

Masaryk University in Brno

Faculty of Arts

Department of English and American Studies



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PREFACE

The 7th conference of English, American and Canadian Studies, held at the department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, on 10-12 September 2002, represents an important landmark in the history of venues arranged by Brno Anglicists in the recent decades.

Continuing the tradition of Brno conferences started in 1986, it brought together Czech and Slovak university teachers and researchers, creating a unique atmosphere of sophisticated talks and discussions which were held not only during the sessions in the lecture halls, but also during the evening parties.

The professional exchange of views, concentrating on a variety of literary, linguistic, cultural, translation and methodology topics, reflects the rich scope of academic interests and pursuits of Czech and Slovak Anglicist scholars at our universities.

The conference in September 2002 was a success not only due to the number of participants. It was fruitful especially due to the heterogeneity of topics presented and discussed in the individual sections. The debates showed interest, insight and a determined zeal of the scholars as well as their creative potential. It was a clear manifestation of the academic standard witnessing the positive development in the field of English, American and Canadian Studies in the Czech lands and Slovakia at present.

Brno, February 2003

Ludmila Urbanová

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This is one of the nicer privileges relating to my – fortunately quite temporary – position of Dean of this Faculty: let me welcome all of you to the 7th conference of English, American and Canadian Studies, organized by the Department of English and American Studies of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University. My thanks for organizing this event go to all members of the above Department who have been involved, students and teachers. Thank you very much.

As all of you know much better than I do, there are at least two different approaches to language studies:

- first, there is the traditional philological approach with linguistics, literature and, in a broader sense, culture, and
- second, there is a more contemporary (I would not like to say “modern”) approach consisting in studying methods of teaching a language for mostly practical purposes.

I am pleased to say that both approaches are, if I am not mistaken, covered by the sessions of your conference, and I have some good news for you:

For those who prefer the first approach the good news is that even extinct languages can be studied from the philological point of view, so there will probably be quite a lot of work for all of you even one thousand years from now;

For those who prefer the more practical approach the good news is that it will take at least three to four generations before the use of English as a more or less universal means of communication is overwhelmed by the Spanish or perhaps by the Chinese language, so there is still quite a lot of work for all you for the next 100 years, which should be largely sufficient.

I apologize for these perhaps slightly misplaced reflections, but the truth is that, for the next generations there is a great challenge lying in front of us. The English language plays, and will continue to play for some more years, the role Latin had one thousand years ago, and it will be decisive for this population, for this country and for its economy if it is able to benefit from this universal means of communication. I would like to hope the teachers this Faculty will “produce” will be able to cope with this challenge so that as many people as possible acquire the necessary competence in English or, I should rather say, at least in English.

To tell the truth, English is obviously rather universal, but in our old Europe it is not enough: André Martinet, the famous French linguist, said some 15 years ago at a conference in New Delhi, India, that: “In the European Union, people who will count, will be able to speak three or four languages, whereas people who will not be able to speak three or four languages, will not count.”

This is one of the reasons why I am really happy that this faculty hosts a conference on and in any foreign language.

PhDr. Jan Pavlík
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Linguistics

