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THE SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY OF DOC. PHDR. LIDMILA PANTŮČKOVÁ, CSC.



Docent (Senior Lecturer) Lidmila Pantůčková, a distinguished and long-time member of the English Department of the Faculty of Arts, Brno University, is seventy this year. She was born in the South Moravian town of Kyjov in 1923. A year after she finished her secondary studies (1942), her mother's death obliged her to stay at home and help her father keep the family. Later, she worked as a clerk, and it was not until 1946 that her keen interest in English and desire to study led her to the Faculty of Arts in Brno. She finished her studies of English and philosophy in 1950 and until 1991 continued in the English Department, for long years as a Lecturer and from 1990 as Senior Lecturer – a rank corresponding to her actual responsibilities of the preceding twenty years.

Docent Pantůčková's life-long devotion to literary research began with her doctoral thesis on the life and work of George Eliot (defended in 1952), and the 19th century has remained her special area of interest to this day. Between 1957 and 1970 she published numerous articles on W. M. Thackeray (in *Sborník prací filozofické fakulty* and *Brno Studies in English*), among them her Candidate of Science dissertation 'The Aesthetic Views of W. M. Thackeray' (*Brno Studies in English*, vol. VI., Brno 1966), a work of undoubtable value to literary scholarship as the theme had not been systematically studied previously.

The decade of extensive inquiry into Thackeray's work culminated in the comprehensive monograph *W. M. Thackeray as a Critic of Literature* (*Brno Studies in English*, vol. X and XI, Brno 1972). This valuable contribution to Thackerayan studies covered the wide-ranging body of Thackeray's critical writing, re-examined his critical beliefs and their development and convincingly demonstrated their principles with the help of then newly available materials in the identification of which doc. Pantůčková herself played a part. She was the first to analyse and assess Thackeray's literary criticism to its full extent and her effort received due appreciation in specialized journals (*Review of English Studies*, August 1973, *Notes and Queries*, October 1975, *The Thackeray Newsletter*, May 1976), being referred to in *Études anglaises* (March 1973) as a 'huge endeavour deserving boundless admiration'. The monograph was listed in British and American annual bibliographies and the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*.

As a recognized authority on Thackeray doc. Pantůčková was invited to contribute

to a special 1981 Thackeray Number of the American journal *Studies in the Novel* (published by the State University of North Texas), where her article 'Thackeray in Czechoslovakia (With a Glance at Other Slavonic Countries)' as well as all her previous work on Thackeray was highly commended by the editor Professor Robert A. Colby.

Apart from the results of her painstaking Thackerayan research, doc. Pantůčková published many reviews, reports, birthday tributes, obituaries and bibliographies of Brno Anglicists and, in cooperation with colleagues, textbooks of English literature for university students.

In recent years doc. Pantůčková's research interests have turned to the comparative study of the relationships between Czech and English and American prose in the 19th century. The results of this demanding and truly pioneering work, as doc. Pantůčková is the only scholar currently engaged in this field, were presented in several articles, notably 'British and American Literature in Jan Neruda's Magazine *Pictures of Life* (Obrázky života)' in *Brno Studies in English*, vol. 19 and in papers at English conferences in Brno in 1986 and 1989. Unfiring, doc. Pantůčková is now preparing a paper on her comparative study in progress concerning the *Family Chronicle* (Rodinná kronika) edited by Jan Neruda.

Besides scholarly work, much of doc. Pantůčková's energy was devoted to teach-

ing. Over the years, her courses included practical English, introduction to literary studies, the theory of literature, the history of the literatures of the United States and of other countries and above all the history of English literature from its oldest period to the 1870s. At the beginning of her career, she spent ten years as administrative deputy-head of her department, and later did very much organizational work there as well, the student and teacher exchange with the University of Leeds being one of her diverse responsibilities. For years, she supervised final year dissertations and she goes on supervising doctoral theses and working as a member of committees awarding senior academic titles.

Though retired now, doc. Pantůčková is as busy as ever, helping her faculty by her experience, vast knowledge and authority, and working on her new research projects with the humbleness and modesty of a true scholar. She is also a loving mother and grandmother and a devoted wife. All her work as well as her wisdom, honesty and kindness have won her the deep respect of generations of students and colleagues. On behalf of all of them and in particular of the members of the Brno English Department we would like to express our gratitude and admiration to Docent Pantůčková and extend our best wishes on the occasion of her 70th birthday.

Milada Franková and Iva Gilbertová