

The First International *Humanities – Society – Identity* Congress

**Thematic panel
Canada and the Imagined North
Sociopolitical, Identity and Aesthetic Issues**

Warsaw, 9 December 2022



Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté Scène de neige (1925 ?), source : <https://collections.mnbaq.org/fr/oeuvre/600002029>

Part of the First International *Humanities, Society and Identity* Congress* and inspired by Daniel Chartier's book, *What is "the Imagined North"? Ethical Principles* (2018)**, this session proposes to investigate how the imaginary of the North - and all that it connotes, i.e. cold, winter, snow - is concretized in the perception of oneself on the level of individual and/or collective experience and this through Canada and/or the cultural texts inspired by this country.

In the case of Canada, the North can be interpreted in various ways. For example, what is called the Canadian North usually refers to three territories: the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, with the Canadian Arctic region usually referred to as the Far North. However, Canada as a whole is often perceived as the North because of its geographical position in relation to the United States, but also – quite simply – because it occupies the northern part of the continent called North America. Its climate is considered severe: "My country, it's not a country, it's winter", sang - referring to Québec - Gilles Vigneault.

It is well known that by testing the resistance of the human body, winter, the cold, the snow, the icy wind contribute to the emergence of a limit-situation where man asks himself questions about life, death and himself. He becomes more conscious of himself, he (re)defines himself. It is the same for the communities originating from the "cold country" as well as those which explored, even colonized this territory. The exceptional living conditions as well as the clash between the native and colonizing cultures produce a complex social situation, the consequences of which are felt to this day, exacerbated by the climate crisis. These different dimensions of the North, inscribed in a broader context of Canada's social and political reality, also permeate literary and artistic representations of this territory.

Our session will thus focus on Canadian issues of the North presented from a socio-political, identity and/or aesthetic perspective. The gaze we are interested in can be located inside (the inhabitants of Canada) or outside (the perception of the country by others).

We propose the following lines of thought (which are not exhaustive):

- The experience and condition of the traveler who crosses the North
- Literary and pictorial representations of the North (inter- or transmedia approaches)
- Socio-political and identity issues of the Northerners (the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal view)
- The representations and presuppositions of those who dream of the North (the North as an imaginary country)
- The North-South transversal perspective and the impact of this opposition on the political, social and aesthetic
- Representatives of other countries/cultural areas that explore or imagine the Canadian North
- The imaginary of the Canadian North versus the imaginary of other Nords (Europe, Asia)
- The ethical turn and its reflections in social, political and literary research on the North

General conditions

Proposals for papers of approximately 250 words, accompanied by a brief bio-bibliographic note, should be sent to the following addresses: malgorzata.skolowicz@uw.edu.pl and m.obszynski2@uw.edu.pl before **August 28, 2022**.

Papers, presented in French or English, should not exceed 20 minutes each.

The registration fee of 100 euros will cover coffee breaks and meals. Travel and hotel expenses are the responsibility of the participants.

Agenda

August 28, 2022 – submission of proposals

September 15, 2022 – notification of acceptance or rejection of the given proposal.

December 9 – our session organized in the framework of the First International Congress Humanities – Society – Identity*.

For any further questions: malgorzata.sokolowicz@uw.edu.pl and m.obszynski2@uw.edu.pl

* The First International *Humanities – Society – Identity* Congress is organized by the Faculty of Modern Languages of the University of Warsaw. See the attached call for papers.

NOTE: our session will be proposed to the organizers outside the main selection of individual papers.

** The text (multilingual version) is available under this link: <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01858100>