

Summaries

Pál S. VARGA

The concept of romanticism in Hungarian literary criticism of 19th century literature

The concept of romanticism is commonly used in the context of late 18th to middle 19th century. According to René Wellek, however, there was a “typological and historical usage” of the term; according to this “romantic’ means all poetry written in a tradition differing from that descended from classical antiquity”. The theorists of early German romanticism, inspired by the principle of historicism and the holistic view of Göttingen neo-humanism, distinguished two great eras of European civilization: classical and romantic – and their relationship was traced back to the opposition of pagan and Christian religions.

When “the broad meaning of the term [of romanticism] spread abroad from Germany in all directions” (Wellek), this also affected Hungary. Hungarian literary historians have always ignored the fact that between 1818 and 1864 this broader interpretation prevailed in Hungarian literary thinking. The role of the initiator belongs to József Teleki, who studied in Göttingen (*A’ régi és új költés’ külömbiségeiről*, – ‘On the Difference between Old and New Poetry’, 1818). The early stages of the history of the concept are characterized by different perceptions of the relationship between classicism and romanticism. While Teleki says there is no way back into the alienated world of classicism, the rearguards of classicism propagated the romanization of classical heritage (Ferenc Toldy). The discourse was steered in a new direction by the theorists of demotic [népies: based in authentic folklore] literature (Ferenc Kölcsey, János Erdélyi); this interpretation equated to romanticism with the works of the low cultural register (written in “Romanic”, i.e. in neo-Latin languages). The preeminent novelist of the time, Zsigmond Kemény, provides a holistic overview of European literature in his essay *Classicism and Romanticism* (1864), connecting the perspectives of religion, ethics, poetry and society.

The historical study of the concept leads to the insight that the term, as it was used in contemporary Hungarian literary criticism, is often based on a broader concept of romanticism, even when it comes to romanticism as a specific period of literary history.

Eszter VILMOS

From *Kanada* to Canada: Bernice Eisenstein and Second-Generation Holocaust Literature

The Canadian author Bernice Eisenstein is a daughter of Holocaust survivors and immigrants. Her illustrated autobiographical novel *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* could be one of the cornerstones of second-generation Holocaust literature, for it represents all the major topics, problems and questions in the art of Holocaust postmemory. We can observe the ever-present dialogue with the generation of witnesses, both in a personal and in a cultural context. Eisenstein reflects on the unceasing doubt concerning writing about the Holocaust without having witnessed it, focusing on the ambivalent situation of not-being-there, while shedding light on the indirectness of the experience. The novel also discusses the problem of language in an immigrant setting, also the literary use of language while aiming to represent the unrepresentable. Pictures have a particularly important role in this half-graphic novel, among others in reimagining some well-known Holocaust photographs. The book also poses questions on the mediating role of a second-generation Holocaust survivor, and on Jewish identity.

Enikő DARABOS

Crises and Meaning. Impacts of the „Poetics of Animality” in *The End of a Family Story*

'The End of a Family Story: A Novel' (1977) is Péter Nádas's first book, which made him instantly one of the most important writers of the so-called “New Prose” in contemporary Hungarian literature. This paper intends to carry out a critical discourse analysis and gives an interpretation of the “poetics of animality” accounting for the atmosphere of corporeality in the text. The sensuality of the little boy's first-person narrative of opposes the abstract truths of the grandfather's biblical discourse. By considering the rhetorical elements that maintain the vibrant, sensual significance, this interpretation conceives them as causing a crisis in meaning, which destabilizes not only the position of the narrator, but also that of the reader.

Viktória RADICS

Architextual Web of *Bright Details*

Péter Nádas inserted a plethora of archival documents into his 2017 two-volume memoir, *Világló részletek* ('Bright Details'). Nádas's private archive contains written, visual, and intermedial sources, personal memorabilia, and artworks. The function of these is to give legitimacy to the text; at the same time they are meant to keep memory work in check. Acting as a bridge between the text's linguistic

dimension and its present and past realities, they constitute the architextual web of the book. In my paper I will approach the theory of the archives based on Wolfgang Ernst and Jacques Derrida primarily, furthermore I will also engage with Maurizio Ferraris' concept of documentality. I will categorize the rich documentary material of *Világló részletek* and highlight some of the most important documents: the farewell letter of Nádas's father and his never finished, hagiographic biography of Nádas's mother; the exceptional story of the "family's heirloom swaddling cloth"; the Hungarian sculptor Pál Pátzay's small statue *David*; the autobiography of Magda Aranyossi, the author's aunt and the letters of Pál Aranyossi. I will describe these documents' and artefacts' positionality in the text, their ekphrasis, their scope of effect and the way they inform motives. This study is part of my research on Péter Nádas's documentarist method as an idiosyncratic form of literary archival science.

ZSOLT MIKLÓSVÖLGYI

Scenes of National-Socialist Biopolitics in the Novel *Parallel Stories* by Péter Nádas

The essay aims to conduct a spatial-centered analysis of Péter Nádas' literary texts with particular focus on his renowned novel *Parallel Stories* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2010), originally published in 2005. The key objective of the essay is to analyze the biopolitical scenes in *Parallel Stories*, with particular regard to the Nazi eugenic research laboratory that is set up in a medieval castle in the interwar period near Wiesenbad, Germany. The essay analyzes the venues of the institution of racial hygiene disguised as a boarding school for boys, and the Kaiser Wilhelm Racial Biological, Racial-Hygienic and Hereditary Institution. The main goal is to interpret the spatial configurations of the Nazi racial-hygienic theories beyond the individual and intersubjective interactions that operate in the foreground of power-related and ideological discourses. The Wiesenbad boarding school is one of the key settings of the eerie spaces depicted in the spatial-poetic structure of the book, since it manifests the mutual and bi-directional interaction and pervasiveness that stretches between the concrete physical structure of architectural venues and the language of power that organizes its discursive spaces. Furthermore, the essay also seeks to analyze those anthropological aspects of the novel that have spatial-poetic relevance: from the controlling power that exaggerates the classical humanist education concept to the hygienic regime that is motivated by natural sciences and political concepts, to the dehumanizing aspects of Nazism.