

*A MODERN MAGYAR LÍRA/PRÓZA VILÁGIRODALMI KONTEXTUSBAN
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This two-part volume contains the proceedings of a four-day conference held at Péter Pázmány Catholic University Faculty in 2017, which brought together academics from faculties of humanities across Hungary and abroad to explore the relationship between Hungarian and world literature. The volume has a peculiar form, bound as a single volume but containing two works: one on poetry, and the other on prose.

Both works are introduced by theoretical writings on literary criticism, followed by studies examining, comparing and analysing classical, late modern and postmodern literary works, as well as the writings of contemporary authors. The palette of literary history presented is quite colourful and contains many comparative studies dealing with Hungarian modernity and pieces of art from world literature. Beginning with 19th romanticism, the conference –entitled *A modern magyar próza világirodalmi kontextusba (Modern Contemporary Prose in World Literary Context)* – sought to explore the history of Hungarian prose (novels, short stories and essays), and its defining authors, works and features into the present day, all in an international context. The lectures and writings investigate Hungarian literature as an inherent part of world literature that has been developed in organic interaction with European prose and poetry.

In the work on prose, the text block entitled *Irodalom- és létszemléleti horizontok (Horizons of Approaches to Literature and Existence)* is opened by the study of István Fried, who draws attention to the literature produced by small nations and how the characters experience self-determination in Imre Kertész's novels. Balázs Füzfa emphasizes the formative role of *regionality* in literary history and writes about the most defining texts of the Trieste-Szombathely-Kőszeg-Vienna-Prague region. In her study, Kornélia Faragó describes the ethos and values of the journal «New Symposion» between 1965 and 1975. In Anikó Kurucz's study we can read about the basic concepts of Béla Hamvas's essays inherited from the philosophies that were most significant for the author, including the concept of *aletheia*.

The second chapter, entitled *A klasszikus modern próza poétikák nemzetközi vetületben (Classical and Modern Poetics of Prose in International Dimensions)* begins with the study of Ágnes Hansági, in which the author takes stock of the peculiarities of Jókai's style of writing, especially the way it moves away from romantic paradigms. Zsuzsa Horváth compares the narrative worlds of Margit Kaffka and Katherine Mansfield by considering the impressionistic features of the two types of prose. Krisztián Benyovszky re-reads the short story titled *A béka (The Frog)* by Géza Csáth, which mobilizes the tools of the genres of horror and psychological narration, instructively comparing them with Poe's short story *The Black Cat*. Gábor Kovács's writing draws a parallel between how Géza Gárdonyi and Mark Twain develop their characters in their novels. Ágnes Klára Papp brings *Sárarany (Gold in the Mud)* by Móricz and *Crime and Punishment* of Dostoevsky into a fruitful dialogue. Zoltán Abádi Nagy highlights the role of relativizing irony in novels by Swift and Karinthy, while Árpád Kovács examines how the genres of novel, thesis novel and sacred texts are intermingled in *Anna Karenina* and *Anna Édes*. Tibor Gintli points to parallels between the narrative techniques of Maupassant and Kosztolányi novels, emphasizing that the fictional world of the psychological novel is based on the principle of reality. The dialogue of Kosztolányi-novels with world literature is further expanded by the study of László Bengi, in which the author examines the motivational and narrative similarities between *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Kosztolányi's *Pacsirta (Skylark)*.

The third chapter discusses late modern and contemporary Hungarian prose. This chapter starts with the writing of Kornélia Horváth, in which the author takes into account the hidden and not so hidden historical references of *Iskola a határon (The School at the Frontier)* by Géza Ottlik. The study *Az emlékezet bozótjában (In the Bush of Memory)* shows how Géza Ottlik's *Minden megvan (Nothing's Lost)* and Thomas Wolfe's short story *The Lost Boy* influence each other. Géza S. Horváth discusses the poetic processes of Miklós Mészöly's novel *Saulus* by describing its interdependent relationship with *Crime and Punishment*. István Ladányi's writing traces the experimental nature and poetic solutions of Ottó Tolnai's novel *Rovarház (Insect House)* to the traditions of avantgarde text construction. János Szávai re-interprets László Krasznahorkai's novel *Báró Wenckheim hazatér (Baron Wenckheim's Homecoming)* from the perspective of the *menippos satire* and Bakhtin's carnival theory. In the final study of the volume, Lívía Érfalvy presents István Vörös's *Thomas Mann kabátja (Thomas Mann's Coat)* as a contemporary novel that imitates the irony in Thomas Mann's texts.

The work on poetry, the second half of the volume, consists of three chapters: two studies in the first chapter entitled *Emberi megfontolások (Human Considerations)* examines various lyrical, historical and artistic linguistic trends in Europe,

and focuses on a new theoretical approach and analysis of various traditions of poetics. In particular, the study of Ernő Kulcsár Szabó articulates the need to create a new literary history, which would not study historical circumstances, but the internal dialogue of the literature itself, along the dynamic dialogue of texts. The eleven studies of chapter two analyse the authors of classical and late modern Hungarian literature like Endre Ady (written by János D. Mekis and István Fried), Lőrinc Szabó (Lóránt Kabdebó), Attila József (Antal Bókay), Sándor Weöres (Mihály Benda, Kornélia Horváth, Attila Páli and Bianka Zámbo), János Pilinszky (Ágnes Burján, Anna Máriáss), or Ágnes Nemes Nagy (Adrienn Pataky).

It's an interesting fact that in this chapter most of studies are dedicated to the poetry of Weöres (four in total), while two deals with the poetry of Ady and two of Pilinszky. This may indicate the growing appreciation of the Weöres-oeuvre in the academic discourse. However, it is not the number of the studies that is important, but the perspective from which the analyses are born, and the philological relations between world literature and Hungarian literature revealed by the studies. Such is the aspect of biblical rhetoric in Ady's poetry in the study of János D. Mekis and István Fried.

Lóránt Kabdebó, Lőrinc Szabó's outstanding Hungarian researcher, explores innovative approaches for interpreting the poet's new autograph materials. Antal Bókay recites József Attila's *Külvárosi éj* (*Suburban night*) in a new voice, based on Anglo-Saxon traditions of objective poetry. This writing is followed by four studies on Sándor Weöres, of which two draw a parallel between the work of Weöres and French poetry. Pilinszky's lyricism is also interpreted by two parallels of poetic history: in Rainer Maria Rilke's works by the study of Ágnes Burján and in Mihail Bulgakov's works by the study of Anna Máriáss. This chapter concludes with a study by Adrienn Pataky on the poetry of Ágnes Nemes Nagy and her *Ekhmaton* cycle.

Chapter three of the volume on poetry examines the works of contemporary Hungarian lyricists from the last two or three decades of the 20th century to the present day. The writing of Bálint Buday deals with a special topic, the genre and the possible ways of interpreting of footnote, mainly in the poetry of Tandori, Petri and Ottó Orbán, but also on János Arany's and T.S. Eliot's lyricism. Anna Branczeiz discusses the poetry of György Petri in light of poems by John Berryman, especially the relationship between self-reflexive irony and apparent lyricism. The study of Dorottya Szávai analyses the tradition of elegy in contemporary Hungarian poetry, emphasizing that the genre has a continuation from antiquity to the present day. In her view, it would be justified to introduce a genre in the academic discourse, which we might call "elegiac-ironic". All this results in a critical rethinking of Hungarian postmodern literature.

Sarolta Ostroluszky in her study *Mi a vers nektek? (What is the poem for you?)* interprets the poems of five Hungarian poets (András Ferenc Kovács, Lajos Parti Nagy, Tamás Jónás, Anna Anna Szabó and Krisztina Tóth) and five American poets (Jane Miller, Sam Hamill, Dana Leving, Richard Cecil, Alexander Long) from a comparative perspective. László Bedecs discusses the erotic and homoerotic poetry of Zoltán Csehy in a way that is particularly illuminative. Mária Bartal examines two volumes of Zsuzsa Takács (*A test imádása, Tiltott nyelv – Adoration of the Body, Forbidden Language*) based on the concepts and views of famous 20th century literary scholars (e.g. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Derrida), and on ancient authors (Homer, Euripides, Catullus, Ovid). Finally, Márton Tanos analyzes the postmodern poetry of Márton Sirokai.

I hope that this description reveals the wide spectrum of literary and poetic history that appears in the volume, affording readers the opportunity to approach contemporary Hungarian poetry and prose through the great authors of classical and late modernity. The studies of this outstanding volume point to the common origin of world literature and the genealogy and narrative techniques of modern Hungarian literature.

IV

NECROLOGI
