

The XXII International Congress of FILLM

By

Dr. Suthira Duangsamosorn

Assistant Secretary General
FILLM

From 19-23 August 2002, Assumption University hosted the XXII International Congress of FILLM. FILLM, a French acronym for International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures, is an umbrella organization, which is supported by UNESCO through the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (CIPSH), and comprises over 20 major scholarly associations. Its total membership has reached about 40,000 scholars in more than 90 countries. Every three years FILLM holds its Congress at a new venue with the cooperation of a university proposed by its members.

The previous Congress was held at Zimbabwe University in Harare in 1999. Papers were presented in this

Congress of FILLM by Dr. Edward Vargo of Assumption University and by me. Dr. Somboon Duangsamosorn, the then Director of the Office of Thai Art and Culture, gave a superb speech before the general assembly. All these factors led to the unanimous acceptance of Assumption University's proposal to hold the next Congress in Bangkok.

The theme of the Congress, "Re-imagining Language and Literature for the 21st Century", had been appropriately selected and divided into four sub-themes, "New Foundations: Grounding Language and Literature Studies in Ethics", "New Contexts: Facing Social Change in Language and Literature Studies", "New Instruments: Integrating Technology into Language and Literature Studies", and "New

* Dr. Suthira Duangsamosorn holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from Marathwada University, Aurangabad, India. Currently she is teaching in the new Bangna Campus of Assumption University. Her literary articles and poems have been published in several journals.

Communications: East Meets West Meets North Meets South.” It was clear from the beginning that the year 2002 would be an important milestone for Assumption University. Its new campus at Bang Na had been officially inaugurated, and its serene surroundings were perfectly suited for scholarly contemplation and lively exchange of ideas. Therefore, to welcome the international community of scholars to the new campus was to underscore the international character of Assumption University. The Call for Papers received an overwhelming response by renowned scholars in the field of languages and literatures, and over one hundred participants travelled to Bangkok despite the September 11 shock to present their papers. It was a moment of great pride when Her Royal Highness Princess Soamsawalee inaugurated the Congress. Reverend Brother Martin’s address in his capacity as Rector of Assumption University, the Presidential Address of FILLM president Maria Alvira Seixo, and the memorable keynote address by world class scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, all made a lasting impression on the audience. Judging from the many scholars who sent in their reactions and words of thanks after the event, the Bangkok Congress was a singular success.

The Local Organizing Committee led by Reverend Brother Bancha Saenghiran and Dr. Sompit Porsutyarak, the advisors Professor Dr. Chetana Nagavajara and Dr. Edward

Vargo, both of whom were members of the Bureau of FILLM at that time, in fact all sub-committees worked together beautifully to make the XXII Congress an outstanding academic event of both Assumption University and FILLM. My special thanks must include my faithful helpers of the Secretariat, Marlar Myint and Than Than Mu and last but not the least, Secretary General of FILLM David Wells, and FILLM President Maria Seixo. Apart from the proceedings of the congress to be published soon, it was also proposed after the event to bring out a special issue of the ABAC Journal with papers presented during the Congress. It is here that I would like to thank Dr. James Gallagher for accepting these excellent papers, and producing such a wonderful commemorative issue. The papers express the international character of the Congress, and the concerns addressed here are of particular importance to the scholarly community engaged in the teaching of English. One theme that rang very clear throughout the whole Congress was the East West encounter. Assumption University, besides its endeavour to excel in business studies, aims to communicate effectively with people from other nations through the medium of English, and the study of languages and literatures of other nations, to quote Gayatri Spivak’s words, is a “very robust way” of achieving this goal.
