

## EDITORIAL PREFACE

It is our pleasure to present the seventeenth issue of *Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies* (Belgrade BELLS), which once again offers a rich selection of articles by scholars working across a range of disciplines. The contributions in this volume engage with a broad spectrum of topics, reflecting both established research traditions and emerging directions in the study of language, literature, and culture. Together, the authors offer analyses that shed light on contemporary debates and contribute fresh viewpoints to ongoing discussions. The volume is organized into two main sections: *Theoretical and Applied Linguistics*, and *Literary and Cultural Studies*.

The first part of the Volume, *Theoretical and Applied Linguistics*, contains eight articles. In “I mean, what are you talking about? You have the morals of an alley cat’ – The Negative Evaluations of the Political Opponent in the 2024 US Presidential Debates,” **Maja Stevanović** and **Tijana Vesić Pavlović** analyse how candidates in the two 2024 US presidential debates used linguistic strategies to discredit one another. Focusing on insults, pronoun-based oppositions, repetition, three-part lists, and metaphor, the study shows that all candidates relied heavily on similar rhetorical patterns, contributing to a highly confrontational tone and deepening political polarization. “Heteroglossia in ELT and ESP Research Article Abstracts: Instantiation and Realization Across Rhetorical Structure,” by **Katarina Ilić**, explores how authors in the area of ELT and ESP manage dialogic space in research article abstracts. Using the Engagement subsystem of Appraisal Theory, the paper examines how strategies of contraction and expansion function across rhetorical moves. The findings reveal systematic differences between sections of the abstract, shedding light on how disciplinary identity and reader guidance are shaped through Engagement choices. In “I’m Not Angry...: Perceptions of Punctuation Marks in Online Text Messages by Serbian Students of English,” **Miloš Milisavljević** investigates how different punctuation marks in online text messages affect the perceived confidence or interest

of the interlocutor. Survey results show clear differences in how marks such as the period, exclamation mark, and ellipsis are interpreted, with participants' judgments aligning more closely with native-speaker patterns than with typical L2 user tendencies. "Exploring Syntactic Ambiguity Enablers in News Headlines," by **Miloš Mirković**, examines structural patterns that lead to ambiguity in headline language. Focusing on what Oaks (1994) terms syntactic ambiguity enablers, and applying X-bar syntax, the study analyses multiple interpretations of authentic headlines. The results show that such ambiguity is systematic rather than accidental, with many cases arising from word forms that can function as different parts of speech. In "Phonological Awareness in Serbian and English: A Comparative Study of Preschool and First Grade EFL Learners," **Danica Jerotijević Tišma** compares early phonological awareness in L1 Serbian and L2 English among preschoolers and first graders. While older learners performed more consistently in Serbian, this pattern was less stable in English, pointing to the influence of additional factors in the development of phonological skills in a foreign language. "'Wonder Words': Leveraging Advanced Learners' Extramural English Engagement for Vocabulary Learning," by **Ulla Fürstenberg**, examines the integration of elements of wonder pedagogy into an advanced L2 English class through a specially designed task sequence. By encouraging learners to reflect on words encountered in their daily lives, the study illustrates how engagement with extramural English can support vocabulary learning and stimulate independent language development. In "Opinion Mining in ESP Classrooms: A Comparative Analysis of Traditional vs. AI-Assisted Instruction," **Igor Ivanović** compares student sentiment across traditional and AI-assisted ESP classrooms. Analysing essays using a specialised sentiment lexicon, the study finds a clear shift toward more positive evaluations of the AI-assisted environment, highlighting AI's potential to enhance learners' affective responses to instructional materials. "Development of Critical Thinking in Literature Classes," by **Svetozar Poštić**, combines survey data with practical recommendations for fostering critical thinking in literature courses. The article outlines techniques for encouraging students to articulate and reassess their interpretations and discusses the Dialogue Teaching Model as an effective means of supporting these skills.

The first article of the *Literary and Cultural Studies* section explores literariness in contemporary digital environments. **Tijana Parezanović** and **Milena Stojanović**'s article entitled "Aspects of Literariness in New

Media Writing” analyzes the technologically enabled way of writing by four recent winners of the New Media Writing Prize. tracing the most prominent aspects of literariness – defamiliarization, self-referentiality, and dialogism – in electronically mediated works. Their study aims to estimate whether these aspects are mediated electronically or literally. In “Metaphorical and Ontological Representations of Human Life in a Selection of Poetry by H. W. Longfellow and E. A. Poe”, **Goran J. Petrović** analyzes the selection of poetry of the American 19th-century poets Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Edgar Allan Poe. The essay focuses on the representation of human life in ontological and metaphorical terms. The author argues in the article that the two poetic universes differ considerably in their choice of metaphors and in their poetic spirit, even though a common source of their ontological systems is God. The author calls for a greater appreciation and a renewed scholarly attention to the American 19th-century literature. In “Hybrid Families in Postcolonial Narratives: *Small Island* by Andrea Levy and *Lara* by Bernardine Evaristo”, **Emilija B. Lipovšek**. Drawing on postcolonial theory of hybridity, Lipovšek explores postcolonial urban narratives focusing on identity and belonging. She examines how the migrant perspective contributes to a completely new dynamic of urban life. **Slđana Stamenković** “Aestheticism in Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty* and Donna Tartt’s *The Secret History* revisits Aestheticism through Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty* and Donna Tartt’s *The Secret History*. The essay traces stances on beauty and the legacy of the l’art-pour-l’art movement in art and literature that the novels draw upon. Stamenković discusses the satirical perspective in Smith’s novel and the tragically exaggerated aesthetic attitudes of Donna Tartt, intending to show the limitations of the movement’s fundamental ideas. “Female Sanguinary Capitalism in Victorian Vampire Fiction” by **Mara Ruža Blažević** offers new insights into *fin-de-siècle* nineteenth-century Gothic fiction. The article examines the Victorian vampire fiction through the lens of Marxian political economy, revisiting *Dracula* and *Carmilla* to show the intimate link between Victorian vampire fiction and industrial capitalism. The author claims that common Marxian tropes – such as capital, class conflict, and the bourgeois work ethic in both works need reinterpretation, while at the same time identifying motifs such as estrangement, animalisation, emasculation, factory working conditions, child exploitation, and deterritorialization that have been largely neglected by critics. The essay also highlights the neglected interpretative potential of female vampires as figures of “sanguinary capitalism”. The Gothic in

contemporary environments is the theme of the essay „Chronotopes of Trauma: Reconfiguring the Gothic in *Sharp Objects*“. Timeless Bachtin’s theory of chronotopes, which centers of the fusion of time and space is employed to analyze Gillian Flynn’s novel. The author argues that common motifs of Gothic horror, now transformed in the novel as uncanny domesticity, oppressive climate, and the stagnation of small-town life are used to express pain, trauma, and moral decay. **Aleksandar Radović**’s “Fight Club and Information Hazards” rethinks *Fight Club* through the theory of information hazards. The article examines the impact of the circulation of dangerous knowledge and argues that its dissemination both destabilizes power relations and sustains the novel’s subversive force.

We want to thank all the authors who contributed their work to the seventeenth issue of *Belgrade BELLS*. We are also very grateful to Andrijana Aničić, Andrijana Broćić, Bojana Gledić, and Mirjana Vučković for their efforts in preparing the present issue of the journal. Their invaluable help led to the improvement of this volume. Finally, the publication of this edition of *Belgrade BELLS* would not have been possible without the support of the dean of the Faculty of Philology, Professor Iva Draškić Vićanović. Also, we would like to thank the Ministry of Science and Technological Innovations, whose financial support has proved essential for the preparation and publication of the present journal. We hope that the fifteen articles included in the current issue of *Belgrade Bells* will inspire further research and stimulate new lines of inquiry.

*Editorial Team*