

## ABSTRACTS

**Balázs Antal**

■ ***How They Dismantle It: The Critique of Transylvaniam in Absurdist Prose***

Keywords: *absurd, fiction, ideology, literary canon, Transylvaniam*

In this article, I attempt to demonstrate the dialogue between absurdist prose – the most striking post-World War II wave of the Transylvanian regional canon – and the discourse of Transylvaniam. In the case of prose writers, the theory of generational belonging proves far less tenable than with poets: while the poets of the Forrás book series can to some extent be grouped in terms of a generational cohesion in their spirit, the prose writers are grouped by their age. My analysis shows, however, that it is possible to speak of a prose generation parallel to the so-called second Forrás generation of poets – a group that, while the poets advocated a kind of neo-Transylvaniam under the principle of “serving the people,” emphasized precisely the loss of those values once enshrined by classical Transylvaniam. Although my primary concern refers to the ideological dimensions of the writings of the “absurdist generation,” the question of form remains unavoidable: in order to articulate social issues unspeakable under conditions of censorship, these authors stretched the possibilities of prose beyond the confines of realism, arriving at the borderlands of the so-called Hungarian “prose turn” of the 1980s – though with different aims and conceptions.

**Imre József Balázs**

■ ***The Transylvanian Dimensions of Gusztáv Láng’s Work***

Keywords: *essay, hybridity, identity, literary history, Transylvaniam*

The article explores the Transylvanian dimensions of Gusztáv Láng’s literary, critical, and teaching career. Closely connected to the journal *Korunk* and to his co-author Lajos Kántor, Láng’s oeuvre

reflects a lifelong engagement with the intellectual and cultural identity of Transylvanian Hungarian literature. His early works, such as *Boríték nélkül (No Envelope)*, already emphasize the moral and spiritual dynamics of “provinciality” as an inner condition, while later studies – especially on Transylvaniam – redefine the relationship between local tradition and cultural hybridity. Through analyses of authors like Jenő Dsida, Láng articulates a nuanced view of regional identity grounded in agency, dialogue, and ethical reflection. His essays and teaching methods combined critical depth with conversational openness, shaping generations of readers and students. The article concludes that Láng’s intellectual legacy continues to influence both Transylvanian and broader Hungarian literary thought in a transnational context.

**Nándor Bárdi**

■ ***Political Transylvaniamism***

Keywords: *ideology, minority, politics, regionalism, Transylvaniam*

In a dialogue with Imre József Balázs, historian Nándor Bárdi analyzes the evolution of Transylvaniam from a political-historical perspective. He traces its transformation from an early-20th-century ideology of regional autonomy into a complex minority identity discourse within Romanian–Hungarian relations. Before 1989, research on Transylvaniam was largely literary and centered on its spiritual aspects, later shifting toward institutional and political history. Bárdi distinguishes between the Transylvaniamist vision as an intellectual construct and the practical strategies of the interwar Hungarian minority elite, highlighting their pursuit of social organization and cultural preservation. He also explores the role of figures such as Károly Kós and Miklós Bánffy, the community service ethos, and post-1945 reinterpretations of the regional identity. The discussion extends to post-1990 attempts – like the

Provincia group's regionalism – to revive the concept in the eve of European integration, concluding that Transylvaniam's enduring significance lies in its tension between political accommodation and cultural autonomy.

**Lilla Bocskor-Salló**

■ ***Romanian Literary and Cultural Influences in the Poetry of András Ferenc Kovács***

Keywords: *communist Romania, literary debate, minority literature, translation, world literature*

After 1918, the role of literary translation as a cultural mediator increased in Romanian/Transylvanian Hungarian literature. Romanian book publishing was nationalized in 1948, and translations were constrained by communist ideology; however, translations also provided an opportunity for an orientation towards world literature. The article presents the theoretical positions and debates of Hungarian translators from Romania in the period. In this context, I examine the relationship of András Ferenc Kovács's poetics to Romanian poetry, highlighting his connection with a romantic and a modern poet: these two poets, Mihai Eminescu and Marin Sorescu are also organically linked to the canon of world literature.

**László Boka**

■ ***Transylvanisms: the Vitality of a Multifaceted Concept***

Keywords: *identity building, interwar period, regionalism, transnationalism, Transylvaniam*

The article examines the diversity and plurality of Transylvaniam, its forms and qualities as manifested in network-like expressions that have taken different forms in different eras, covering varying areas and addressing partly different target audiences, tracing an arc from its historical manifestations in the distant past to the present day. The ideology and phenomenon of Transylvaniam underwent many changes and reinterpre-

tations during the 20th century, but certain elements of it were often reactivated during different historical periods. The author draws attention to numerous aspects of the interwar period, deriving from them the differences between literary and political aspects, while pointing out that certain elements (its regionalist program, literary forms, basis for collective identity building, or even its progressive, transnational elements) continue to have an impact in the present. The author therefore sees the vitality and potential of Transylvaniam in its fluidity and adaptable forms.

**Gusztáv Tamás Filep**

■ ***The Beginning of the End, the End of the Beginning?***

Keywords: *conflict, debate, rural literature, Transylvaniam, urban literature*

In an earlier text published in the collection *Transylvaniam: Ideas, Eras, Variations* in 2023, the author discussed “urban Transylvaniam”, noting that Hungarian public opinion and a significant portion of the professional community consider these two concepts to be incompatible, mainly due to the ideological overload of the term “urban literature” in Hungarian literary history. His pessimism has since been confirmed by the reception of the volume. In addition to responding to some of the doubts raised in certain review articles, this article seeks to draw attention to the fact that political conflicts originating (mainly) in Hungary, but appearing throughout the Hungarian-speaking territories can be traced back to the historical conflict of the “rural and urban” that arose in the metropolis, Budapest, and which influenced the interpretation and evaluation of literary phenomena.

**Zsolt Karácsonyi**

■ ***The Alternative Stages of Transylvaniam***

Keywords: *alternative stage, experimental art, politics, theatre, Transylvaniam*  
The author examines the emergence

and significance of alternative minority theatrical spaces in Transylvania, the Partium, and the Banat from the 1960s to the 1980s. These amateur, student, and semi-professional theatres – such as the Cluj Studio Stage, the Temesvár Thália Studio, and the Arad Periszkop Theatre – played a crucial role in popularizing contemporary Hungarian drama and poetry under restrictive political conditions in Romania. Drawing on the insights of critics like Lajos Kántor and János Szekernyés, the paper shows how these “peripheral” troupes became laboratories of experimentation, creativity, and cultural resistance. Their repertoire combined classical reinterpretations, modernist and absurdist plays and literary adaptations, creating a dynamic public sphere for Hungarian-language performance. Karácsonyi argues that these initiatives sustained minority cultural identity and artistic innovation, while also embodying the dignity of experimentation – transforming theatre into a form of collective expression and self-preservation during Romania’s late socialist era.

**Gusztáv Láng**

■ ***Introductory Remarks: Transylvaniam as a Worldview of Poets and Writers***

Keywords: *analysis, cultural experience, literature, Transylvaniam, worldview*

The article is the introduction of a posthumous book by literary historian Gusztáv Láng, where he outlines the scope of his volume about Transylvaniam. The author’s book aims to make the literary and poetic formation of Transylvaniam as an artistic worldview analytically accessible. Since a comprehensive account of Transylvaniam Hungarian literature is yet to be written, there are conceptual inconsistencies regarding the subject. To address this, the author proposes examining Transylvaniam through objectively analyzable literary features – its artistic transformation within creative works. Manifestos, critical

essays, and declarations about the “Transylvaniam idea” serve only as starting points, revealing authors’ intentions but not how these notions take shape as thematic, structural, or stylistic elements in literary texts. The study treats the Transylvaniam worldview not as a subjective construct or ideological statement, but as a literary response to the collective expectations and shared cultural experience of the Hungarian readership in Transylvaniam.

**Ildikó Lőrincz**

■ ***Áron Bak: The Transylvaniam Fate of a Theologian and Visual Artist***

Keywords: *artistic career, historical context, ideology, Transylvaniam, visual art*

The search for a Transylvaniam artistic identity represents a complex and multi-layered problem extending across several historical periods. In this regard, the concept of “Transylvaniamness” has repeatedly surfaced in the study of Hungarian artistic careers within Romania. The evolving attitudes toward the acceptance or rejection of minority status reflect diverse life paths and the often turbulent processes of identity-seeking over the past century. The more than four decades of dictatorship after 1948 brought a series of personal and collective grievances for visual artists, sometimes even resulting in fatal blows. For many, the idea of “Transylvaniamness” served as an ideological point of reference – a means to transform a fate assumed under constraint into a spiritual vocation and a process of value creation. Such a point of reference can be discerned in the works of those artists who, after 1950, were no longer free to choose a career path aligned with their talents. Excluded from secondary and higher-level art education, they sought alternative ways to engage with the inner resources essential to artistic sensibility. Descendants of clerical families or families of noble descent were often barred from attending art schools or academies and, as a result, many chose

pastoral vocation instead. Within the limits of these circumstances, they continued to seek opportunities for creative expression and artistic fulfilment. In the present case, I aim to outline the life and career of Áron Bak (1945–2012), with the specific intention of focusing on the visual arts dimension of his oeuvre. I seek to situate this uniquely evolving body of artistic work within the broader framework of Transylvanian artistic identity quests. The visual art practice that emerged during the final period of Áron Bak's life has been unjustly overlooked in both scholarly and art historical accounts – primarily because he created his oeuvre in a small village, far from cultural centres, and even when he exhibited, his work remained outside the reach of the larger professional circles that shape the canon. I consider his art as a self-determined and autonomous form of value creation within the Transylvanian context.

■ ***Pearls and Sand, Dreams and Reason: Roundtable Discussion at the Hungarian Literary Studies Department of the Babeş-Bolyai University***

Keywords: *dissidence, education, ideology, literary history, Transylvaniam*

The discussion dedicated to the memory of literary historian and university professor Éva Cs. Gyimesi focuses on two of her major works, *Álom és értelem* (Dream and Reason) and *Gyöngy és homok* (Pearl and Sand), which are examined from multiple perspectives. Participants include faculty members from the Hungarian Literary Studies Department of the Babeş-Bolyai University – István Berszán, Zalán Seresztély, Csilla Gábor, Gyöngyi Orbán, Enikő Molnár Bodrogi, Anna Farmati, Imre József Balázs, Anna Ábrahám, and Márta Zabán – whose contributions aim to situate Gyimesi's thought within broader cultural and theoretical contexts. A key question that connects both volumes in discussion: the problematics of Transylvaniam, explored as a critical framework for understand-

ing identity, regional consciousness, and intellectual tradition in Transylvanian Hungarian literature. The roundtable thus continues the dialogue on Gyimesi's legacy as a thinker bridging regional identity and universal human inquiry.

**Andrea Tompa**

■ ***“To Die Is Permitted”: The Role of Hamlet as a Model for Jenő Janovics in 1919***

Keywords: *ensorship, cultural survival, Hamlet, politics, resistance*

The article explores the role of Hamlet as a political and cultural model for Jenő Janovics, director of the Kolozsvár [Cluj] National Theatre, in the turbulent year of 1919. Drawing on Janovics's diary, the author examines how the Shakespearean drama provided interpretive and ethical frameworks in a moment of regime change, censorship, and institutional dispossession. The analysis highlights parallels between Hamlet's imposed role and Janovics's forced position as Hungarian theatre director under Romanian administration. Using Erving Goffman's concepts of role and performance, the paper investigates how Janovics enacted resistance and identity through his artistic and institutional choices. The diary itself is read as a monologic form of testimony, shaped by censorship and deferred publication. The article situates Hamlet not only as a universal political drama but also, through János Arany's canonical translation, as a cornerstone of Hungarian national culture. Thus, Janovics's interpretation of Hamlet's role illustrates how theatre becomes a medium of political agency, cultural survival, and moral responsibility in times of historical dislocation.

**Ferenc Vincze**

■ ***Regional Representations in Contemporary German-language Literature: Transcultural/Transylvaniam Readings***

Keywords: *Banat, migration, rural literature, transculturalism, Transylvaniam*

While in the early 1990s Herta Müller's works focused primarily on representations of Banat and Timișoara before the 1989 regime change, later narratives – emerging in the 2000s – significantly expanded this portrayal within German-language literature. In Cătălin Dorian Florescu's texts, Timișoara remains the focal point, but in the novels of Richard Wagner, William Totok, Ernest Wichner, and others such as Johann Lippet and Iris Wolff, Banat appears as a more nuanced region, contextualized through its surrounding rural landscape. These works

construct a complex image of Banat and Timișoara, embedded in migration experiences and framed within a multilingual, multicultural past. According to the article, although this pluralistic world largely belongs to history, it still shapes the interpretation of the present. As inherently transcultural narratives, these texts can be read as contemporary manifestations of Transylvaniam: they record intercultural coexistence, confront its decline in modern times, and explore the cultural memory of a once-diverse Central European space.

