

SILENCE AND VIOLENCE

IN THE NORTH

Call for papers

International conference co-organized by the Université du Québec à Montréal and the University of the Faroes Islands in Tórshavn on November 30th and December 1st, 2022

Silence is one of the primary characteristics of the imagined North: it is part of a network of signs with the immensity, cold, the snow, storms, whiteness, horizontality, eternity and the absence of landmarks, in short around a place defined by Western cultures as that of a human absence.

However, silence can become an imposition that leads to violence. The rule of silence, dumbness, reserve resulting from the snow and the cold could be seen as characteristic of the peoples of the North - even more in the isolated villages where a "law of silence" can be imposed. "Most often, we don't talk," writes Québec novelist Pierre Gobeil. One can think in the visual arts of painting scenes without human presence or of the striking work of Edvard Munch, *Skrik* [The scream] in which a man seems to emit a permanent silent cry. By imposing itself on humans, this silence of the North can also end up forcing them into a silence that denies their own existence. An Arctic missionary recalls the words of the philosopher Pascal: "The eternal silence of these spaces frightens me". In Nordic cultures, it is question of a culture of silence or of taciturnity.

In this conference, we would like to explore, in cultural and literary representations, in historical texts and in travel accounts, the links between "silence and violence" in the context of the North and the Arctic. We are thinking in particular, but not exclusively of:

- The silence of the North as a value of moral imposition
- Absence or scarcity of words, which can lead to violence
- The "law of silence" in small communities that can hide violence against the most vulnerable
- The historical "silencing" of certain cultures, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, from a colonial point of view
- The choice of individual silence, faced with the pressure of Nordic social normalization.

In accordance with the scientific program of the International Laboratory for Research on Images of the North, Winter and the Arctic, we conceive of the "North" in its broad and circumpolar sense, which includes all the cold cultures around the pole, including Indigenous cultures.

This call for papers is aimed at professors, researchers and graduate students in the humanities and the arts, as well as artists and writers. The presentations, lasting 20 minutes, must be made in English. Proposals will be received until October 5th, 2022, by email to: imaginairedunord@uqam.ca. They should include the title of the presentation, a description of 10 to 20 lines, the name of the speaker, his or her institutional affiliation and status, as well as postal address and email. A response will be given before October 15th, 2022. Travel and accommodation costs must be covered by the participants.

This event is the 17th international conference organized by the International Laboratory for Research on Images of the North, Winter and the Arctic at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

At the end of the conference, participants will be invited to submit an article for a planned publication.

The conference is co-organized by Malan Marnersdóttir (University of the Faroe Islands) and Daniel Chartier (Université du Québec à Montréal).

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