

LITERARY STUDIES AT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ: HISTORY AND PRACTICES

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Abstract. *The article is a short history of the academic study of English literature(s) at the English Department of the Faculty of Philosophy, the University of Niš from the moment of their institutionalisation to the present. Rather than attempting to give an exhaustive list of and a commentary on all the courses taught in the past fifty years, the article identifies some key moments in the history of academic literary studies and characteristic positions and approaches within the established literature programmes. By examining the content and goals of past and current literature courses, this paper also aims at raising a question of the pedagogical and intellectual value assigned to literature by the literature teaching staff of the Department. A historical perspective on the discourses that have shaped the position of literary studies within the English studies curriculum could provide a lens for understanding both past and present, and for considering their future shape.*

Key words: *academic literary studies, Niš English Department, historical perspective, formative discourses*

1. INTRODUCTION

The academic study of English literature(s) in Serbia begins with the formation of English language and literature departments. It was fifty years ago when the Faculty of Philosophy was founded at the University of Niš, with the Department of English language and literature as one of its seven original departments.¹ The very name of the department, which was changed into the Department of Anglistics in 1972, suggests a pairing and correlation between literary and linguistic studies as one of the essential premises upon which the English Studies curriculum was constructed. This article deals with the emergence of professional academic literary studies,

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¹ The relevant material for the article was found in university regulations, in introductory course books, the Faculty archives, interviews with colleagues and my personal knowledge of literary studies in English.

the origins of the discipline and diverse discourses surrounding the position and role of literature(s) in English within the English Studies curriculum over the period of fifty years. Rather than giving a comprehensive commentary on all the courses taught, the article foregrounds the shaping power of the past - it identifies and comments on the characteristic positions and approaches within the literature programmes at different moments in the history of academic literary studies. By examining the content and goals of past and current literature courses, the article also aims at raising a question about the goals of literary studies and about the underlying conceptions of literature and the value assigned to its study. A historical perspective on English literary studies is a means of exploring the ways in which literature, as an enduring element of the study of English, has shaped the English Studies curriculum in different contexts and times. As Catherine Beavis puts it, “[c]ritical and historical perspectives on the discourses and culture of English teaching therefore can play an important role in providing a broader context in which to locate contemporary pressures and debates, and from which we might re-appraise what is being asked from us” (Beavis 2009, 6)

2. LITERARY STUDIES AND/IN ENGLISH STUDIES

The study of literature(s) in English is an integral part of the English Studies curriculum at the Niš English Department. Not surprisingly, I hasten to say, if we know that from the earliest times, in English-speaking countries, the study of English comprises both literacy and literature. The English approach to higher education certainly influences the way the discipline is institutionalised and practiced in a department dealing with English-speaking cultures. Doing English as a foreign language always includes the English perspective as well, not only because most of the material used is written from an English-speaking perspective, but also because the scholarly community is dominated by Anglo-American voices. However, in different contexts, times and with different teachers, the balance between these core elements of the study of English will vary – between literature (text) and literacy (grammar), between literature, literacy and writing, or between literature, literacy and culture.² So, although literature has always been one of the central elements of the English Studies curriculum at the Department, the ways in which language teaching and literature teaching compound, the function of literature within the study of English and what we understand literature to be have been differently constructed over the past fifty years.

To understand the position and the function of literary studies in the study of English, it is important to know how English Studies are presently organised at the Department. On the whole, English Studies take multiple forms in countries where English is a foreign language. At the University of Niš, “English Studies” is a vast field which includes linguistics, applied linguistics, language learning, literary and cultural studies. Literary studies are one of the two disciplinary categories/affiliations for teachers and researchers at the Department - Anglo-American literature and culture and English linguistics – with a variety of subfields. The most striking aspect of the current academic literary studies at the Department is a variety of content, methodologies, ideologies and practices. With a great number of mandatory and elective courses at both the bachelors’ and masters’ levels, the study of English literature(s)

² As Beavis points out, different authors understand and describe these core elements differently. Many authors see the study of English as primarily concerned with the study of aesthetics, rhetoric and ethics – “a careful mix of aesthetics (critical reflection on literary texts), rhetoric (the study and use of language, generally for the purposes of persuasion) and ethics (personal development towards proper conduct)” (Beavis 2009: 12)

appear to be organized as self-standing university programmes, but they actually exist as part of the set programmes (Bachelors', Masters' and PhD Academic Studies of English language and literature) and a subpart of a larger degree in English Studies.³ Although Serbian institutional structures centralise the organisation of teaching and research, in reality there is considerable room for autonomy in the creation of the higher education curriculum which is not prescribed in terms of its content. It is largely up to English departments themselves to decide which disciplinary question or what topics to address, which provides an opportunity for curricular development in English Studies in general and literary studies in particular.

The organisation of English Studies at the Department and the agreement about the longstanding core components of the study of English attest to a certain kind of commonality within diversity. In identifying three key moments in the history of English literary studies, my intent is not to stress any paradigm shifts but elements working towards the stability and long-term development of the discipline, those which have been perceived and shared as central, and as part of tradition and continuity. The three key moments in the history of English literary studies - the moment of institutionalisation in the 1970s, the cultural turn of the 1990s and the Bologna reform of the 2000s - seem to have had a continuing and formative influence on the state of literary studies in the present.

3. THE 1970S AND THE 1980S – INSTITUTIONALISATION AND CONSOLIDATION

The moment of institutionalisation is of particular interest because it is then “that both the scholarly and external factors are most influential and most clearly visible” and “it is then that certain practices are established that determine the manner in which new issues, arising later on, can be addressed” (Engler 2000, 5).

The beginnings of literary studies in Niš depended on the individual initiative and hard pioneering work of dedicated professors, which is so characteristic of the development of particular disciplines/field in overseas universities. The first university courses devoted to English literary studies were introduced in 1971. Credit goes to Professor Vida E. Marković, a Professor of English and American literature at the University of Belgrade, who was the first Head of the newly formed English Department in Niš. With a group of enthusiastic colleagues, among whom some were her former students - Sonja Dekanić Janoski, Ratimir Ristić, Ljiljana Bogoeva Sedlar, Brankica Pacić and Lena Petrović - Professor Marković created the necessary conditions for the emergence of the continuing discipline - stable courses and “sufficient students and lecturers being recruited to study and teach it” (Moran 2003, 12). It is worth noting that these founders, working in a traditional and seemingly less flexible educational system than ours today, had the courage and perceptiveness to introduce theoretically new ideas and apply them in practice. In the words of Professor Ratimir Ristić, Professor Marković taught literature “as an exploration of human experience ... according to the most recent teaching methods based on the assumptions derived from the approaches of renowned critics such as I.A. Richards, F.R.

³ In part, the absence of narrow specialisation and degrees in literature is the result of the centralisation of the Serbian university system; in part, it reflects the strong connection between university degrees and primary and secondary school teaching in the human sciences, which goes back to the moment of the institutionalization of English Studies in Niš. One of the main external factors behind it in 1971 was a need to train professionals, especially foreign language teachers at an advanced level.

Leavis and E. Wilson” (Ristić 2000, 202). This trait, on which we pride ourselves, has characterised teaching English literature(s) at the Department up to the present time. The Niš English Department was the only department in Serbia in 1971 in which all the literature courses were conducted in English and all the literary texts were studied in their original form. We have continued to practice it up until now. Looking back at the 1970s and the 1980s, a perfect partnership and coordination seems to have existed among institutions working for the improvement of English literary studies - the Niš English Department, the Faculty of Philosophy, the Serbian Ministry of Education, the British Council, and the American Embassy, etc. This collaboration resulted in a number of scholarships for promising teachers and students, the engagement of internationally renowned experts to deliver lectures, donations of books and journals which contributed to the quality of teaching English, and book fairs which created the possibility for students to purchase up-to-date and high quality anthologies and books in English. All of the teaching assistants in the 1970s and the 1980s won grants for shorter or longer stays at various universities in the UK and the USA which resulted in their obtaining MA and PhD degrees. By 1981 they had become fully qualified members of the staff, thus providing a stable basis from which to conduct research and teaching and creating the conditions for the maintenance and the development of the discipline.

On the whole, the 1970s and the 1980s could be seen as a period of expansion of the discipline. The Department had a sufficient number of students enrolled, the permanent staff and full-time appointments, and a new generation of teaching assistants on their way to obtaining MA and PhDs in the literary subjects they were teaching. The major ambition was to justify the centrality of literary studies within the English Studies curriculum by strengthening the research aspect of the lecturers’ work and building links with broader research community.

4. THE 1990S: THE CULTURAL TURN

Contrary to the 1970s and 1980s, the 1990s can be seen as a period of stagnation and stasis. It was the time of a violent break-up of the SFRY and international economic and cultural sanctions against the Republic of Serbia, which resulted in the dissolution of many productive links between national and international disciplinary communities. The generous financial support provided by national and international institutions and agencies dwindled - book donations and scholarships were few, and there was very little direct funding of research for English Studies.

However, it was also the period of curricular innovation and significant expansion of English Studies at the Department: the postgraduate programme was introduced in 1993; the journal *Facta Universitatis* (Literature and Linguistics Series) was launched in 1996, and all of the core literary and language courses were changed into one semester courses by the end of the 1990s. Most significantly, unlike other English departments in the former Yugoslavia, our Department introduced a number of cultural studies courses in the 1990s - *British Studies* were introduced in 1988, *American Studies* and *Culture and Civilisation of the Commonwealth Studies* in 1991.⁴ These are stable and continuous courses which have been fully integrated into the English Studies bachelors’ programme as mandatory courses up to now. Despite its inclusive title, *Culture and Civilisation of the Commonwealth Studies* was dedicated to the study of cultures, histories and literatures of only two postcolonial nations – Canada and

⁴ In Serbia, “Commonwealth” as a term refers to countries that have been/are part of the Commonwealth of Nations as well as any country from the former British Empire with English as an official language.

Australia - and its original goal was an attempt to “expand the teaching of English and American literatures by including Canada and Australia” (Ristić 2003, Author’s Note). It was an important innovation which resulted in the opening of the traditional literary canon to new/postcolonial literatures. Two years later, in 1993, the course was split into two courses – *Introduction to Canadian Studies* and *Introduction to Australian Studies*. So, the history of cultural studies in the Niš English Department corresponds to the evolution and development of cultural studies in other European countries, which Chris Wallace-Crabbe describes as having sprung “from the diversified offerings of English departments”, which “first moved beyond the traditional canon into twentieth-century literature, then into American, and then into Commonwealth literature” (Wallace-Crabbe 1992, 38).

The establishment of cultural studies was a result of the growing interest in what was called ‘new literatures’ on the one hand - the study of literatures in English emerging from the former British colonies - and the application of new, interdisciplinary, cultural studies approaches on the other. This newly born discipline is a hybrid field begotten from the crossroads of history, sociology and literature. The content, methods and objectives of the cultural studies courses at the Department suggest that they aim to prepare the student of English for further exploration of the studied cultures by giving them an example of a syncretic approach to the study of cultures. These courses foreground new theoretical and methodological approaches to the text in which the focus is on the understanding of the connections between the text and the larger cultural and socio-political contexts in which it is produced. The most important goal of cultural studies is to help the student develop a critical understanding of English-speaking societies and cultures, which is best achieved if the knowledge about a particular culture is presented “in cross-cultural, comparative ways” (Bennet 1992, 30). Although Wallace-Crabbe calls for cultural studies to be a “transdiscipline” that involves “a dizzily diverse array of practices and priorities” (Wallace-Crabbe 1992, 35), our cultural studies courses have been always characterised by the centrality of literature in most of them. Literature is regarded as providing unique insights into the cultural mentalities of Britain, the USA, Australia and Canada and into a large number of social, political, ethical and intellectual matters, thus assisting the teaching of culture to language students unfamiliar with these societies. For the past three decades, older and newer English fiction has been increasingly used in tandem with other media manifestations of culture in both cultural and literary studies, with the aim to illustrate and critique cultural beliefs and ideologies. This orientation, it may be assumed, broadens up English students’ understanding of the domains of literary studies and of critical modes of reading.

5. THE 2000S – THE BOLOGNA REFORM

For many departments in Serbia, the Bologna reform was the beginning of a difficult process of cultural and academic modernisation. Yet, our Department was in a much better position than many other departments in Serbia, because it was organised on the modern British and American models and the staff was open to theoretically new ideas and their application in practice. The adoption of the Bologna system in 2004 with its three cycles of BA, MA, PhD studies gave the institution enormous flexibility in assimilating new ideas, subjects and methods, but it did not essentially change the structure and the organisation of literary studies within the English Studies curriculum. The most significant innovations of the 2008 accredited programmes of bachelors’ and masters’ English Studies was the inclusive, more broadly defined list of courses (mandatory and elective) and the increased

functional independence of lecturers in carrying out their tasks. The literary studies curriculum⁵ today is an aggregate arranged to cover an array of historical and generic literary fields, with a scattering of themes and special topics. Generally, at the BA level, American and English literature is taught from a traditional, historical perspective and a thematic approach - the literary corpus is divided into periods, but predominantly organised thematically. The MA and PhD programmes try to incorporate more recent directions and subjects – they tend to include a grouping on genres and periods and they are open to new humanistic disciplines and new critical theories (such as Marxism, Postcolonialism, Critical Sociology, Poststructuralism, Feminism etc.). I return to this matter below.

6. THE CONTENT AND FUNCTION OF ENGLISH LITERARY STUDIES

The continuing presence and even privileging of literature as an object of study over the fifty-year period raises the question of what Dodou calls “the pedagogical and intellectual value” assigned to literature by the disciplinary and teaching community, which “is understood in terms of the rationale and objectives formulated for the study of English literature” (2020: 259).⁶ The right place to look for the evidence are literature course syllabi, past and current, which are important records of the knowledge and conceptions of literature that the literature teaching staff deem to be worthwhile imparting. Unfortunately, there is scarce, mostly indirect and experiential knowledge on which I must rely for my conclusions about the function and significance attributed to literary studies in the 1970s, 80s and 90s of the twentieth century. The most recent academic literature programmes (Accredited Bachelors’ and Masters’ Academic Programmes of English Studies in 2021), identify, more explicitly, the educational goals, course content and intended learning outcomes of the curriculum offered by the Department, thus representing more reliable evidence about the function of literature and its study. Unfortunately, the nature of this article is such that I must focus only on certain patterns and points of convergence, instead of going into a detailed analysis of the current literature courses.

In the 1970s *English and American literature* was the name of two-semester mandatory literary courses taught in six weekly classes in each term, during the four years of bachelors’ studies. Actually, it comprised a number of survey courses in literary history which covered literature from the medieval period through to the early-to-mid 20th century, with the focus on the Anglo-American literary canon and Shakespeare as its gravitation centre.⁷ In an interview given in 2000, Professor Marković discussed her views on literature and its study: “literature is an exploration of lived and imagined experience, a powerful promoter of creativity, social skills, and the ability to think critically. It develops young people’s independent spirit, their thinking skills to make decisions autonomously and have courage to speak their mind; in short, to produce rather than reproduce knowledge” (You Tube, Part 7, my translation). These words indicate that the founders of academic literary studies subscribed to Matthew Arnold’s ideal of broad general culture and the view of literature as a coherent criticism of life. One of the major goals of teaching literature in the 1970s was to promote active classroom

⁵ Curriculum here refers to the sum of literature course syllabi that comprise the course of study in the subject

⁶ I wish to acknowledge my debt to Katherina Dodou for her review of English in higher education in Sweden and her insightful mapping of “the main objectives linked to literary studies and also the subject matters, theoretical orientations, and conceptions of literature that are foregrounded in the curriculum nationally” which gave me an idea how to organise and systematise the researched material in this part of the article (Dodou 2020, 260)

⁷ I would also like to express my gratitude to Professor Slobodanka Kitić, who generously responded to my questions about the organisation of literary studies at the Department in the 1970s.

participation and stimulate the student's imaginative and critical potential by exposing her to "the best that is known and thought in the world" (Arnold 1973:1018). The very organisation of the 1971 curriculum reveals the belief that literature "teaches itself" in a way, and "that exposure to a more or less balanced array of periods, genres, and themes would add up in the mind of the student to an appreciation of humanism and the cultural tradition" (Graff 2007, 7). The Arnoldian humanism had a lasting impact on the organisation of literary studies at the Department. Even though not immune to strain and contradictions, Arnoldian humanism is "an effective umbrella concept that has gradually opened academic literary studies to a variety of competing views of literature, scholarship, and culture", incorporating novelties such as New Criticism, Marxism, feminism, black studies, deconstruction and contemporary literature (Graff 2007, 6). Back then, I assume, literary studies were nothing but academic and English literature teaching must have been seen as belonging to its unique, specific pedagogical domain and yet serving as an aid to language teaching and learning; language and literature teaching did not just "occasionally co-occur but they actually compounded", to borrow Widdowson's words (Widdowson 1985, 180).

The 1983 English Studies curriculum offers a more complete overview of literature courses and a more explicit formulation of the content and educational goals of literary studies. These are the names of all the literary courses and their instructors in the 1980s and the 1990s: *Medieval English Literature* (Sonja Dekanić Janoski), *16th and 17th Century English Literature* (Sonja Dekanić Janoski), *18th and 19th Century English Literature* (Ratomir Ristić), *19th Century British Literature – Victorian Literature* (Ratomir Ristić), *19th Century American Literature* (Brankica Pacić, Dragana Mašović), *20th Century American Literature* (Brankica Pacić, Dragana Mašović), *Special Course in Shakespeare* (Vida Marković, Ljiljana Bogoeva Sedlar), and *20th Century English Literature* (Vida Marković, Ljiljana Bogoeva Sedlar). It is worth noting that most of the literature courses were one-semester courses in 1983 – an exception is the two-semester course on 20th century English literature in the final year of bachelor's study – the fact that significantly facilitated the Bologna reform in the 2000s.

The focus in literary studies is on survey courses and literary periods, reaching back to Anglo-Saxon and early medieval English literature and the colonial and early national period of American literature. As regards the core knowledge of English literary history imparted to students in the 1980s and 1990s, attention was paid to both the literary-textual and aesthetic and the social, intellectual and ethical aspects of literary works. In other words, the organisation of literary material and the "progression" of courses were chronological, but the emphasis was not on philological and historical literary scholarship but on wide reading, thematic approaches to literature, the skills of close reading and literary analysis and the fostering of humanising values through literature rather than studying the literary text as a mine for teaching grammar or verse techniques. The major curricular ambition was to teach the student a form of literary competence – "the ability to read and critically analyse a literary text, whereas interpretative acts lead to the appreciation of literary and aesthetic values and the development of the student's ethical judgments." (Program nastave engleske i američke književnosti na odeljenju za Anglistiku OOUR-a Filozofski odsek za školsku 1983/4, my translation). In the Preface to the course book on Medieval English literature, Professor Lena Petrović makes some explicit assumptions about the nature of literature and the function of literary studies. She defines literature as "an equipment for living authentically in the present" and the teacher's task as stimulating "the student's imaginative and critical potential" (Petrović 1999, 7) in "a critical reinterpretation of a culture" (Petrović 1999, 8). Literature is seen as not only representing human experience and social reality, but also inquiring into, even intervening

in societal practices, and offering alternative existential models. Literature as providing an insight into a host of social, ethical and intellectual matters, past and present, and as simultaneously being an instrument of social and political critique is just another formulation of Matthew Arnold's concept of literature as "a criticism of life" and a powerful instrument of personal moral development (Arnold 1975, 1021).

The 2021 BA literature curriculum does not significantly deviate from the previous ones in terms of the content and objectives of the core literature subjects. The names and content of the courses, their methodologies and lecturers change, but these courses represent the core of the bachelors' literature curriculum at the Department. Here are the names of the mandatory courses in the 2021 curriculum, and the names of the instructors who have taught them since the 2000s: *Medieval English Literature* (Lena Petrović, Milena Kaličanin, Danijela Petković), *English Renaissance Literature* (Lena Petrović, Milena Kaličanin), *English Poetry of the Romantic Period* (Ratomir Ristić, Milica Živković), *Victorian Literature* (Ratomir Ristić, Milica Živković, Danijela Petković), *American Literature-Classics* (Dragana Mašović, Ana Kocić Stanković), *American Literature-Drama and Short Stories* (Dragana Mašović, Ana Kocić Stanković), *Special Course in Shakespeare* (Ljiljana Bogoeva Sedlar, Milena Kaličanin); *20th Century Anglophone Literature* (Lena Petrović, Nataša Tučev), *English Modernism* (Lena Petrović, Nataša Tučev). As mentioned earlier, cultural studies courses have been a part of the English Studies curriculum since the 1990s. Here are their present names and the names of the teaching instructors for the past three decades: *British Studies* (Dragana Mašović, Ljiljana Bogoeva Sedlar, Vesna Lopičić, Milena Kaličanin, Sanja Ignjatović) *American Studies* (Dragana Mašović, Ana Kocić Stanković), *Canadian Studies* (Ratomir Ristić, Vesna Lopičić) and *Australian Studies* (Ratomir Ristić, Milica Živković).

Like the previous curricula, the most recent also privileges the literary canon and periodisation, with two courses on Shakespeare (a mandatory course and an elective one) and a number of courses dealing with older literature (medieval English literature, Renaissance, Romantic and Victorian literature, American literature-Classics). A few elective courses on genre fiction, such as children's literature, gothic literature, speculative fiction and Canadian short stories, represent an exception. On the other hand, the MA and PhD programmes are characterised by a plurality of literary subject matters, approaches and objectives; on the whole, they have a more modern profile focused on 20th and 21st century literature and they are oriented toward the study of narratives across genres and media. What is particularly worth noting is the absence of theory courses either on the BA or MA levels (an exception is the PhD level at which the priority is given to modern critical and cultural theories). Moreover, many syllabi announce that literature is read alongside modern theory and recognise the importance of theorised approaches to literature as an educational goal, but they do not specify these theories or are vague about the perspectives taught and literary and cultural knowledge imparted. So, it is hard to discern whether the literary courses represent complementary or conflicting theoretical ideas about literature and its study. What also seems to be missing in the current literature curriculum is the earlier emphasis on fostering humanising values through love of literature as one of the central educational goals. Similarly, although many syllabi describe literary studies as an occasion to train and improve the student's language skills in oral and written production, there seems to be no direct linking between literary/cultural studies and language subjects. The cultural studies courses on offer, on the other hand, are more explicit in formulating their theoretical perspectives - they foreground modern critical and cultural theories and

the study of the function of narratives across genres and media, thus revealing their dependence on what is known as the narrative turn in literary and cultural studies and “historicist/contextualist cultural analysis” (Dodou 2020, 283).

The major goals of literary studies in the 2021 curriculum are basically the same as those in the past curricula - to develop the student’s literary competence with the focus on close reading, critical thinking and contextualising aspects of interpretation. As Dodou states, “the recurring thematisation of literary-textual properties and of literary history attests to a desire to develop students’ literary competence and to familiarise them with traditions and ways of thinking about various representational and intellectual problems” (Dodou 2021, 288). The foregrounding of the student’s mastery of literary reading abilities and critical-analytical skills rests on the belief in the intellectual and socialising functions of literature and its study and the transferability of these skills and abilities to a range of other cultural narratives. As Scholes suggests in *Textual Practice*, literary education is a useful means of training of future citizens for communication skills and critical thinking and interpretation of the wider “cultural text” of institutions, politics, the popular media (Scholes 1985, 33). There seems to be no better way to sum up the relevance of literary studies about which there is a basic consensus at the Niš English Department. At the same time, this conceptual concord about the relevance of literary studies attests to the teaching staff’s commitment to cultivating “the best that was taught in the past”.

7. CONCLUSION

By way of concluding, I want to return to where the article started. The study of literature(s) in English has always been an integral part of the English Studies curriculum in the Niš English Department, although our understanding of what literature is and how and why it should be studied have been differently configured across times and contexts. The three phases in the development of English literary studies are intended as emblematic rather than definitive in indicating characteristic discourses that have shaped and continue to shape them. A historical perspective on English literary studies has provided us with a basis for identifying the elements working towards the stability, continuity and long-term development of the discipline and the underlying conceptions of literature and the value we assign to its study. It can also provide us with an opportunity to think about the future shape of literary studies and kinds of curriculum which would be most useful in moving English Studies forward in the context of the globalised, technologically advanced world of the 21st century – “what Kress (2000) calls ‘the changed communications landscape of the present day’” (Beavis 2009, 1). If literary studies are to continue to play an important part in the English studies curriculum in a world characterised by change and instability, we cannot stop exploring why students of English should study literature.

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STUDIJE KNJIŽEVNOSTI NA DEPARTMANU ZA ENGLESKI JEZIK U NIŠU: ISTORIJAT I PRAKSE

Rad daje kratki istorijski pregled akademskih studija anglofonih književnosti na Departmanu za anglistiku Filozofskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Nišu, od momenta njihove institucionalizacije do danas. Umesto sveobuhvatnog pregleda svih književnih predmeta u proteklih pedeset godina, u radu se identifikuju ključni momenti u istoriji akademskih književnih studija i karakteristični pristupi u utvrđenim nastavnim programima. Razmatranje sadržaja i ciljeva književnih predmeta, aktuelnih kao i onih iz prošlosti, nameće pitanje pedagoške i sazajne vrednosti koje profesori književnosti na Departmanu pripisuju književnim studijama. Istorijsko sagledavanje diskursa koji su oblikovali i nastavljaju da oblikuju akademske književne studije u okviru programa studija Engleskog jezika i književnosti je je način za bolje razumevanje njihovog nekadašnjeg, sadašnjeg, kao i budućeg izgleda.

Ključne reči: *akademske studije književnosti, Departman za anglistiku u Nišu, istorijska perspektiva, formativni diskursi*