

2017 Mennonite Studies Conference

Mennonite/s Writing VIII: Personal Narratives of Place and Displacement

Hosted by the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies

The University of Winnipeg
Eckhardt Gramatté Hall, 3rd Floor Centennial Building

October 19–21, 2017

In Partnership with Canadian Mennonite University
Friday Evening Location: Marpeck Commons, CMU

This international, interdisciplinary conference focuses on personal narratives – including biography, autobiography, diary, and memoir – in relation to the theme of “place and displacement.” Participants will explore the historical and literary significance of personal narratives that arise from varied dislocations. Some may have resulted from violent and forced migrations from places like Russia and Poland, others from social and cultural upheaval in peacetime Canada and the United States. Some stories of dislocation are historical in nature, some are literary, others are theological; most blur these interpretative lines.

Questions to be considered: How have Mennonite writers recorded their experiences of forced migration, or resisted assimilatory pressures of modern society? How have they imaginatively grappled with their local community’s place in “the world”? What role have personal narratives played in connecting, sustaining, or challenging Mennonite communities and institutions? And what future spaces are opened by attending more closely to personal narratives within the context of Mennonite writing?

FREE ADMISSION

REGISTER AT CONFERENCE



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG



CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19

Welcome and Introduction

2:30–2:45 p.m.

Royden Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies

Narratives of Soviet Suffering

2:45–3:45 p.m.

- **JOHANNES DYCK**, Bibelseminar Bonn, “The Migration Narrative of a Karaganda Church Elder”
- **TATIANA PLOKHOTNYUK**, Northern Caucasus U, “Narratives of the 1930s by NKVD Police Stenographers”

3:45–4:15 p.m. *Coffee*

Adoption and Belonging

4:15–5:45 p.m.

Chair: TBA

- **FRAN MARTENS FRIESEN**, Fresno Pacific U, “Adoption, Faith and Belonging”
- **HOPE NISLY**, Fresno Pacific U, “Family, Nonviolence and Social Class in Adoption: One Family’s Story”
- **JANICE SCHROEDER**, Carleton U, “Weaving Displacement Plots in Maurice Mierau’s *Detachment*”

5:45–7:30 p.m. *Break for Dinner*

Featured ‘Commemorative’ Evening

Displacements of the Russian Revolution: A Centenary Reflection

7:30–9:00 p.m.

Greetings: James Currie, Vice President Academic, U Winnipeg

Chair: TBA

- **ROBERT ZACHARIAS**, York U, “Revisiting *Rewriting*”
- **AILEEN FRIESEN**, Conrad Grebel U. College, “Letters and the Disquiet of Home”
- **SEAN PATTERSON**, U Alberta, “*Selbstschutzler* ‘Lost Paradise’ Narratives”

Reception to follow in foyer

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20

Memoir and Questions of Genre

8:30–10:00 a.m.

Chair: TBA

- **PAUL TIESSEN**, Wilfrid Laurier U, “Transplanting Identity: The Confessions of Rudy Wiebe”
- **JULIA SPICHER KASDORF**, Penn State, “‘Coming Back’: The Poetry and Life of Jane Rohrer”
- **MAGDALENE REDEKOP**, U Toronto, “Genre from the Inside Out: Fathers and Other Spectres”

10:00–10:30 a.m. *Coffee*

Narratives of Faith and Religion

10:30–12:00 p.m.

Chair: TBA

- **CONNIE T. BRAUN**, Trinity Western U, “Place and Displacement: A Pilgrimage from Poland”
- **TRAVIS KROEKER**, McMaster U, “Scandalous Displacements in *Irma Voth*”
- **ANDREW HARNISH**, U North Dakota, “Giving Voice to the ‘Unspeakable’ within a Conservative Congregation”

12:00–1:00 p.m. *Break for Lunch*

Book Launch

1:00–1:30 p.m.

- **HILDI FROESE TIESSEN & OTHERS**: *11 Encounters With Mennonite Fiction & Rhubarb* 42

Intergenerationality

1:30–3:00 p.m.

Chair: TBA

- **DORA DUECK**, Tsawwassen BC, “Ways of Looking at my Father-in-Law, Refugee and Paraguay Pioneer: A Personal Biographical Quest”
- **MARY ANN LOEWEN**, U Winnipeg, “Mennonite Daughters and Cross-Gendered Narratives of Place”
- **RAYLENE HINZ-PENNER**, Washburn U, “Tracing my own Rural Ancestral Journey from Poland”

3:00–3:30 p.m. *Coffee*

Rethinking Emplacement

3:30–5:00 p.m.

Chair: TBA

- **GRACE KEHLER**, McMaster U, “Di Brandt’s Ecological Subjectivities”
- **HILDI FROESE TIESSEN**, Conrad Grebel U. College, “Autobiographical Fragments in the Mennonite Literary Text”
- **ANN HOSTETLER**, Goshen College, “Layered Narratives of Displacement”

5:00–7:30 p.m. *Break for Dinner*

Featured 'Creative' Evening

Location: Marpeck Commons, Canadian Mennonite University, 2299 Grant Ave.

7:30–9:30 p.m.

Greetings: Cheryl Pauls, CMU President

Chair: TBA

- **JENNIFER SEARS**, NY City College of Technology, “Ghost Trains and Political Refugees”
- **LEN NEUFELDT**, Gig Harbor, WA, “Indictment and Prisons: Legacy of Escape”
- **JESSICA PENNER**, NY City College of Technology, “Attempts at Homecoming”

Intermission

- **CAROL ANN WEAVER**, Conrad Grebel U. College, “Songs for my Mother”
- **CASEY PLETT**, Windsor, “Little Fish”
- **MAURICE MIERAU**, Winnipeg, “Detachment: An Adoption Memoir”

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21

Autobiographical Fragments

8:30–9:45 a.m.

Chair: TBA

- **LARRY WARKENTIN**, Fresno Pacific U, “Displacement and Translation of Peasant-Poet Peter Gunther”
- **JOHN D. THIESEN**, Mennonite Library and Archives, “Writing the Autobiography of an ‘Imperfect’ Stranger”

9:45–10:15 a.m. *Coffee*

Dislocation Fiction and/as Memoir

10:15–11:45 a.m.

Chair: TBA

- **MARGARET STEFFLER**, Trent U, “Dislocations of the Family in Rudy Wiebe and Miriam Toews”
- **DANIEL SHANK CRUZ**, Utica College, “The Queer Call of Wes Funk”
- **DAVID ELIAS**, Winnipeg, “By Way of the Barn”

11:45–1:00 p.m. *Break for Lunch*

Keynote Address

1:00–2:00 p.m.

Chair: TBA

- **JULIE RAK**, U Alberta, “CanLit, Genre and Cruel Optimism”
2:00–2:30 p.m. Coffee

Place and Forced Migration

2:30–4:00 p.m.

Chair: TBA

- **MYRON PENNER**, Trinity Western U, “disPLACE: Refugee Stories”
- **DOROTHY PETERS**, Trinity Western U, “Childhoods Placed and Displaced: Two Girl Immigrants”
- **ELSIE NEUFELDT**, Vancouver, “Ort and Vertreibung: My Mother of the 1920s”

4:00–4:15 p.m. Break

Mennonite Writing and the World

4:15–5:30 p.m.

Chair: TBA

- **JEFF GUNDY**, Bluffton U, “Mennonite Writing and the Things of This World.”
- **DI BRANDT**, Brandon U, “Paradigms of Re-Location, Re-Vision and Re-Placement”

5:30–7:30 p.m. Break for Dinner

Featured ‘Memoir’ Evening

Mennonite Literature and the Role of Memoir

7:30–9:30 p.m.

Chair: TBA

- **MIRIAM TOEWS**, Toronto, Ontario
- **RHODA JANZEN**, Holland, Michigan

Thank you and Conference Farewell: Royden Loewen and Robert Zacharias

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22

A Mennonite/s Writing Tour of Winnipeg

2:30–5:00 p.m.

An informal driving tour of locations relevant to the rich history of Mennonite literature in Winnipeg will take place on Sunday afternoon. **Tour admission is \$35, space is limited; please RSVP to an.dyck@uwinnipeg.ca**

CONFERENCE DETAILS

Journal of Mennonite Studies

Selected, peer-reviewed papers from this conference will be published in the **2018 Journal of Mennonite Studies**.

For more information, visit: jms.uwinnipeg.ca

Subscription: \$28/year

Back Issues: \$18/issue

2017 Mennonites, Land & the Environment: Global Perspectives; **2016** Mennonites, Medicine & the Body; **2015** Ex-Mennonite/Near Mennonite; **2014** Mennonites, Human Rights & State Power; **2013** Anti-Modern 'Horse and Buggy' Pathways; **2012** Mennonites in Siberia; **2011** Mennonites, Melancholy & Mental Health

To subscribe, email r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca



LODGING

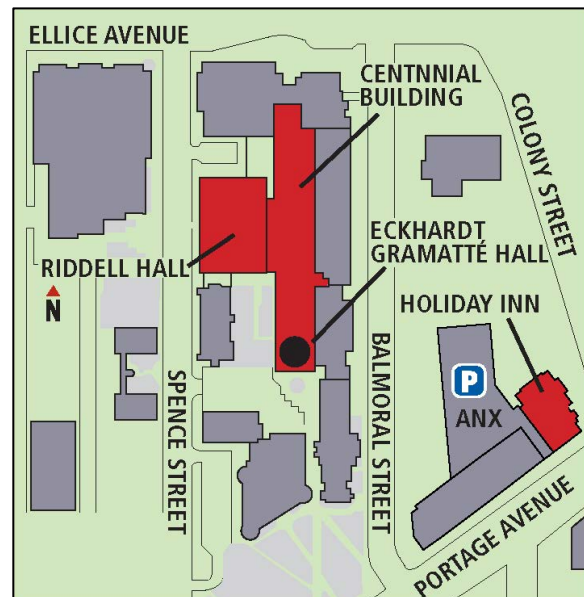
- Holiday Inn, 360 Colony St.
Phone: 204-786-7011
**Ask for special U Winnipeg (Mennonite Studies Conference) rates*

PARKING

- AnX Parkade off of Colony St.
- Impark parking lots around the University
- Hudson's Bay Parkade
- Street parking also available.

FOOD

- Stella's, The Buhler Centre
- Elements, Richardson College for the Environment and Science Complex
- Riddell Hall Cafeteria, Centennial Building
- Starbucks, AnX Building
- Garbonzo's, AnX Building
- The University Club, Wesley Hall
- Dozens of restaurants near campus



Major Contributors: The University of Winnipeg; York University (Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies; Department of English; Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies); the Marpeck Fund; Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies (UW); Canadian Mennonite University; the Defehr Foundation; the D. F. Plett Historical Research Foundation. **Planning Committee:** Conference Conveners: Royden Loewen (U Winnipeg) and Robert Zacharias (York U). Planning Committee: Daniel Shank Cruz (Utica College); Paul Doerksen (Canadian Mennonite U); Dora Dueck (Tsawwassen BC); Ann Hostetler (Goshen College); Hildi Froese Tiessen (Conrad Grebel U. College). **Special Thanks:** James Urry, Dora Dueck, Andrea Dyck, and students from the 'Mennonites in Russia' history class.