

Roman Mnich

**THE EPOCHS OF CRISES IN EUROPEAN CULTURE
AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROJECTS TO OVERCOME THEM**

Abstract

The article considers the issue of crisis in the history of European culture and analyses two main eschatological concepts of history: mythological/cyclical and Christian/apocalyptic. In the context of these concepts, three philosophical projects for overcoming the crisis are discussed: 1) overcoming the “decline” of Europe (Oswald Spengler), 2) the concept of historical and cultural epochs, and 3) the religious concept of *unum necessarium*.

Keywords: European culture, crisis, eschatology, *unum necessarium*, Marxism, modernism, Silver Age

Alexander Smirnov

**PUSHKIN'S TRAGEDY A FEAST IN TIME OF PLAGUE
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE „PLAQUE TEXT“
(FROM BOCCACCIO TO CAMUS)**

Abstract

The article focuses on the evolution of „feast during the plague“ motif within the „plague text“ from Boccaccio, Defoe, and Wilson to Pushkin's tragedy and Camus' novel. The article traces how the plot of the „feast“, which initially does not perform a significant semantic function, gradually transforms, crystallizes and, finally, acquires features that allow us to speak about the similarity of the anthropological ideas of the Russian writer of the 19th century and the French philosopher-literary of the 20th century. The writers reproduce the plague as a situation of absurdity, that is, the existence of a person under the action of a transpersonal irrational (and therefore excluding the possibility of its change by human efforts) and threatening force that generates a stoic response from the characters. The author proves that rebellion against the belittling of the personal principle in a person and, ultimately, the assertion of human dignity is the purpose of the protest of Pushkin's and Camus's characters. The author concludes that for Camus and Pushkin it is essential that in his/her rebellion a person goes beyond the limits of his individual interests.

Keywords: „plague text“, „feast during the plague“, existential anthropology, personality, Pushkin, Camus.

Anna Bulgakova

**MEDIA REFLECTION ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
AS A DISASTER: A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS**

Abstract

The article presents a study of broadcast narratives about the COVID-19 pandemic, which aims to identify the main narratives, characteristic of the general metanarrative of the catastrophe, on the one hand, and presenting some specific features, on the other. The research is carried out within the framework of a metanarrative approach to the study of the pandemic, which allows bringing together a variety of phenomena. In the course of the study the connection between the pandemic narratives unfolding in the media space with those presented in the novel *The Plague* by Albert Camus was

established, which testifies to the intensification of interaction between artistic and media discourses during this period. Understanding the pandemic and its representation in media texts suggests the co-existence of local interconnected narratives that make up the structure (a core and a periphery) of the pandemic metanarrative and act as a mechanism for translating norms and values, key concepts and symbols, based on which structural changes in the worldview and all spheres of human life can be observed. The pandemic picture of the world is characterized by heterogeneity, a multiplicity of complex, often contradictory narratives, which can be grouped according to their temporal characteristics. COVID-19 and the pandemic caused by it becomes an important factor determining the selection of events, episodes, and situations that constitute the agenda. As a result, fragmentary micro-histories with different interpretations, based on different pictures of the world and reflecting the view of what is happening from a certain perspective, are combined, forming a coherent image of the event. Thus, the mega-history of COVID-19, which can be called the metanarrative of the pandemic, is formed.

Keywords: narrative, media text, catastrophe, COVID-19, pandemic

Josef Dohnal

THREE LEVELS OF GRIEF IN VIKENTY VERESAEV'S NOVELLA NO WAY

Abstract

The article focuses on the function of the cholera epidemic theme in the novella *No Way* by V.V. Veresaev. Author's analysis of the text shows that the cholera epidemic theme serves as a catalyst that allows Veresaev to show the inadequacy of the Narodniki ideas, although he mostly shared their views. As shown in the novella, the Narodniki highly idealized the people; in fact, they were not enough educated. Characters representing the people behave irrationally in the epidemic, distrusting the doctor who comes to their aid. Being under the influence of superstition and bias towards intellectuals, they finally beat the protagonist who dies feeling the insurmountable barrier of distrust between him and the people. His unsuccessful attempt to help his "younger brother" shows the inadequacy of the Narodniki ideas about the active vital energy of the people's masses and emphasizes the long-term dual-linearity of the social stratification of Russian society of the time.

Keywords: V. V. Veresaev, *No Way*, way of life, the Narodniki, the inadequacy of Narodniki's ideas, epidemic

Irina Banakh

CHERNOBYL TRAUMA IN THE LITERARY, CINEMATOGRAPHIC, AND MEDIA DISCOURSES OF THE LATE 20th - EARLY 21th CENTURY

Abstract

The article deals with basic narratives about the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant that took place in 1986. The article identifies four groups of narratives: 1) official (heroic) about a successfully overcome trauma, 2) post-apocalyptic, in which the Chernobyl accident appears as a scenery of a destroyed civilization, 3) analytical, which is represented by documentary texts analyzing causes and consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and reconstructing the tragic events minute by minute, 4) unofficial (tragic), representing the Chernobyl disaster as a civilizational tragedy and collective trauma, not fully understood and not worked out by society. The tragic narrative is considered in detail on the

example of Svetlana Alexievich's fiction-documentary story "Chernobyl Prayer: Chronicle of the Future" (1997).

Keywords: Chernobyl accident, narrative, trauma studies, language of trauma, catastrophe, Svetlana Alexievich

Tatiana Avtukhovich

THE COLLAPSE OF THE USSR IN CONTEMPORARY WRITERS' PERCEPTION AND EVALUATION

Abstract

The article discusses the range of perception and evaluation of the collapse of the USSR, also known as „the largest geopolitical catastrophe of the century” (V. Putin), in the works of Russian writers of the late XX–XXI centuries. The author sets the directions of this discussion as follows: the causes of the collapse of the country and the failure of *perestroika*; the choice of the vector for further development of the country between East and West, religious / Orthodox and secular / universal values; the nature of political processes in the post-*perestroika* period (the resumption of imperial ambitions); the essence of the Russian national character and the formation of mass society; the lack of spirituality of everyday existence as a cause of national frustration and a factor of potential revanchism; options for the future of Russia (the revival of the country on the basis of national values, its disintegration into separate states and/or self-destruction as a result of the zombification of the population). The author concludes that contemporary Russian literature functions as a kind of sociology, fixing the transformation of public attitudes, showing the variability of the development of the historical process after the civilizational catastrophe, and, at the same time, developing various artistic forms of understanding history.

Keywords: the collapse of the USSR, geopolitical catastrophe, contemporary Russian literature, discussion about history, present and future of the country

Tünde Szabó

THE TOPIC OF WAR RAPE IN THE 20th CENTURY HUNGARIAN FICTION AND FILM (S. MÁRAI, A. POLCZ, M. MÉSZÁROS)

Abstract

Mass rape of women during war-time is a delicate and insufficiently investigated topic which poses several difficulties for the researchers. This also applies to the thousands of acts of rape committed by Soviet troops in Hungary during World War II. Victims, perpetrators, and official agencies do not, for various reasons, often speak about the events. Official documentation is incomplete and partially inaccessible, while the subject is still being politicized. Along with historical research, the works of art play an important role in processing this phenomenon. The present study examines three 20th-century works of art that deal with the subject in different ways and contexts: Sándor Márai's novella *Liberation*, Alaine Polcz's autobiographical novel *Woman on the Front* and Márta Mészáros' film *Aurora Borealis*. Following certain shared aspects of artistic representation, the study seeks to understand to what extent the author's position influences the portrayal of rape by Soviet soldiers and what symbolic meanings this event receives. All three works play an extremely important role in preserving historical memory, but at

the same time, the unresolved proportion of documentary features and fictionality in the works seems problematic from an artistic point of view.

Keywords: war rape, 20th century Hungarian literature, 20th century Hungarian film, S. Márai, A. Polcz, M. Mészáros

Ivo Pospíšil

KAREL ČAPEK AS AN ANALYST OF THREATS AND DISASTERS

Abstract

The Czech writer Karel Čapek (1890-1938) is well-known in the whole world, though his popularity cannot be compared with that of the first third of the 20th century, when on the world stages in England and the U.S.A. there were the dramas by brothers Čapek which did not disappear from the stages in New York and London. Josef Čapek invented the famous word „robot“ used in the drama R.U.R.. Karel's works contain specific philosophical layers and crucial problems. In relation to the subject of world disasters, pandemics, and human values it becomes obvious that Karel Čapek's work is permeated by the theme of open or hidden disasters, threats and extreme situations. This concerns nearly all his bigger or smaller artefacts, actually, literary experiments created in the framework of novel dystopias, detective stories and novellas. His novel dystopia *War with the Newts* (1936) represents the real top of the creation of the author, the analyst of fatal disasters, catastrophes, threats and unsolvable, eternal, problems, cursed questions, and extreme positions and situations. As the topical world situation shows, Čapek grasped up to incredible details the intrinsic psychic moods and precisely anticipated the crises and existential tensions leading to the self-destruction of humankind.

Keywords: Brothers Čapek, Karel Čapek, scarlet thread of threats and disasters running through his work, dystopic novel/novel of warning, humankind over an abyss, short stories, dramas, and novels by Karel Čapek, *War with the Newts*

Erzsébet Schiller

THE EMPTY CITY: EXAMPLES FROM EAST-EUROPEAN FICTION

Abstract

Empty, desolate cities are often found in East-European fiction. The author maintains that such cities are not just a backdrop for action, but play an essential role in the texts, sometimes being the main characters. Different techniques and methods are observed in describing the emptiness of the cities, with the result that the reader is confronted with questions of time, memory and the problems of depicting them. In this respect, some fragments of the works of Vasily Grossman, W. G. Sebald, Stefan Chwin, Piotr Szewc, and Sasha Filipenko are examined.

Keywords: city, historical cataclysms, Vasily Grossman, W. G. Sebald, Stefan Chwin, Piotr Szewc, Sasha Filipenko

Zsuzsanna Kalafatics

**POST-APOCALYPTIC MOTIFS IN VLADIMIR SOROKIN'S
LATEST NOVELS**

Abstract

Since antiquity, literature has been saturated with examples of both natural and human-caused catastrophes, with various depictions of the defects of nature, society, and body. The *topos* of catastrophe appears in a variety of genres even today. This article focuses on three novels by Vladimir Sorokin – *Telluria* (2013), *Manaraga* (2017) and *Doctor Garin* (2021). The analysis attempts to examine how the author draws on clichés of anti-utopias, fantasy, science fiction, apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic works when constructing a post-catastrophic world. The story of the catastrophe and its aftermath is most vividly presented in *Telluria*, while the other two novels merely add various nuances to the depiction of this post-transcendent world. Sorokin's texts are closely linked to anthropological, political, social, and cultural theories, ideas and issues of our time. In the writer's novels nothing is left untouched, everything, including spaces, states, languages, books, concepts and man himself, is in a state of rupture, disintegration, disappearance, constant transformation.

Keywords: disaster tropes, genre clichés, Telluria, Manaraga, Doctor Garin, post-apocalyptic world, transgression

Olga Grinevich

**THE TRAUMA OF EMIGRATION IN BAKHYT KENZHEEV'S POETRY
(A COLLECTION *AUTUMN IN AMERICA*)**

Abstract

The article discusses the features of trauma of emigration in the poetry of B. Kenzheev, in particular, in his collection of poems *Autumn in America*. The poems primary focus on the experience of exile as well as on attempts of structuring it following previous literary examples of Ovid, Pushkin, Boratynsky, Mandelstam, Nabokov, in whose works the “text of exile” had been shaped. The poems form a single semantic field in which centripetal and centrifugal connections are traced: on the one hand, a semantic conflict is created due to different points of view regarding the same event; on the other hand, an attempt is made to streamline chaos at the level of rhythm, plot, genre and intertextual connections. This contributes to the stereoscopic vision of the situation of exile. Such stereoscopy brings together the literary experience of previous eras into a single focus and shows the continuity of cultural memory.

Keywords: B.Kenzheev, *topos* of exile, supertext, emigration trauma, intertext