

NINETY YEARS OF ANGLO-AMERICAN LITERARY STUDIES IN ZAGREB

In November 2024 the English Department in Zagreb organized an international conference to celebrate its ninetieth anniversary. It was a joyous occasion, allowing us to showcase the breadth of our research and reconnect with dear friends and colleagues from other universities. We are only too pleased that a selection of papers addressing literary studies has been published in this issue of *Umjetnost riječi* as a lasting memento and a pledge that the conversation we then initiated will continue.

The first three papers began as presentations in a panel on English literature and the idea of criticism, which was curated by the Croatian Association for the Study of English. The panel was followed by a spirited roundtable discussion about the future of English Studies, also curated by the CASE; many concerns and arguments voiced in that discussion also found their way into the essays now published here. Anja Müller-Wood writes about modernity whose historical articulation is suspended between John Milton and Evelyn Waugh; Borislav Knežević discusses the idea of criticism in the writings of Matthew Arnold; Tatjana Jukić analyzes the Victorian dramatic monologue as a critical function. Heartfelt thanks also go to Cian Duffy and Stipe Grgas whose contributions to these two formats remain with us.

The articles by Lilijana Burcar and Sven Cvek have more in common than the Americanist positions from which they engage with their historically and geographically distant subjects. Burcar reconstructs the transatlantic journey of Claude McKay's proletarian sonnet and its arrival in the socialist literary circles of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the 1930s. Cvek looks at the global popularity of the contemporary Chinese writer Liu Cixin, which, in this account, becomes the mark of a generalized post-socialist condition. Even if only implicitly, both authors mobilize local, (post-)socialist histories for the exploration of transnational cultural processes.

With their broad thematic scope and variety of perspectives, the five essays we invite you to read testify to an exciting here-and-now of Anglo-American literary studies in Zagreb. We remain curious, against the odds; that may be our best bet.

Tatjana Jukić
Sven Cvek