

ABSTRACTS

Imre József Balázs – Júlia Vallasek
■ ***A Dictionary of the Central European Novel***

Keywords: *Central Europe, comparative literature, dictionary, novel, Third Europe Foundation*

“The Dictionary of the 20th Century Central European Novel” (Dicționarul romanului central-european din secolul XX) is a forthcoming reference book edited by Adriana Babeți, the result of a collective effort of scholars affiliated with the Third Europe Foundation, Timișoara, a project carried out in more than 20 years. The book includes scholarly articles about 250 novels, written by 197 authors. As coauthors of the Dictionary, with an expertise on Hungarian and comparative literary studies, we discuss the theoretical background of the Dictionary, presenting the contexts of its creation. Through some examples we present how the volume conceives and defines the idea of Central Europe, and how it circumscribes the specific values and themes of the region.

Iván Balog
■ ***“Central Europeanisation”***

Keywords: *imagined communities, illiberal populism, political hysterias, legitimacy crisis, traumas, world-systems theory*

In my study, I am not investigating how far Central Europe extends, but who, when, why, and how thematize and construct Central Europe as an imagined community. Where do they want Central Europe to be (and not where it is), why, with what political intentions is the issue of Central Europeanism being raised, and who is “Central Europeanising” today? Why is a centre of power defining itself as Central European beginning to emerge among the V4 countries, and why is it orienting itself in an

illiberal direction, distancing itself from the Western countries? Following István Bibó, I discuss this phenomenon as political hysteria. Bibó analysed political hysterias from the perspective of what he called false positions or false constructions of legitimacy, as well as from historical traumas. In this spirit, I first examine the legitimacy deficit that emerged in our region after the regime changes of 1989, drawing on world-systems theory. I then explore the crisis situations and traumatising factors that existed in the region’s historical past, which have added to the current crisis phenomena.

Ágnes Bernek
■ ***Central and Eastern Europe – A New Gateway Zone to the Emerging Eurasian Continent?***

Keywords: *Eurasia, gateway region, gateway zone, North-South Baltic-Adriatic axis, Southeast-East European axis*

This paper seeks to answer how the geopolitical situation of the Central and Eastern European region can be repositioned within a changing political and economic environment of the 21st century with a particular focus on the emerging Eurasian supercontinent. From 2013, with the announcement and launch of the Chinese “One Belt One Road” infrastructure and economic development program, the Eurasia concept was granted a new and exclusively economic interpretation. The role of a gateway zone is to establish connections between the spheres of the great powers. The territorial units of gateway zones are gateway cities and the gateway regions forming their hinterlands. In the Central and Eastern European region, there are four gateway regions along the north-south Baltic-Adriatic axis (the Baltic, the North Adriatic, the Central Euro-

pean and the Eurasian gateway regions) and two further gateway regions are along the southeast-east European axis (the Mediterranean and the Black Sea gateway region). A priority of the near future is to build links between the two main axes and among the six gateway regions.

Beáta Farkas

■ ***Capitalist Transformation and Changing Geopolitical Context: Three Decades of Central and Eastern Europe***

Keywords: *European integration, Central and Eastern European growth model, geopolitics, human rights*

The content of the term “Central Europe” usually means the idea of “in-betweenness”, the region between East and West. Nowadays the 11 Central and Eastern European countries which belong to the European Union represent this idea. The study summarizes the essential features of capitalist economic transformation that resulted in substantial convergence to the EU average in GDP. Currently the region faces not only new economic difficulties but the consequences of a changing and unstable world order. The EU is in a difficult position due to the tensions between China and the USA. The author argues that the influence of the EU depends on not only economic and political issues but the insistence on the universal norms of human rights attacked by non-democratic regimes. Social scientists from Central and Eastern Europe could play a proactive role in intercultural dialogues to reformulate the content of human rights which may be the guidance on managing global challenges.

László Fazakas

■ ***Relationships between Urban Society and Public Sanitation Infrastructure in the 19th Century***

Keywords: *urban society, public sanitation infrastructure, public health problems, 19th century, Europe*

The social and economic changes that took place in the 19th century led to serious public health problems. The solution to the problems was the construction of a modern water supply and sewerage network. In Europe, however, the construction of these utilities has not been uniform. Implementation has been strongly influenced by political elites, economic actors, social transformations, and the pace of urban development. In this paper, I will present the relationships between water supply, sewerage, and urban society.

Ferenc Hörcher

■ ***The Pride and Prejudice of Central Europe: Reflections from the Perspective of Intellectual and Literary History***

Keywords: *Central Europe, regime change, Stalin, Hitler, István Bibó, Jenő Szűcs, Milan Kundera, Miklós Mészöly*

This essay is to show that both in the Hungarian public debate during the years of the regime change and in the European debates in the decade leading to the fall of the Iron Curtain, the concept of Central Europe, as the other of the West, that simply cannot be set aside, played an important role. It argues that while no analysis of the tragedies of 20th century can excuse the mistaken decisions of the leaders of the political communities of Central Europe, the fact that Europe had to collaborate with Stalin to defend the continent against Hitler's Germany played a key role in their tragic fate. The essay starts with an overview of the idea of a historical middle region in Europe between the West and the East, in the works of the Hungarian thinker István Bibó and the historian Jenő Szűcs. This is followed by a reconstruction of the

Western debate about Central Europe after the publication of Kundera. Next comes a normative account of the relationship of Western and Central Europe. Finally, the work of Miklós Mészöly, a Hungarian writer of the mid-20th century will be referred to, as an original contributor to the debate, who made sense of the term Central Europe both in his prose work, and in his essay writing.

András Máté-Tóth

■ ***Religion in Central Europe – from the Perspective of the Wounded Collective Identity***

Keywords: *Central and Eastern Europe, Mitteleuropa, wounded collective identity, religion*

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the eastward enlargement of the European Union, Central and Eastern Europe has become a focus of social science interest. More recent publications go back to the myth of “Mitteleuropa”, which acquired a specific and provocative meaning in the discourse of prominent thinkers in the region in the 1980s. However, the analysis of recent publications also shows that the interpretation of contemporary processes in the region is based on social theoretical paradigms that are less able to take account of the region’s specific historical and cultural experiences. At the heart of these experiences is a woundedness, a traumatic memory. It is due to the collective tragedies of the 20th century and the geopolitical location of the region, its betweenness. Building

on this fundamental regional marker, my study presents an interpretative framework of wounded collective identity and applies it to the analysis of the religious dimensions of the region.

Andrea Tompa

■ ***Empty Space – Jenő Janovics’s Supposed Diary***

Keywords: *Jenő Janovics, Hungarian Theatre, Cluj/Kolozsvár, diary*

In the archives of Jenő Janovics, the legendary theatre director of the Cluj Hungarian (National) Theatre, there is a part of a diary of the author. The whole diary was never found, although this manuscript hints to the existence of such a writing. These pages describe the day-by-day events of the most turbulent times of the theatre: the period from December 1918 to September 1919, when the Hungarian National Theatre had to be handed to the Romanian authorities due to the changes of the borders of the country, i.e., the Paris Peace Treaty. But Janovics presumably takes out these pages in 1940 when again borders change due to the Second Vienna Award – he tries to prove his own faithfulness to the “Hungarian cause”. Janovics is threatened again – he is a Hungarian Jew, and he tries to escape. In my paper I have a close look at the diary, its language and history, stating that such important and “dangerous” writings as this – being a threat first of all for their writer – are condemned to be stolen, destroyed or getting lost.

SZÁMUNK SZERZŐI

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„A köztes régiók számára nagyobb gyakorlati – vagyis cselekvést megalapozó és irányító – jelentősége van a létező vagy utólag kreált történelmi folyamatossághoz való ragaszkodásnak, mint a pragmatikus kihívásokra adott pragmatikus válaszoknak. Ebből fakad a változásokkal, változtatásokkal szembeni alapvető averzió, hiszen minden változás a kívülről jövő változtatási kényszerek tapasztalására emlékeztet, így csak fenyegetésnek fogható fel. A régió társadalmi reflexei nem lehetnek mások, mint főbiások. Nem a változtatási kényszerek tartalma és iránya, hanem maga a változtatás képe, esélye provokálja a veszélyérzetet.”

(Máté-Tóth András)

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