

The 28th PASE conference

Diversity is inclusive. Cultural, literary and linguistic mosaic

27-28 June 2019

<http://pase.edu.pl/>

The leitmotif of the conference was triggered by the divides and differences which are noticeable in the Western cultures, societies and politics. Therefore the conference organisers decided to ask colleagues from English studies to emphasise the need for inclusiveness and diversity; as Gerard Manley Hopkins in his famous poem "Pied Beauty" wrote that "All things counter, original, spare, strange; / Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?) / With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim". Whether or not he was (un)wittingly following Darwin's discoveries, which were a praise of diversity in nature, Hopkins's argument is as irrefutable as Darwin's. The two great minds of the Victorian times confirm, from two perspectives, that of science and religion, knowledge and faith, the necessity for difference, vital for the survival of life, be it humankind, fauna or flora. Commonplace and grandiose as it may seem today, this fundamental principle has too often been brushed aside in the ways people treat each other and nature. The world we are living in today displays a tendency to build walls against the Other, whoever or whatever that may be. But there is no just black or white: languages display a wonderful variety in which there is no hierarchy. Philologists are only too much aware of this. It is impossible to study one language and its cultural manifestations without the context of other languages. On a micro scale, English, being a most widespread language, also embraces, too, multiple dialects, literatures, cultures, which – significantly – talk to each other.

The 28th PASE conference took place in June in Poznań. It was organised by the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. It gathered 80 participants, mainly from Poland, but also from all over the world. The plenary speakers were Nicoleta Cinpoș, Professor of Shakespeare studies from the University of Worcester, Professor Guenther Senft, from Max Planck Institute, Nijmegen, Holland, Professor Christiane Dalton-Puffer from the University of Vienna, Professor Agnieszka Rzepa from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and Professor Magdalena Wrembel from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The keynote speakers represented a variety of English studies: literary studies (Shakespeare and Canadian literature), acquisition of English language and linguistics.

For the first time in the history of PASE conferences, scholars were asked to present papers in general sessions as well thematic ones (two such sessions were organised). Both types of sessions proved successful, plenary lectures and the variety and large number of sessions (22 altogether) addressed issues of current scholarship in English studies.

This conference did witness the tendency we have been observing for some years now, which is also visible in the number of PASE members: a decreasing number of participants (many of the conference delegates were employees of the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań – as many as almost half of the total number of conference speakers). The organisers of the conference observed, too, a rather meagre response to the first call for papers, which required extending the deadline for sending paper proposal. It is worth noting that all abstracts underwent the process of blind review before they were accepted by the conference organisers. For some of them, the organisers used the platform EasyChair, which helped effectively manage the process of reviewing and responding to the applicants.