

## PROLOGUE

*Some Sundry Wits Gathered Together* is the title of this book of variegated essays on English Language and Linguistics. It is complemented by a joint volume entitled *Many Sundry Wits Gathered Together*, that contains studies in the fields of literary criticism and appreciation. With these titles I have sought to collect a somewhat classical term for the vague humanist connection of the diffuse parts integrated here. It has also been born as the direct result of most of the papers read at the «I Congreso de Filoloxía Inglesa» held at the University of Coruña, their discussion with the audience and the specialists, their revision by their authors, and the final adjustments effected by the editors.

In this self-assigned task of heralding the supposed coming of age of English Studies in the newer Galician Universities, the main editor would like to express the general recognition that the academic work of the staff of the University of Santiago de Compostela has gained in the past. One must also mention clearly that in what research is concerned the 'loose' research group, with members at the three Galician Universities, directed by Professor Teresa Fanego, has already achieved not just in the rest of Spain, but one would also like to state that whatever international appreciation of English Studies in Galicia might be today, it is mostly due to the authoritative scholarship of Professor Fanego and her disciples.

The University of Santiago de Compostela was celebrating 500 years of academic activity in 1995. Her offspring, the universities of Coruña and Vigo, are only 5 years old as independent institutions, and consequently their academic excellence in the field of English Studies is, for the moment, much more a promise than a fact. However, this «I Congreso de Filoloxía Inglesa» was not just a congregation of learned specialists, but a real gathering of many people really interested in this field in Galicia. The University of Coruña wished to promote our speciality and hence that it decided to host such an assembly of scholars and students of English Language, Literature and Culture. I would also like to bring here the underlying and, I hope, appropriate supposition that gatherings such as that one tend to improve the state of the art in the area. At least if we believe in the statistical principle that out of many things some will be commonplace, some will be good, and some will be excellent. Some, of course, may be considered even as pernicious and despicable, but let us assume that they might have been absconded from this book.

This is why *Some Sundry Wits Gathered Together* is the result of much effort, many hours of silent work and preparation, and the eagerness, devotion and excitement of many people who gathered at the University of Coruña in the Spring of 1995 (23-25 March). The conference was a special event to celebrate the full *licenciatura* studies in English at the Universidade da Coruña, and was attended by over five hundred students, mainly from Coruña, but also from Santiago, Vigo, Oviedo, León and others. More than one hundred professionals,

together with reputed scholars and more public interested in this area of study also convened then and there. Six plenary lectures, over 80 papers, 5 plenary discussion panels, and several parallel activities composed a summary of activities that we will not enumerate here in detail. All in all, over 30 different Spanish universities sent delegates and these represented a wide range of ages, positions, interests, and scientific approaches. It is only natural that a selection from the whole had to come about for the ensuing edition to be published, and that despite that selection took place quite naturally, we also allowed room for the younger generations of academics to be represented. We hope that a set of these divergent features are depicted in the choice that forms *Some Sundry Wits Gathered Together*.

This volume embodies 23 articles dealing with British English, American and Other Englishes. There are authors belonging to 12 different institutions of higher education, and the range of topics includes for instance Translation, Language Acquisition and Learning, Syntax, Historical and Modern Dialectology. Dr. José Ramón Losada Durán has also been so kind as to publish with us his plenary lecture on comparative syntax. Three languages, English, Spanish and Galician are also gathered together in this book as working languages so as to further prove that spirit of secluded multi-perspective humanism that has been one of the main targets of the editor.

Finally, and on behalf of the organising committee of the conference and especially on that of the editors of this volume I would to express our gratitude to the following persons and institutions who have backed *Some Sundry Wits Gathered Together*:

Our institutional supporters and sponsors: Rectorado, Vicerrectorado de Extensión Universitaria, Vicerrectorado de Investigación, Secretaría Xeral, Departamento de Filoloxía Inglesa, Facultade de Humanidades (Coruña), and Oficina de Cursos e Congresos from the Universidade da Coruña; The Fundación Barrié de la Maza - Banco Pastor, the Comisión do V Centenario da Universidade de Santiago de Compostela and the Consellería de Educación of the Xunta de Galicia.

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The panel sessions chairs who did not belong to the University of Coruña and who nevertheless were so kind as to help the organisers: Dr. Matilde Mansilla, Dr. José Manuel Oro, Dr. Daniel Pastor, Dr. Jesús Varela, and Dr. Javier Gómez Guinovart.

The English degree students of the University of Coruña deserve a very special place in our appreciation for their help and interest. It is unlikely that this book would have existed if they had not been there.

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