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Faculty of Arts

Department of English and American Studies



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Proceedings from the Seventh Conference of English, American and Canadian Studies

(Literature and Cultural Studies)

Edited by Pavel Drábek and Jan Chovanec

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Linguistic usage in the articles has not been modified by the editors.

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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

CONTENTS

Preface (Ludmila Urbanová)	3
Conference opening speech (Jan Pavlík)	7

PART ONE – LITERATURE

1 Don Sparling Appropriating Thanksgiving – Plenary lecture	9
2 Alice Brabcová Marriage in Seventeenth-Century England: The Woman’s Story	21
3 Šárka Bubíková The Formation and Transformation of the American Literary Canon	25
4 Kenneth Froehling Canadian Media Commentary on Resurgent Anti-Semitism and Israel in the 21 st Century	29
5 Josef Grmela The Czech Reception of Irish Literature: the 1930s	39
6 Anna Grmelová Beyond the Traditional: An Attempt to Reassess E. M. Forster’s Fiction	45
7 Pavlína Hácová The Stream Never Forgets Its Source: Themes explored in <i>Lara</i> (1997) by Bernardine Evaristo	51
8 Stephen Hardy A Barking Dog?: Manchester Writing and English Regional Culture	57
9 Lucie Johnová Patterns of Crossdressing in Shakespeare’s Comedies	65
10 Michael M. Kaylor ‘The Divine Friend, Unknown, Most Desired’: The Problematic Uranian Poets	71
11 Blanka Klímová Lexical Analysis of Annual Reports	77
12 Stanislav Kolář Animal Imagery in Kosinski’s <i>The Painted Bird</i> and Spiegelman’s <i>Maus</i>	87

13 Christopher E. Koy	The Misunderstood Conclusion of Mark Twain's <i>Pudd'nhead Wilson</i>	93
14 Jaroslav Kušnír	Parody of Western in American Literature: Doctorow's <i>Welcome to Hard Times</i> , and R. Coover's <i>The Ghost Town</i>	101
15 Lidia Kyzlinková	Ruth Rendell/Barbara Vine: Social Thriller, Ethnicity and Englishness	109
16 Bohuslav Mánek	The Czech Reception of G. M. Hopkin's Poetry	115
17 Soňa Nováková	Sex and Politics: Delarivier Manley's <i>New Atalantis</i>	121
18 Libora Oates-Indruchová	Initiation Motives in Margaret Atwood's <i>The Robber Bride</i>	127
19 Nilüfer Öcel	Reading Films Through Different Glasses: Foreign Films in the Context of Turkey	135
20 Michal Peprník	The Recoil Effect of Retaliation: Leatherstocking's Unerring Arm of ('Divine?') Justice	153
21 Patricia Ráčková	The Angel with a Hoof: Metamorphosis in Golding's <i>The Spire</i>	159
22 Jiří Rambousek	Between Language Play and Language Game	165
23 Ralph Slayton	A Post-postmodern Reading of Lotte Kramer's 'Ice'	173
24 Kamila Velkoborská	J. A. Harrison: An Extraordinary Victorian Scholar	177
25 Helena Vladařová	Bernard Malamud (1914-1986): A Quest of <i>A New Life</i>	181
26 Rudolf Weiss	Mise en abyme in Pat Barker's <i>Regeneration</i>	189
27 Olga Zderadičková	Scottish National Identity in the Works of James Kelman	195
28 Jakub Ženíšek	Slave Narratives as Part of the American Literary Canon	201

Jan Pavlík

Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno

Plenary Address

Well, this is one of the nicer privileges relating to my—fortunately quite temporary—position as Dean of this Faculty: let me welcome all of you at the Seventh 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.

Well, 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 of 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 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 that it be able to benefit from this universal means of communication. I would like to hope that 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, better, at least in English.

To say the truth, English is obviously rather universal, but in our old Europe it is not enough: André Martinet, the famous French linguist, said some fifteen 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/about and in any foreign language.