

## Editor's Notes

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Professor István Pálffy (1929-2001) on the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birthday, editor emeritus of *HJEAS* for nearly a quarter of a century (1976-1990, then named *Hungarian Studies in English*). Legendary teacher, eminent scholar of English theatre and drama, widely known theatre critic, as well as academic administrator, Professor Pálffy is much respected by his former students, colleagues, and the academic community for being a man of high intelligence, erudition, humanity, and versatility. His many publications include university textbooks (*20<sup>th</sup> Century English Drama, Britain Today* [both 1971], *English Literature from 1485 to 1660* [1982, co-authored by Zoltán Szilassy]), monographs in Hungarian (*Az új angol dráma - mint a valóság drámája* [1982; *New English Drama as the Drama of Reality*], *G.B. Shaw Magyarországon* [1986; *G. B. Shaw in Hungary*]), nearly 30 scholarly articles, and a large number of reviews and articles both in English and Hungarian.

Holding several academic and administrative positions during a period of politically difficult times under the communist regime in Hungary, Dr. Pálffy always managed to create a healthy environment for the professional growth of his colleagues thanks to his unusual ability in cultural diplomacy. As Chair of the Department of English (1976-1989, 1991-1992) he brought “academic flexibility and openness to the life of the department” (Szaffkó and Béneyi 2); to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Department of English in 1978, Dr. Pálffy organized the first ever international seminar on British and American Studies in Debrecen, whereby he succeeded in (re-)establishing the fame and the exceptionally high professional standards of the Department. Whether serving as the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Humanities (1978-1983, 1984-1986), as the Director of the Institute of English and American Studies (1983-1987), or Vice-Rector of the University responsible for international relations (1987-1990), Professor Pálffy was convinced, as Zsolt Virágos explains, that leading back the university into the institution of “universitas” as conceived in Europe was not merely desirable but also possible through the consolidation of international connections (266).

Generations of English major students and colleagues at the University of Debrecen have benefited from Dr. Pálffy's dedication in introducing a great variety of courses within the fields of language teaching, English literature, drama studies, as well as British Studies. As his former student and colleague, I am grateful to Professor Pálffy for his engaging lectures on English drama, especially on Shakespeare, Milton, and the Angry

Young Men, which greatly inspired me to become a student of drama studies. This issue of *HJEAS* begins with a group of four essays each focusing on the expansion of usual generic borders in various works of fiction and drama. In the opening study “A Train to Castle Von Aux: Patrick deWitt’s Fiction and the Transnational Paradigm” Krzysztof Majer convincingly argues that the works of Canadian novelist Patrick deWitt (1975-) deserve scholarly attention since he skillfully integrates a vast array of popular cultural as well as traditional literary elements, whereby he builds a transnational aesthetic and rejuvenates some “tired” genres. Well-versed in the Canadian literary landscape as well as the European novelistic tradition of Robert Walser, Franz Kafka, and Thomas Bernhard, Majer situates deWitt’s *Undermajordomo Minor* (2015) at the crossroads of these influences and provides a nuanced analysis of the novel.

Judit Friedrich’s “Levels of Discomfort: Paul Beatty’s *The Sellout* as the First American Novel to Win the Man Booker Prize” seeks to find answers to the question why an American writer’s novel was awarded the British Booker Prize in 2016. In her lucid essay Friedrich suggests several valid reasons while also underlining the effective combination of various elements of standup comedy, satire, and magic realism in the novel, thus indicating that novelty in the generic composition might have also contributed to his winning the award.

Shifting the focus from classic genres to the truly new medium, the graphic novel Ildikó Limpár’s “Theater within the Graphic Novel about Theater: Neil Gaiman’s Concept of the Artist in his *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*” explores the problem of doubling in Gaiman’s version of the Shakespearean play. The presentation of the renaissance comedy within the artistic space of the graphic novel raises a number of intriguing questions, including the creation of mythical doubles, the interchangeability of reality/illusion/fantasy and art, and the concept of artist and art, among others. Limpár discusses all these aspects with clarity and sophistication.

The final essay in the first section, Katarina Havranová’s “The Memory of the Land in Cherríe Moraga’s *Heroes and Saints*” departs from former restrictive interpretations of the Chicana dramatist’s play and approaches it from a new perspective that builds on the land’s transformative power on the body.

The second part “Competing Traditions: The Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Irish Literatures between Realism and Experimentation,” guest-edited by Katarzyna Ojrzyńska and Wit Pietrzak, contains six essays with a focus on the constant battle between traditional and innovative strategies, structural elements, and themes in Irish literature over the past hundred years that has generated an unprecedentedly rich literary output. In their

introduction to this thematic unit the guest editors provide a highly informative and comprehensive survey of the competing trends in Irish fiction, drama, and poetry from the beginning of the twentieth century up to the present day as well as brief summaries of the six perceptive analyses.

Nicholas Grene's "Re-running the Rising: Centenary Stagings", opening the Irish thematic bloc, explores creative intersections between tradition and experimentation in the genre of drama. The essay surveys a range of theatrical performances related to the Easter Rising produced in the centenary year of 2016. In "Irish Native Autobiography: Tomas O'Crohan's *The Islandman*" Joanna Jarzab-Napierala investigates O'Crohan's work and claims that it is a "cosmopolitan text" integrating foreign literary influences. Experimental approaches in various representations of the Irish West are discussed in Joanna Kruczkowska's "Memorials of the Irish West: John McHugh, Paul Durcan, and Henry Clifton." Touching upon the issue of the Irish West's disappearing culture, she offers a thorough comparative analysis of McHugh's sculpture *1950s Boat* (2009), Durcan's poem "1950s Boat (after John McHugh)" (2009), inspired by the sculpture, and Clifton's "The Year of the Yellow Meal" (2012). Sorcha deBrún examines the integration of diverse sources and narrative strategies in contemporary Irish language fiction writer Daithí Ó Muirí's selected short stories in the essay "Experiments with Realism in Irish Language Short Stories by Daithí Ó Muirí." In his insightful analysis of Eimear McBride's *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* (2013) Aran Ward Sell suggests that the novel effectively combines the narrative traditions of the historical novel and innovatively adapts the Joycean stream-of-consciousness technique. The analysis of the representation of Dublin's cityscape through the complex use of various narrative devices and methods is in the focus of Barbara Szot's "Doubling Dublin: Mimetic and Anti-Mimetic Use of Urban Space in Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*."

The review section containing ten reviews covers a wide variety of topics including contemporary Irish drama, early English drama, American radicalism, the enduring effects of slavery in present-day America, posthumanism in fantastic literature, and the art of love poetry.

The broad range of topics within diverse disciplinary fields in this issue of *HJEAS* aptly illustrates that Professor Pálffy's efforts to maintain the continuity of the journal (*HSE*) of the Department of English for more than twenty years as well as his attempts at developing connections internationally in English and American Studies have come to fruition by the twenty-first century. His openness to introducing new disciplines like Canadian and Irish Studies into the curriculum and encouraging his younger colleagues to offer courses in these fields generated an extended network of international

contacts that has allowed for including contributions by many foreign colleagues.

As editor of this issue I wish to thank the guest editors Katarzyna Ojrzyńska and Wit Pietrzak, who did a tremendous job recruiting, soliciting, and editing the thematic section on Irish literature. I am also indebted to all the blind reviewers for their invaluable professional help, and the members of the editorial board—notably review editor Gabriella Moise, copy editor Zsófia Orosz-Réti, language editor Jared Griffin, and technical editor Balázs Venkovits—who have been instrumental in bringing out this issue. Special thanks are due to editor-in-chief Donald E. Morse for his unfailing professional advice and support.

Lenke Németh  
University of Debrecen

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