studies nor excluded co-operation with Canadianists in the region. Apart from the cooperation with CEACS, PACS is also part of the European Network for Canadian Studies (ENCS). ENCS helps to expand Canadian Studies into new European areas and into new, non-traditional fields. It also tries to reinforce and widen fields such as human resource development, public administration, law, integration and identity, new technologies, development aid, economics. The network has made a great contribution to develop the European dimension of Canadian Studies and to foster linkages between European Canadianists. PACS representatives regularly attend meetings of presidents or representatives of European Canadian Studies associations, while Polish Canadianists take active part in the conferences and seminars co-organized by the ENCS.

PACS and Canadian studies in Poland today

Today PACS is a successful and dynamic organization. The Association has 92 members³ and the membership in the Association is slowly but constantly and regularly growing. PACS members are not only established scholars, but also PhD and graduate students. Doctoral students or scholars who have obtained their PhD degree within last 2–3 years constitute a vast majority of Canadianists associated with PACS. It is mostly this group that ac-

² Source: ICCS webpage: http://www.iccs-ciec.ca/pages/1_theICCS/a_overview.html

³ Data from March 27th, 2008.

counts for the rise in membership, which proves to be a promising perspective for the future development of Canadian studies in Poland. A few members are Canadians teaching courses at a Polish university or Canadians who have visited Poland as guest lecturers and decided to sign in the Association. Some members come from other countries like Ukraine, Romania or France.

Interests of and research done by the scholars and students belonging to PACS cover a great variety of scholarly disciplines. Canadian literature remains a dominant discipline, but among PACS members one can also find experts in Canadian theatre, cinema and the media, Native issues (history, culture, literature, etc.), environmental issues, Canadian history and literature (both in French and in English), political sciences, linguistics, sociology, culture and identity studies, gender and immigration studies.

An important problem Canadian Studies in Poland face is the specialization of the Canadian Studies centres in a limited number of disciplines, which makes it difficult for those Centers to run wide-ranging teaching programs, providing students of one university with courses touching the whole spectrum of Canadian issues. For that reason Polish universities do not run Canadian Studies as a major program and Canadian courses are usually a part of other programs (i.e. English-Canadian literature is taught at the departments of English philology, etc.)

Due to PACS's status as a non-profit association, the possibilities of financial development are quite limited. The annual grant received from Foreign Affairs Canada allows PACS to support the majority of its activities. In 2004 it constituted over 90% of the Association's budget. The remaining part of the budget comes from the membership fees. However, PACS benefits also from a number of in-kind services offered by Polish universities—they include hosting PACS webpage on the Jagiellonian University server and PACS office on the premises of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

Despite the limited budget, PACS is able to achieve its statutory goals by providing financial and scholarly assistance for the members of PACS doing their research in the field of Canadian studies. The Association maintains a developed system of numerous grants and awards which encourage active participation of all members in Canadianist activities. PACS offers conference grants to cover part of travel and accommodation costs for Canadianists who attend conferences outside Poland. The budget of PACS also includes funds to allow a partial cover of travel expenses and accommodation for undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students as well as for other scholars who plan to do their research in the libraries of Canadian Studies Centres in Poland. Each year PACS awards the *Nancy Burke Best M.A. Thesis Award*. The award is designed to promote outstanding master dissertations on Canadian topics written in Poland (in Polish, French or English), which contribute to a better understanding of Canada in Poland. The award is consistent with a wider strategy of fostering a new generation of Canadianists. The As-

sociation also contributes to the costs of lecture tours of invited guests among whom one can find Canadian Francophone and Anglophone literature professors, sociologists, film directors, writers, poets, journalists. Moreover, the Association co-sponsors outreach programs, like the *Days of Canadian Culture* organized by the Canadian Centre of the University of Silesia, and contributes significantly to the publications of books and articles on Canadian topics.

As an associate member of the International Council for Canadian Studies, PACS also promotes grants and programs offered by ICCS-CIEC and the Government of Canada. The grants include *Faculty Enrichment Program* and *Faculty Research Program*, which allow Polish scholars to develop Canada-related courses and conduct research leading to the publication of articles on Canadian issues respectively. *Graduate Student Scholarships* and *Postdoctoral Fellowships* – programs addressed to young scholars wishing to do their research in Canada are also important and quite popular. PACS regularly sends out an email circular to maintain contact with its members, provide them with news related to PACS and the latest news of Canadian Studies events in Poland and abroad. Once a year it publishes *Biuletyn* – PACS newsletter that informs PACS members about the latest events, publications on Canadian topics and plans for future actions in Canadian Studies in Poland. The publication of the first issue of *TransCanadiana* is an important event for PACS. We hope that the journal will develop into a respected venue for publication of Canadianist articles by Polish and foreign scholars, at the same time providing current information related to Canadian Studies in Poland and PACS activities as it incorporates the PACS newsletter.

In the nearest future PACS authorities are planning to apply for the full membership in ICCS-CIEC, to modernize and extend the PACS webpage and to debate over further development and diversification of PACS activities in order to make the Association even more open for new disciplines and new members.