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Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

**‘We cannot keep our self or our identity intact,  
whether we stay at home or wander far away from it’.  
Comparing E/migrations and Migrant Narratives in Canada**

This keynote lecture is an attempt to explore the position of post/memory of Central and Eastern Europe in contemporary migrant literature in Canada. It will trace Marianne Hirsch’s idea of “postmemory” and Pierre Nora’s “les lieux de mémoire” in selected works of contemporary Canadian authors who are the first, second and even the third generation immigrants from Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries to North America. The texts in question, both novels and memoirs, are all published in Canada at the turn of the 20th and 21st century and recreate the images of ‘Old Places’ in the new or newly discovered contexts. The two concepts, mentioned above, capture the broad spectrum of attitudes to the past, remembering and forgetting. Both novels and autobiographical texts will be analyzed in order to give a panoramic perspective onto the once multicultural Poland and Eastern Europe. Among the writers taken into consideration are Andrew J. Borkowski, Janice Kulyk Keefer, Eva Stachniak, Antanas Sileika, Lisa Appignanessi and Eva Hoffman. Their literary memoirs as well as novels testify to the immigrant experience as well as to rich, ethnic heritage with which they (or their ancestors) came to Canada. While all of the chosen novels and memoirs explore the problem of post/memory and un/belonging caused by immigration, joining and contesting diasporas, and the trauma of World War II, they try to address the question of identity of immigrants (or their descendants) created on the border between the memory and postmemory of the past and the contemporary reality of transcultural Canada. As a result, the post/memory and the recreated after/images of Central Europe offer both therapy and consolation as well as testimony to the past and its sites of memory.



**Dagmara Drewniak**, AMU Professor, teaches American and Canadian literature at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań. Her research interests include: literature by immigrants from Poland and Eastern Europe, life-writing, and postcolonial literatures in English. She has recently published *Forgetful Recollections: Images of Central and Eastern Europe in Canadian Literature* (2014) and, with A. Rzepa and K. Macedulska, *The Self and the World: Aspects of the Aesthetics and Politics of*

*Contemporary North American Literary Memoir by Women* (2018), as well as essays on Kulyk Keefer, Stachniak, Hoffman, Rushdie, Ondaatje, Appignanesi and other contemporary writers. She has served as vice-President of the Polish Association for Canadian Studies since 2016. Currently, she is director of a grant awarded by the



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