

## Summaries

András VERES

In Memoriam György Konrád (1933–2019)

The paper written on the occasion of György Konrád's death wishes to briefly revisit the multiple directions of the writer's career. It was his novel *The Visitor* which imploded into the Hungarian literary life and signaled Konrád's way going against the value system of the official party state. In 1969, he also debuted as a sociologist, with his book in manuscript (co-authored by Iván Szelényi) on the paths of intelligentsia, which ended in a legal procedure. After that, Konrád was not allowed to publish in Hungary for a decade and a half, while his works were published abroad, making him one of the best known representatives of Hungarian prose fiction. As of the eighties, his essays on politics and philosophy of history gained more attention than his novels, in his volume *Antipolitics* (1985) he predicted that East and Central Europe might be liberated, in a peaceful way, from the Soviet pressure. A leading figure of the 1989 transformation, his international standing is reflected in his roles as the president of International PEN Club, then the Berlin-Brandenburg Art Academy in the nineties. Of his late prose fiction, *Departure and Homecoming* (2001) received, again, significant critical recognition. His life and work can be characterized by the concept of freedom – referring to his personal and fortunate liberations from the grip of Holocaust, from dictatorships and half-dictatorships, as well as his conviction that the circles of freedom are always ready to be broadened.

Louise O. VASVÁRI

The Proustian Phenomenon and Women's Multigenerational Alimentary Life Writing as Trauma Literature of the Holocaust

The present study is part of a larger project examining various forms of life writing created by several hundred women survivors of the Holocaust and their descendants. Here I discuss a subcategory of life writing, for which I propose the term *alimentary life writing*, in which the story of the self is closely linked to the production, preparation and consumption of food and where 'alimentary' refers not only specifically to food but also to the action of nourishing someone and hence to human relationships. First, I consider this form of writing briefly within the context of the history and the great significance food possesses as a cultural category, in the writings of Georg Simmel, Claude Levi-Strauss, and especially in Proust's image of the *madeleine*, which for him represented the affective memory of the senses, different from conventional memory. I then discuss women's alimentary life writing as

trauma literature of the Holocaust, where associations attached to food, recipes, and recipe books are not only crucial to gendered family networks, but also to women's gendered identity. Alimentary narratives, with their access to the „deep memory” of survivors that has essentially been considered untouched, can help unlock memories. Survivors and their second- and third-generation children blend their own lived experience and longing for continued group identity, to bear witness to the fragmented and traumatic chapters of Holocaust history.

Judit KÁDÁR

An Exceptional Case of Women's Self-Promotion in the Horthy Era. Cécile Tormay and Her *Bujdosó könyv* (*An Outlaw's Diary*)

The defeat of Hungary and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy following World War I left the writer Cécile Tormay, member of the so-called old „Christian gentlemanly middle class” in a more vulnerable position than most of her female contemporaries of the same social status. Due to her sexual orientation, she did not want to get married, nevertheless she was yearning for financial independence, but she did not have appropriate qualifications to get a job befitting her status. The potential transfer of the family's rural estates to newly created countries and the fear of losing private property aggravated her anxiety and increased her anger toward the newly born Hungarian People's Republic, therefore Tormay stood at the forefront of the counter-revolutionary conspiracy of the old elite against the democratic government of Count Mihály Károlyi from the beginning. She had recorded important political events and her commentaries on them in the form of a diary from 31 October 1918, the outbreak of the revolution until the beginning of August 1919 when Miklós Horthy, the future governor-regent became the commander in chief of the counter-revolutionary National Army. After finishing the draft, she spent almost two and a half years editing the manuscript for publication. In that period the country experienced a great deal of turmoil, even the form of government – republic or monarchy – was undecided.

The aim of this paper is to examine Tormay's conscious deliberation in selecting information during editing the diary (its first volume was published at the end of December 1920, the second one was ready for printing in December 1921) in order to demonstrate her commitment to the antidemocratic elite and strengthen her unstable social position. A strong supporter of the former Prime Minister, the monarchist Count István Tisza who had been assassinated on the day of the outbreak of the democratic revolution in 1918, she concealed her true opinion about her preferred form of state. She also withheld the names of the main leaders and financial backers of the counter-revolution (persons from Count István Bethlen, the future Prime Minister's circles) in case the old elite loses the leadership of the country. However, she took care to refer to her family members as active supporters of the

counter-revolution, emphasizing her own leading role. Instead of exploring who bore responsibility for the war, she made the Jews scapegoats, relying on growing post-war anti-Semitism. When the old elite regained power, Tormay and several members of her family were rewarded for their efforts described in *Bujdosó könyv*. Her brothers, brothers-in-law and other distant relatives got highly paid public service jobs and Cécile Tormay was appointed editor-in-chief of a newly founded conservative literary magazine, the *Napkelet (Orient)*. In spite of the social and financial insecurity of her youth, due to her craftiness and cautious handling of information, finally she was able to break into the political and intellectual elite that dominated Hungarian society between the two world wars.

Ersu DING

#### Tragedy and Modernity: Two Misconstrued Cause-Effect Relationships

The central aim of the article is to refute certain clichés linked to the negative effects modernity is accused of having on tragedy. In order to achieve this, the traditional characteristics of both Western and Chinese examples of this dramatic genre are introduced and examined, with brief but informative historical overviews of the two separate trails tragedy seems to have taken over the centuries.

The essay identifies, as the first misconstrued cause-effect relationship, the one between the emergence of literary and cultural modernity and the decline of certain age-old conventions that define (or used define) tragedy in the West, with an especial emphasis on George Steiner's theory about „the death of tragedy”. The second line of thought involves the Chinese tradition of tragedy, questioning the idea that the alleged lack of tragic plays in the Chinese cultural heritage has been hindering the actual appearance of modernity in the country. Among other characteristics, the problem of happy endings in tragedies is highlighted and analysed in detail in both contexts. The argumentation is mainly built upon the common ground and shared tropes of the two – often radically dissimilar – genealogies of tragedy.

Overall, the essay consistently maintains the dichotomy of Western and Chinese cultural connotations attributed to tragedy, ultimately comparing the two traditions to each other. Besides pointing out the obvious and considerable differences, the article manages to provide certain convincing parallels between them as well, thus criticizing and eventually disproving two potentially incorrect standpoints about the relationship between tragedy and modernity. Concurrently, the article displays some small but crucial details in the complex system of the modern understanding of tragedy in both the Western and the Chinese realm of drama.

Maya J. LO BELLO

Chasing Impressions: a Comparative Cultural Analysis of Impressionistic Criticism in Hungary

The aim of this article is to examine whether the comparative cultural analysis of a critical text can provide a greater understanding of why *Nyugat's* editor, Miksa Fenyő, chose impressionistic criticism's highly aesthetic, yet seemingly quixotic approach to promote modern literature in Hungary, as opposed to selecting more conventional means. Applying a comparative cultural approach also opens this analysis to an exploration of the broader connotations implied by Fenyő's Jewish origins and his position at an industrial lobby association, GyOSz.

László BENGI

Sequentiality and Calculability in Modern Literature

The famous idea of „two cultures” supposes a deep rupture between quantitative sciences and the humanities. In this polarized situation, it seems highly important if the reading of modernist literary works confirms the dichotomy between quantification and aesthetic experience. The essay argues to broaden the relationship between calculation and literature beyond the mere realm of numbers and to pay attention to the various forms of discursive embeddedness of calculation in modern literature. There are several models through which calculation enters the field of literature and thus the relation of numerical reasoning and literary expression, as well as being full of tension, significantly varies in accordance with the cultural function of calculation.

Péter HAJDU

The Asian utopia of Mór Jókai in *The Novel of the Next Century*

This is a case study in cross-cultural imagology. Mór Jókai's utopian novel titled *The Novel of the Next Century* (1872–1874) offers a colourful and often repulsive panorama of national and racial stereotypes (not to mention gender stereotypes), but the Chinese part is particularly interesting. Most utopias devote significant space to describing the sexual life of the imagined better (or in the case of dystopias, worse) society, which is hardly surprising, since they have to say something about the possible transformation of the family as nucleus of the society, and also because there are so many social constraints around sexuality in the Western world. Decorum did not allow Jókai to imagine a basically different sexual practice in the future, but he inserted a Chinese source about Kin-Tseu, a hidden country among the mountains of Central Asia without any significant social control of sexuality. Although the

novel will prove that the Chinese myths about that country are erroneous, it is telling that the imagination of a society of free love is attributed to the Chinese. The omniscient narrator then corrects the sexualised Chinese phantasy about Kin-Tseu, which proves to be a real utopia based on strictly monogamous family life and the ethos of sobriety and hard work.