

## RECENZIE / BOOK REVIEWS

**ZOLTÁN NÉMETH – MAGDALENA ROGUSKA (eds.): Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus a közép-európai irodalmakban / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus v literatúrach strednej Európy [Transculturalism and bilingualism in Central European literatures]**

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**ZOLTÁN NÉMETH – MAGDALENA ROGUSKA (eds.): Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus az irodalomban / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus v literatúre [Transculturalism and bilingualism in literature]**

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**ORSOLYA HEGEDŰS – ZOLTÁN NÉMETH – ANIKÓ N. TÓTH – GABRIELLA PETRES CSIZMADIA (eds.): Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus [Transculturalism and bilingualism]**

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Over the past decades, it has become evident that the concept of homogenous cultures and national literatures is a strong abstraction that is easily undermined by the reality of culture and literature, as their existence is one of continuous interaction. Due to these interactions, they change dynamically and create new forms of expressions, which often blur or abolish the boundaries of homogenous culture/literature. Globalization, as well as its attendant process of migration, have intensified this process and, in parallel with it, also brought forth certain phenomena which are not categorizable within the homogenous concept of culture and literature, necessitating new points of view. Using the theoretical basis of multiculturalism, interculturalism and transculturalism, both the hybrid and liminal phenomena have been subjects of research. What are the literary consequences of a multicultural, multilingual existence? What forms of expression and language does it use? What are the characteristics of regional (e.g. minority) literatures which, in comparison with the central homogenous literature, are also influenced by contact literatures/cultures? How can the works of literature which express the experience of a change of language and culture be classified?

The research group of the Institute of Linguistics and Literary Science at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, in an international collaboration, has embarked on an exciting task: the creation of an interpretative and methodological framework for uncovering the characteristics of linguistically and culturally transgressive texts, resting on the theoretical basis of transnationality and bilingualism and drawing from the analyses of (mainly, though not exclusively) Hungarian and Central European literary texts. In addition to buzzwords such as “immigrant writer and literature”, “migrant literature”, “transnational literature”, “nomadism”, “diaspora literature” and “literature of foreignness” etc., the research group also aims at the reinterpretation of certain traditional categories, examining the transnational or transcultural phenomena of minority and transborder literatures. The results of this research have been published in three publications, two in 2018 and the third in 2019.

Employing a pluricentric linguistic approach, the first collection, *Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus a közép-európai irodalmakban / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus v literatúrach strednej Európy* (Transcultur-

alism and bilingualism in Central European literatures), is focused on the analysis of texts and publications that are situated in a liminal position and bear the fruitful influence of multiple cultures, literatures and languages. On the one hand, it calls attention to periodicals which validated transnational viewpoints in previous eras of literary history (even if they had not used this term to describe their activities). Dorottya Szávai's paper introduces the first periodical of comparative literature, the *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, published in Cluj-Napoca from 1877. István Ladányi discusses the polycentric view of literature and culture in the Novi Sad periodical *Új Symposion* (New symposium; 1965–1992), and taking inspiration from pluricentrism, brings up the concept of polycentric literature. With respect to Hungary, this concept allows space for regional constructs instead of Budapest-centrism, while “it can also be useful for presenting different canons, divided not only by cultural regions, but also by their relationship with traditions, the concepts of cultural identity, the views on the role of literature and arts, and cultural values” (24), which include the different degrees of reception of transcultural impulses. Magdalena Roguska examines the narratives of identity which thematize a culture change. Zoltán Németh, Attila Mizser and Csilla Nagy's articles, as well as the case studies by Anikó N. Tóth, Gabriella Petres Csizmadia, and Gabriella Mádi, aim at a transcultural reinterpretation of transborder Hungarian literatures. The topic of Patrik Šenkár's chapter is transborder Slovak literature.

In the foreword to the second collection, *Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus az irodalomban / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus v literatúre* (Transculturalism and bilingualism in literature), editors Zoltán Németh and Magdalena Roguska emphasize that the concept of transculturalism helps in approaching and understanding those texts and authors which exist in the space of linguistic and cultural transgressions. As they write: “The bi-

lingual and language-changing authors, the migrant writers or writers living abroad, the writers with a hybrid identity, and the literary works which thematize multilingualism, multiculturalism, and the events of cultural blending and transfer all belong in this category. In many cases, this concerns writers and texts of an unstable position, whose place within the frame of the so-called national literatures is not clear” (6). Zoltán Németh's introduction reviews Wolfgang Welsch's theory of transcultural research, as well as its Canadian and Latin American discourses, in addition to the concepts of Mikhail Epstein and Arianna Dagnino. From these, he draws inspiration for the (practical) question of how the “revolutionary drive of transculturalism” can be applied in the context of Slovak and Hungarian literature, which he answers in the form of a literary-historical, methodological outline. This introduction is followed by a long line of case studies which expand the space of transcultural analyses to the Renaissance (carried out by Zoltán Csehy's analysis), though they mainly focus on selected oeuvres from the 20th century (in the papers by Tímea Jablonczay, Pál Száz, and Roland Orcsik), and contemporary literary works (in the studies by József Keserű, Patrik Šenkár, Györgyi Földes, Kornélia Lomboš, Anikó N. Tóth, Beatrix Visy, Gabriella Petres Csizmadia, Attila Mizser, Csilla Nagy, Magdalena Roguska, Anikó Polgár, and Éva Bányai). The concept of “in-betweenness” becomes a central term, described by Éva Bányai in her article “A hibrid rózsa” (The hybrid rose) as follows: “The space determined by in-betweenness can be interpreted as a culturally defined landscape (Mitchell); the border and liminal land and the discursivity of transit situations and transgressions, which contribute to the creation of in-betweenness, are all fundamental attributes of the transcultural narratives” (234).

The third collection, *Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus* (Transculturalism and bilingualism), gives an account of the research project's next phase. Magdalena Roguska-Németh

examines the ideological (and politico-historical) background of the concepts of multiculturalism, interculturalism, and transculturalism, and states: “These theoretical frames and questions are no less timely in today’s Europe, a continent that, on the one hand, clamors ever louder for cultural independence, while on the other hand, is increasingly cosmopolitan and culturally heterogenous itself” (18). Zoltán Németh introduces his own concept this time, which applies the aspects and emphases of transculturalism to Hungarian literature in Slovakia. The papers can be sorted into thematic groups: some authors focus on transcultural characteristics in works of certain national (i.e. considered to be homogenous) literatures (Anikó Polgár, Attila Mizser, Ariana Fabiszewska, Csilla Nagy, Gabriella Brutovszky, Magdaléna Hrbáček, Éva Bányai), while others analyze texts connected to bilingualism or language change (Ágnes Strickland-Pajtók, Marcin Grad, Anikó N. Tóth, Jutka Rudaš, Gabriella Petres Csizmadia, István Ladányi, Beatrix Visy, Patrik Šenkár), examine questions of translation (Dmitry A. Yefremov, Olga Maximova), or based on their literary

material, discuss transculturalism as an universal worldview (Alexej Mikulášek), vertically expanding the concept as well (József Keserű, Zoltán Csehý).

The material of the three books is naturally diverse. They cannot be expected to offer a unified, elaborate concept of a transcultural literary analysis and system of categorization (nor do they promise to do so). Their significance consists of focusing on the described phenomena in the works of Central European literatures, aiming to increase sensitivity toward such phenomena, and lifting up such writers and works, usually kept out of the frame of national literary histories, into our field of vision. The research published in these three volumes unquestionably works to loosen the homogenous narrative of national literary histories – primary that of Hungarian literature. Its undeniable result is the expansion of transcultural research to minority literatures.

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**MIHAELA P. HARPER – DIMITAR KAMBOUROV (eds.): Bulgarian Literature as World Literature**

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The reviewed book is part of the representative Bloomsbury series “Literatures as World Literature” edited by the comparatist and translator Thomas O. Beebee of Pennsylvania State University. Long-awaited and welcomed, the book synthesizes a variety of perspectives of eminent writers, translators and scholars of Bulgarian literature of the 20th and 21st century for the benefit of a world readership. At the same time it offers an informed, concise and impartial overview of the history of this national literature and the Bulgarian literary heritage. The authors endeavor to identify a variety

of key relationships between national, global, local and diasporic categories while also looking closely at the aesthetic and ideological criteria present in contemporary interpretations of the Bulgarian literary tradition in the international literary context. The editors’ location outside of Bulgaria enables auto-reflexive perspectives at Bulgarian literature from a spatial and temporal distance. Mihaela P. Harper teaches at Bilkent University in Turkey, while Dimitar Kambourov is at Trinity College Dublin. For the European reader, it is imperative that a scholarly analysis of the Bulgarian literary tradition opens