

History

The Students' Literary Studies Conference, in support of the research activities of students and doctoral students, particularly Czech studies scholars, as well as representatives of other humanities disciplines and social sciences, has been arranged by the ASCR Institute of Czech Literature in collaboration with the Charles University Faculty of Education since 2002. In the context of other students' discussions and competitions it is conspicuous for its increasing stress on the common issues which bring the participants together. The first topic arose as a student's idea during a train journey: after all, a journey "there and back again" is not just one of our basic life experiences, but also a literary topos. In 2003 a discussion was held under the title *Moment and History, Halt and Duration* on the literary forms and functions of time; as a result a proposal naturally arose to deal in the next round with the complementary category of space. Participants dealing with the subject of *Landscape and Home, Distance and Proximity, Up and Down...* were joined in 2004 by students from Slovakia and foreign doctoral students from Charles University. The great interest among the Slovaks led to the arrangement in 2005 of a thematic confrontation of Czech and Slovak literature – *Between Rhyme and Novel – the Changing Face of Genres in Czech and Slovak Literature*. The subject of the conference included both changes in the function of genres in the literary process and shifts in their definition. Our circle of foreign participants expanded further to include young researchers from other countries, mainly from Poland. The jubilee fifth conference in 2006 with the subject *Poetics of the Programme – Programme of Poetics* focused on literary programmes, their relationship with other art forms and their realization in authors' actual poetics. *Legends and Myths of Czech and Slovak Literature* in 2007 included contributions which moved within the framework of a single author's work or of a single culture whose representatives were dealing both with a living mythology and a surviving false mythology (in the second sphere the participants dealing with Slovak literature showed themselves to be more emphatic, perhaps because the glorification of the Slovak National Revival lasted longer than in the Czech context). A real confrontation of opinions and cultural investigations were presented by the following discussion, which under the title of *Image of History in Czech and Slovak Literature* attempted to cover the general obsession with the "figure eight" years, while rising to this historical challenge; there were also papers which confronted the dual image and dual conception of "our republic" and several deconstructions of "historical truths", both in analyses of literary works conceived in this manner and in the initiatives of the speakers themselves. In 2009 participants recalled the overall contribution of novelist, semiotician and literary historian Vladimír Macura (1945-1999) in interpretations of his artistic work, analyses of his theoretical work and papers inspired by his method. The 2010 title *Forms and Functions of the Story: towards an Interdisciplinary and Intermedia Debate* indicates that this originally Czech Studies conference has progressively passed beyond the boundaries of one philology and one language, while successfully creating a milieu for a debate between literary researchers, historians and art theoreticians, as well as media studies representatives: hence we heard in succession a paper applying the theory of fictional worlds to the internal structure of unbounded serials, a paper examining our preconceptions over the perception of works of art, which can easily be problematized in both aesthetic and ethical perspective, empirical research into the reception of various media forms, or the confrontation of the creative imagination in such unique works as Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and Švankmajer's *Alice*.