

History

The students' literary theory conference focused on the support of research activities of young students of Bohemistics, undergraduate students, and doctoral students, has been held by the Institute of Czech Literature since 2002. The beginnings of the conference, however, can be traced back to the mid-90's when the students would hold meetings presenting the results of their philological research at various university departments all over the Czech Republic (The Department of Czech Literature and Library Studies at the Faculty of Arts MU, Brno; The Department of Czech Literature at the Faculty of Education, Charles University, Prague; Department of Czech Studies, Palacký University Olomouc; The Institute of the Czech Language and Library Science, Silesian University in Opava). Some of these meetings covered a specific topic, some of them were held as a platform for discussion of outstanding students' theses, research papers, and doctoral projects, often reaching beyond the field of Czech studies.

After one such meeting held in Opava in 2001, several participants agreed on the need of creating a unifying event which would ideally anchor the conference within the context of Czech literature and Czech literary studies, with the aim to promote a more detailed and thorough discussion of the contributing papers. The organizers of the annual meeting of young literary researchers were, following the proposal of its then director Prof. Pavel Janoušek, offered the facilities of the Institute of Czech Literature of the CAS, allowing for the realization of the debate over their research papers since 2002. The organization of the event was taken over by Doc. Alice Jedličková and Dr. Stanislava Fedrová who have gradually codified the format of the conference in collaboration with their colleagues from the Faculty of Education at Charles University. Together they have shaped the event into its contemporary format of a two-day conference with more than twenty speakers from various universities in Central Europe and contributions concerning not only Czech studies, but also interdisciplinary and general philological topics. In that way, the founders organized twelve conference years. In 2014 and 2015, the organization of the event was taken over by Dr. Kateřina Piorecká and Mgr. Iveta Mikešová. Since 2016, the event has moved from the Prague's institutional conference room to the facilities of the Institute of Czech Literature of the CAS in Brno. There the event is held in collaboration with the Department of Czech Literature and Library Studies under the direction of Dr. Michal Fránek, Dr. Aleš Merenus, and Mgr. Barbora Svobodová.

The primary aim of the conference is to create an opportunity for its participants to present the results of their research, discuss them, respond to them, get valuable feedback, and last but not least to give them a chance to experience public presentation in front of the panel of specialists. Some of the presenters attend the conference as delegates of their departments, as representatives coming from the local department selections, others choose to participate on their own initiative. The most inspiring contributions are awarded the Vladimír Macura Prize and certificates of merit, honouring the legacy of this influential literary historian, semiotician, author, translator, and a crucial figure in the history of the organizing institution. The prize is awarded by a panel of specialists comprised of university professors and research workers from the Institute of Czech Literature in two categories – students' and doctoral. The best contributions can be published afterwards with the consent of their authors. In previous years, the contributions have appeared in periodicals such as *Česká literatura*, *Host*, *Tvar*, and *Zrcadlení*. From 2005 to 2011,

the conference also produced anthologies with the financial support of the Faculty of Education at Charles University. You can find the electronic versions of these on this website in categories referring to the respective years. Additionally, in 2009 after the eighth conference year, a collection of the best research papers up to that date called *V Macurových botách (In Macura's Shoes)* was published. This representative selection of 34 texts shows, besides the quality of students' work, the fact that the students' literary theory conference presents a great starting point for the professional journey of the beginning literary scholars. Many of the authors' names of successful conference contributions regularly appear today in scholarly journals or on the lists of university employees.