

L. P. Baka, B. Istók, G. Lőrincz

**TENDENCIES OF HUNGARIAN YOUNG
ADULT LITERATURE IN 2020***



The present study discusses Hungarian young adult literature of 2020 with a focus on its decisive works. We analyze works whose authors were nominated for or won The Author of the Young Adult Book of the Year prize: Gergely Huszti's *Mesteralvók viadala (Master-sleeper's encounter)*, Tamás Rojik's *Szárasság (Drought)*, Éva Janikovszky's *Naplóm 1938–1944 (My diary 1938–1944)*, Fanni Balássy's *Hol is kezdjem (Where do I start)* and the prize-winning Ildikó Lipták's *Csak neked akartunk jót (We just wanted good for you)*. Within the corpus of the investigated works two strong genre-based tendencies prevail: speculative fiction and the updated girl novel. These narratives, which work with diverse time techniques, highly bear the effects of visual culture and have an intermedial nature at numerous places of the text. A common experience of the works is that the knowledge and references of their narrators do not build on classical (literary), but on popular (film, gamer) culture, which they reflect upon as well. A common novel-poetic feature of the works is the self-reflective nature of the language use of their protagonists, which not only mirrors their characters, but also the peculiarities of their world.

Keywords: Hungarian young adult literature 2020, contemporary girl novel, speculative fiction, intermediality, self-reflective novel-poetics.

DOI: 10.35634/2224-9443-2023-17-4-520-530

Introduction

Our paper embarks upon a chase after Hungarian young adult literature of 2020. In order to at least partially suspend our individual biases we use The Author of the Young Adult Book of the Year prize [Hubby 2021a; 2021b] as filter. Thus we analyze Ildikó Lipták's novel titled *Csak neked akartunk jót (We just wanted good for you)* in detail, but first we touch upon those works which were honorably mentioned and therefore determined the Hungarian young adult literature of 2020.

While examining the given text group, we can notice two definitive tendencies. One of them consists of the genre-fusions of speculative fiction, which – based on the experiences of the last one or two decades – function almost as a steady pole. By means of the novel of Tamás Rojik titled *Szárasság (Drought)* and the work of Gergely Huszti titled *Mesteralvók viadala (Master-sleeper's encounter)*, 2020's specific tone is created by the problem-lens of environmental protection and the sacred supernatural. The other pole is outlined by the re-interpreted, realistic, and intermedial girl novel volumes which, however, through divergent poetics, give a voice to the schoolgirls of not only our time. Besides Lipták's novel the young adult novels of Éva Janikovszky's posthumously published *Naplóm 1938–1944 (My diary 1938–1944)* and Fanni Balássy's *Hol is kezdjem (Where do I start)* also belong here.

Although in 2020 in Hungarian young adult literature prose played the leading role, the language of the protagonists created and gave a voice to extremely divergent worlds. Let us see how!

Dream and water shortage

Gergely Huszti rammed into Hungarian young adult literature with his novel titled *Mesteralvók hajnala (Master-sleeper's dawn)* [Huszti 2019] and he rounded the story off with the *Mesteralvók viadala (Master-sleeper's encounter)*. The author goes through the bulk of world-building in the first volume, which is characterized by innovative thinking and an aspiration for the evasion of premises and the precise detailing of motivations [Próza Nostra 2021]. In the next installment this slightly gets into the background and the emphasis is directed towards carrying on with the plot.

One of the key motives of the alternate world, which operates with medieval settings, is insomnia. The inability to sleep can be connected to the master-sleepers who took over the burden of sleep from people in order for them to stay active day and night. After the death of the master-sleepers their bones became relics and they themselves became the celestial patrons of certain cities, and slowly even the necessity of sleep returned to people. What is more, gradually wakefulness and insomnia also became sins. Two of our protagonists suffer from this and they try to hide it from the increasingly profane world which more and more disregards



faith. However, a turmoil develops in the cities of the Gardella Valley when the bones of the masters start to disappear and a rumor begins to spread according to which wakeful masters walk among people who bring either redemption or retribution.

As far as genre is concerned, the duology can be defined as low fantasy [Wolfe 1982, 67] since its world and characters are approaching reality. Only the master-sleepers and the wakeful masters possess special abilities (levitation, mind-reading, telepathy, etc.). The status of the latter group can be marked somewhere between saints and superheroes, hence the novels might as well be called a sacred superhero fiction. We can view the thirteen old master-sleepers as being an analogy with the christian apostles, as long as we consider Saint Paul as being the thirteenth one.

A big merit of the duology is its unremitting and overwhelming dynamism which are ensured by the horizon-changes (cuts) oscillating between the three viewpoint characters, by the spinning dialogues with short descriptions, and by the cliffhangers positioned to the end of the chapters. The dialogues are characterized by taboo-less management of topics, and the novels are not afraid of even getting into the philosophical questions, whether those are connected to the meaning of life or the faith in the supernatural. However, they do not provide answers, or if yes, then they give many options, with which they motivate the readers to establish their own standpoint.

Both volume's most significant novel-poetic novelties are the three character horizons each using a unique language. The two poles of the alternate world are represented in multiple ways by *Admira* (a.k.a. nurse 224) and *Vulgarus Pokk*. They simultaneously ensure the female-male and young-adult positions as well as the sacred and worldly poles of the universe. *Admira* is brought up in a monastery, thus her language is characterized by baroque lengthy sentences, spectacular descriptions, metaphors and similies [Vass 2019], and personifications. On the other hand, *Vulgarus*, the dissolute and dubious cellar master speaks in a much less decorative way. From a rhetoric perspective, his speech is balancing between convivial wisdom-sharing [Uzséka 2019] and a cynical tone. *Vulgarus*'s manner of speech is also the most naturalistic. As self-reflection, this duality is indicated by the deciphering of the two names through Latin, since *Vulgarus* means audience and *Admira*(bile) means admirable [Steinmacher 2019]. In addition, the initials of the names, "V" and "A" are vertical counterpoints of each other as well.

The *Admira*–*Vulgarus* axis is dislocated by *Miló Tótság*'s radically different character horizon, who is transferred from present-day Hungary to the world of the Gardella Valley. Through him, first and foremost *Huszt* updates the fantasy traditions of the portal in a rhetorical way [Mendlesohn 2008, 1; Hegedűs 2012, 11]. *Miló* describes the other universe by operating with the technologized teenager slang of our reality, which is full of anglicisms, web-abbreviations, and nicknames, thus also functioning as a source of humor. A substantial element of his speech and his similie-creations is the pop-culture-based and intermedial reference net(work) as well as a gamer attitude. By means of the latter the text nicely suggests that looking at it from the boy's latest urban locale, the alternate middle ages are on the same level as the virtual worlds, and for him it can only be interpreted through the "lens" of the experiences given by these. In the light of the aforementioned, *Gergely Huszt*'s duology fully aligns with *Márton Mészáros*'s characterization of young adult literature, according to which it is built on pop-culture and intermedial links, and it is suitable for adaptation to film [Mészáros 2017, 298]. All this, however, is valid for *Tamás Rojik*'s novel as well.

The so-called "green topics", the relationship between man and nature have always been determining issues in children's and young adult literature [Lovász 2015, 21; Petres Csizmadia 2015, 201], whether we talk about the harmony between the two or the negative effects of the exploitative human activity. Due to the drastic environmental changes we can experience today, the environmentally conscious perspective and the ecological direction became even more pronounced in the corpus [Zólya 2020a, 2021a, 2021b]. *Tamás Rojik*'s climate fiction [Johns-Putra 2016] novel titled *Szárazság (Drought)* is an illustrative piece of this text group with its precise, disillusioning, and dystopic world-depiction.

The work is based on the fulfillment of contemporary environment-polluting tendencies whose effects are envisioned into the Hungary which, from our perspective, is thirty years in the future. The not so distant point of time as well as the known setting for the Hungarian readers are also aggravating the topic. The key moment of the novel is the water shortage coded into the title. This emerges in the desertifying alternate environment, in the great drought threatening Lake Balaton and the big rivers, and also in the consumer and hygienic rations. Our characters can only spend 15 minutes per week under the shower, the girls have their hair cut short and the threat that water will not flow anymore from the faucet is constantly floating in front of their spiritual eyes [Pagony 2020]. The "green setting" of the work therefore emerges indirectly through the lack of

the color green, healthy nature, and colorful animal kingdom, which of course might urge us to protect them all [Zólya 2021b].

The technological developmental stage of Rojik's society might be considered ambivalent. The residential environment of the higher social classes is fully automated, however the most impressive development is definitely the energy bar, which in its own artificially constructed nutritional value globally eliminated not only gastronomy, but starvation as well. The latter foresees the possibility of solving global problems, however, the chips implanted into the hands of the youth, which besides indicating the vital signs also warn the parents about their sexual activities, allows us a glimpse into the possibility of total surveillance.

According to Rojik's future-script the Hungary of seven million people, which is yearly struck by "merely" a dozen tornadoes and 40+ °C summers, did not leave the European Union, but the latter transformed into the European Environmental Union. The country, however, can be definitely regarded as closed with a political system showing the signs of authoritarianism, manipulation and having an interest in silencing [Kovács 2020]. Society is sharply bipolar, and the members of the fringe are excommunicated by the state leadership through a conscious media strategy. The wealthy inhabitants are guarded by android and human police against the "freeloaders" who became penniless because of their addiction to virtual realities. As a result of this, the two sides are basically hermetically sealed, and they have far-fetched prejudices about each another.

The fictitious medial texts at the beginning of the chapters, which come from future lexicons, newspapers, online blog entries or propaganda materials, are complex poetic tools of world building. *Szárazság (Drought)* is a light text, it reads well, and it also uses a sensitive language for its humor. Its most memorable rhetorical solution is the language use of one of the protagonists, Dani, whose introverted character gets expressed in his manner of speech as well, which is condense, intermittent, mostly incomplete or built up from short and simple sentences, thus self-reflectively referring to the drying out of his world.

The two heroes are connected by art: Dani draws and Anikó paints the comic books. It is an exciting poetic solution, the way Rojik introduces us into the process of the engineering of comic books through the medium of literature. The creations of the duo are present in the text as micro-stories on the one hand, and on the other, through the reflections of the characters, they also allow us to see how the artwork is constructed from the elements of the environment through the filters of the artist. The previously mentioned shortage emerges through the drawings of the characters as well, since Anikó's color-rich flowers, swallow or bug drawings are on the same level as the dinosaur drawings of our reality, both are mementos of extinct species. In connection to this story, we cannot really talk about an ending catharsis. The single promising sign is the planting of diffuse-porous trees which may ease the drought, however, against the shadows of reality our heroes only find a way out in art.

Girls and love, likewise and otherwise

Éva Janikovszky (1926–2003) is a renowned author across Europe. Her books titled *Kire ütött ez a gyerek? (Who Does This Kid Take After?)*, *Ha én felnőtt volnék (If I Were a Grown-Up)* have been read by generations in numerous languages. Her children's stories were written with a few words but with a deep character insight. By using the viewpoint of the child as a mask, they talk about their everyday challenges, about their relationship towards the world, family and contemporaries in a confessional way, while they "discover the world of the adults with snappy precision and humor, and with mocking stereotypical life situations and language use" [Petres Csizmadia 2015, 125]. That is to say, when the child narrator arranges the not infrequently self-contradictory advice and statements of the adults next to each other, but does not point them out, we get a didaxis-parody [Keresztesi 2011, 13]. One of the key moments of Janikovszky's works is the bridging of the adult-child viewpoint differences, which is enabled by a language that is operating with language games and resembles live speech [Komáromi 1999, 226–227].

To what extent can *Naplóm 1938–1944 (My diary 1938–1944)* [Janikovszky 2021] be considered a work of children's literature might be subjected to a debate. In reality, the author of this work is not the Janikovszky known by us, but a twelve–eighteen years old Éva Kucsés, who only became a famous writer twenty–thirty years after writing the diary. Therefore, the text was not written as a literary work, but its linguistic quality, humor, self-ironic voice and character description so much resembled the author's later solutions of style [Dési 2020, 193–194] that they warranted the posthumous publication. In light of this, the text finds itself in the specific and truly tight corpus which is called *literature written by children* [Bárdos 2013, 16] by the researchers.

Of course, as the primary genre of the volume we need to label the diary as a diary novel, nevertheless through the entries we get a description of the era, a window to a reality which has become a historical one in the meantime, thus animating the domains of the historical novel [Böszörményi 2021]. However, we can



rightly call Éva Kucses's diary a coming of age or girl novel as well. The former is validated by the volume's compelling developmental curve, both in terms of the style and the voice, which of course can be considered evident, since in the meantime the twelve years old virago author of the first entries became an adult graduate woman. The early playfully silly records about childish mischief are gradually taken over by deep romantic confessions and poignant descriptions of personally lived war experiences and family tragedies. The girl novel nature of the text is confirmed by the fact that there is always a boy/man in the focus of the entries, and their drive is always love, the dreamy walks on the promenade, the burning of the overheated, sometimes whimsical feelings as well as the smoldering and variation of these emotions.

For a while the emphasized role of the latter almost masks the fact that these love relationships unfolded in front of the background of an era of war [Polgár 2021]. The previously healthily mixed society falls into pieces with the escalation of the era of despair [Szekeres 2020]. For example Éva Kucses's family highly guards those passages of the 1939 second Jew act according to which Éva cannot be regarded as a Jew anymore – however, the grandmother and the rest of the relatives, as the 1944 Christmas entry reports, are dragged away.

Among others, while reading the diary the reader of today might get baffled by the extraordinary intelligence of the author. This shows itself in the unbelievably vast inter-art reference network with which she enriches her records. Her style is characterized by high-spirited humor, cynically critical voice, sallying self-irony, and by the continuous self-reflections concerning both the manner of speech as well as the flow of writing.

A natural characteristic of the diary is that it is fragmentary, hence getting to know the text is an adventure as well. It is the task of the receptive reader to link and tie the fragments and to supplement the hiatuses. It does not matter that the latter is merely the marker of a lifelike reality, subsequently it can be regarded as a text-organizational procedure. This is enriched by the volume's multimedial nature. Besides the core text, the book contains Éva Kucses's drawings, tables of (not only literary) favorites, the thermometers of affection towards the individual boys/men, and also, by favor of the editor, the certificates, photos, typed tender lines of poetry, and newspaper articles of the Janikovszky heritage, all of which bring Éva's world and life closer to the reader.

A connection between Janikovszky's and Fanni Balássy's novel can primarily be built along the lines of the diary form and the girl novel characteristics. The protagonist of the girl novel gradually grows up to become a woman, she occupies her (new) role in society, and the story-scheme leading up to this – i.e. the central character finds herself in a new environment, gets involved in conflicts with the community which are based on misunderstandings and lacks of knowledge, and then she resolves these pseudo-conflicts [Bárdos 2013, 184–185] – cannot be by-passed, since they are the collaterals of social organization and personal maturation. But how can these limits be exceeded?

One of the answers of *Hol is kezdjem (Where do I start)* [Balássy 2020] is that it continually subjects the roots to reflection. The experiences of the classical girl novel and the American romantic comedy function as expectations and they also induce the trains of thoughts of the narrator, to which reality becomes the off-putting counterpoint. The author achieves this at multiple places in the text with intermediality [McLuhan 1999, 55], for example by evoking the peculiarities of film, by mounting them on the reality which is represented by the textual world [Rajewsky 2010, 55]. Recycling the examples of the roots, which are featured as direct references, subjects them to parody, but also verifies their inevitability. Complemented with other elements of pop-culture, they determine the protagonist's and the teenage girls' perspectives like two holding pillars.

The work thematizes the numerous time periods of the first year of secondary school which are suitable stages of initiations [László 2021]. On the one hand, *Hol is kezdjem (Where do I start)* is chronological and is organized into a frame, however, the linear narration is interspersed with diverse time techniques. Through the associations and recollection mechanisms which are connected to the concerned topics, the text wedges together close-distant events and clashes opinions by using film-like cuts and montage techniques, i.e. solutions which also indicate the effects of visual culture [Komáromi 1999, 232–242].

Since all chapters are organized around a central problem or event, the novel can rightly be called a string of independent narratives. Each part starts with the same stroke, the individual sections beginning with the “*Kezdem ott, hogy...*” (“*I start by...*”) formula offer potential answers for the question asked in the title of the volume. The topics touched upon by the author range in a truly wide scale, from initiations, house parties, weight loss diets, menstruation, up to the difficulties of selecting panties. The purpose of the text is not to drastically demolish taboo topics, but to naturally talk about matters which are considered “sticky”. Although through the narrative we learn about the deepest feelings of the narrator, her name remains unknown, which

puts the identity and the challenges of the speaker on the level of the general, making it easier for the reader to connect. The same is true for “The One”.

The key shape of the novel-poetics of *Hol is kezdjem (Where do I start)* is the hyperbolic curve, which depending on the situation, whether zooming in or out, remains the instrument of the expression of both the heightened spiritual state and humor as well throughout the entire work. The language of the narrator is sometimes sarcastic, ironic and self-ironic, sometimes desperate and self-tormenting. “*The lively flow of the monologues built up of mostly multi-complex sentences is not blocked by even the dialogues found in reported speech*” [Kovács 2020]. Only by considering the similes, the narrator displays an imposing wealth of knowledge. In her confession the antique philosophers of the secondary school curriculum, the classical literary figures, the icons of pop-culture, and the actresses of romantic films supplement each other with puzzling naturalness, however, their mutual alterity inevitably generates another layer of humor. It is true, however, that her references are pointing towards the decisive popular works of the X and Y, and not the Z and alpha generation, which creates a time-disorder effect [Karafiáth 2020; Kemény 2020].

However, over the veil of exaggerated humor there lie the hardships of life as well. The constant difference of opinion of the parents, who are sharply different personality types (pragmatic mother vs. idealistic father), the challenges of cooperation after divorce, their searching of their own paths, or the Facebook activities of the just widowed grandma and their convergence in the narrator – they are all instructive [Vojnics-Rogics 2021, 114]. Nevertheless, fighting off the dissatisfaction of the unsteady narrator which she has with herself, getting over the body image disorder enhanced by the media, dealing with the mocking school videos, and her experiments of finding a purpose to life while starting from uncertainty always bring a life-positive outcome. The challenges end up in hilarious situational comedies during which the protagonist overcomes difficulties while mocking herself. And whether the solution is grandma-panties put over jeans, half-complete depilation, or a gorilla costume instead of a ball dress, is just a question of detail.

Life has emerged out of my coat (Ildikó Lipták: *Csak neked akartunk jót [We just wanted good for you]*)

“*The upholstery of my bed is made out of a spiky material. (...) I think they wove it from leftover threads, hence the chaotic pattern*” [Lipták 2020, 5] – is the self-reflective opening sentence and its continuation of Ildikó Lipták’s novel. The description of the bed of the protagonist, Lilla, is also metaphorically the characterization of her life: spiky, chaotic, and woven from leftover threads of poverty. Lipták’s novel tells us everyday events in the strictest sense of the word. Although, through rhetoric craft there is an astounding amount of tension in each of the sentences and words of the work. This is why the minimalist illustrations of Juli Jásdi are balancing between being direct and being abstract while also demonstrating the grotesqueness hidden in everyday situations [Kocsis 2020].

The most important organizing motive of the novel is an old leather coat which is offered by – not as an option – Lilla’s stepfather instead of buying a new one. However, this piece of clothing becomes such decisive in the girl’s life like that specific overcoat was for Akaky Akakievich, true though, in the beginning here it does not partner with desire, but with the total lack of looking cool. By the time the coat would get accustomed to, however, it disappears, thus setting off the entire chain of events: insignificant, everyday stories which, however, lead to becoming an adult, by the time the coat turns up. “*We really just wanted good for you. For everyone not to laugh at you*” – said the thieves, and with the same statement they explained the title. The latter is heard by the all-time teenager most frequently from the parents, though this time it comes from the fellow students. All this also implies that at least so much can be learned about life from them and from their cruelty. However, in the meantime Lilla is engulfed by “*some peculiar feeling which suddenly very closely connects me to this coat. (...) I am not carrying the bag by its ears, but I am embracing it*” [Lipták 2020, 115–116]. Maybe the resentments eliminate some bonds, but at the same time they might motivate us to establish new ones as well.

The homodiegetic narrator of the work speaks with the honest and bare language of a seventh-grade girl. The phrasing which is built up from simple and short sentences and the not overdone but natural use of slang all contribute to the authenticity of this. The text alignment is not justified which denotes the fluctuation of thoughts as well as it puts on the medial peculiarities of the handwritten notebook while also strengthening the personal nature of the text. Therefore the chapters beginning on new pages are also the markers of new or branching trains of thought, which, however, continue to remain parts of a chronologically forward-moving story-complex. This is verified by the titleless sections as well. With these solutions the work plays around with the traditions of diary novels. Nevertheless the thoughts of the narrator are limited neither by space nor



by time. The individual events and the associations evoked by objects enrich the narrative by numerous retrospections.

Thanks to this we not only learn the deepest thoughts about Lilla's present, but also the leaking experiences from her past tell us a lot about her history. Rambling and getting lost in minor matters is realized in the same way. Thus the narration models the mode of operation of the (teenage-)mind's thought-organizational strategy. A great solution of the author for helping the reader achieve full empathy is that she only names the protagonist on page 29 of the volume through a dialogue: "*The selection of form brings us into a situation in which the line between the receiver and the story-teller disappears, since we learn about the protagonist's body and her relation to it sooner than her name*" [Parti 2020]. The receiver might regard her experiences up to that point even more as their own, and at this point the relationship between the reader and the protagonist and her situation is so strong, that the reader can continue treating her further experiences as their own as well [Görbe 2021].

The poetic solutions of the narration always adjust to Lilla's mood. If she is excited, if something bothers her, the text suggests it by imitating live speech: "*Now! Now cease my existence, my god, good god!*" [Lipták 2020, 55]. In certain cases it uses the tools of intermediality, for example by evoking the feeling of film by verbalizing camera movement and the act of zooming in, or the feeling of a letter by writing it in italics to a non-existent, fictitious grandmother, but all these are still the peculiar and medially reflected stages of Lilla's (her diary's) flowing thoughts.

The idea of being a teenager can be felt on the linguistic sensitivity and limits of the text, but also in Lilla's intermittent lack of knowledge [Kocsis 2020]. Some words she does not understand (epeda [spring-mattress]), sometimes she reflects on their archaic nature (veranda [porchway]) or peculiarity (buklé [bouclé]), some other times she interprets them or associates them with personal etymologies from her childhood ("nesz" [faint noise] as the root of "wellness"). She is open to humorous wordplay and also to discuss the differences of linguistic forms which evoke each other, for example "nagynéni" (grand-aunt) and the "Nagy néni" (big aunt), or in case of the evergreen aunt Nusi, "*who I initially just called aunt Nuni (slang word for female vagina) because she was always wearing such short skirts that all her parts were in view*" [Lipták 2020, 6].

The resolution of the lack of knowledge usually gets realized in parallel with detabooing, but these always get evoked by some concrete life situation. The decoding might be spontaneous, it might be based on deduction, but it might be complemented with a direct explanation as well. A fine example for the latter is when Lilla is inquiring about the sportsman past of her aunt since she had seen a cup in her cabinet, which later turns out to be an urn. "*I slept together with a deceased*" – comes then the recognition in a rhetorical feat. "*(B)ut for some reason it does not upset me that I was in the same room with it. Nusi lives there every day, maybe she does not even think about the fact that there is anything strange to this, and it was not her goal to baffle me. (...) Now I find Nusi even more interesting. She is such a merry person! I do not understand how this story fits in her*" [Lipták 2020, 85]. This train of thought is the imprint of a flexible teenager perspective which is open towards learning about the darker experiences of life, where curiosity defeats aversion [Peer 2020]. We see the opposite of this, however, during a spontaneous family visit when one of Lilla's girlfriends reports that "*My mother got her tube sterilized when I was born. (...) And then she had her boobs done. (...) I will have mine done, too. Since we didn't get interpretable boobs from our ancestors, my mother said that after I become eighteen, we're gonna take care about this. / There were at least three words in this sentence which I've never used before in my life. (...) Their life, which I peeked into, was so alien to me that suddenly I felt that I don't even speak their language*" [Lipták 2020, 97–98; 96]. It can be seen on the previous quotes too, that the novel strives for talking in an unconditionally honest and filterless way about each emerging question, whether or not it is difficult or uncomfortable. Talking about personal matters is something that is represented by the narrator's openness as well as reluctance. "*The most heart-breaking in the work is that it is not aiming to be heart-breaking at all. Lilla talks about her traumas with such ease, as if she had already got used to their presence*" [Kaiser 2021].

Through getting to know countless situations, personalities, frameworks, and human functioning modes (evergreen aunt, old-fashioned and ungenerous stepfather, hypocrite and worldly landlords, Tünder's pleasure-seeking father) the world's diversity is unrevealed in front of Lilla. Not in a rough way, but without taboo, and by offering numerous initiation situations, all the while putting a misshapen looking glass in front of reality, whether it be about the poor-rich bipolarization, sexism, abuse in school, or the distorted body-image expectations of the media – or even of the family. The layeredness of the work completely fulfills the criteria of

double-liddedness. It is about adolescence and the adults seen from the eyes of adolescent youngsters and it is written both for the adolescence and for adults [Kiss 2008, 15–18].

Besides social critique the novel's depth psychological layer interwoven with social problems is also quite pronounced [Lovász 2015, 197–198], which primarily manifests itself in the depiction of Lilla's character and her character evaluations, however, problem-sensitivity does not rule over the work's poetic dimension [Lovász 2017]. Lilla is fundamentally introverted and lacks self-confidence, she wants to meet the expectations of her classmates and parents. However, these characteristics of her do not stand on their own nor are they a given, but they are qualities which evolved through the experiences of the present and the infiltrating memories and which get continually reinforced. Their roots reach for the background of the broken family, poverty, and the defencelessness, the elements of the self-enhancing triad, which were elemental determining factors of Lilla's childhood. Since the girl does not know anything about her grandparents or relatives, we can rightly assume that her mother grew up in state care [Zólya 2020b]. Partially independently of this, the key role in the evolution of Lilla's personality was played by two experiences: communication at home and emotional connection. *"Mom loves me, I love her, but actually we don't have any other choice. We're not like some gals in class with their moms. We're not »girlfriends«. I never tell her my secrets, not even my weird thoughts. When I was little, the apartment was quiet so many times that I always had to figure out something, in my head, to break the screaming silence there. For example, I was wondering what we would say to each other if we were not silent. Maybe Mom was doing the same"* [Lipták 2020, 22]. The lack of communication, not talking things over, staying silent are also there as barriers later when Lilla is trying to build relationships, and they further increase her anxieties. Albeit the cause of this is exactly the fact that due to her tough past, the mother also had not learned how these elements of communication work. The last sentence of the quote also refers to this. According to the memories of the girl, the endless silences were only broken when the mother was reading tales, and during these acts even her voice became very different. In the novel the nostalgic memories of these occasions lead her to literature and declamation, that is, to the unfolding of her talent. However, as self-reflection, it also refers to the therapeutic function of tales and literature, which is true for Lipták's work as well.

The work raises multiple existential philosophical questions, for example regarding passing or existential uncertainty, however, the most often returning sensation is that of being invisible. For example when Tündi's parents ignore her presence, or they do not pay attention to what she is saying even at home. All these events end up in philosophical arguments during which the protagonist questions even her own existence. But *"Lilla gets used to this and she finds it comfortable for a while, since as long as they are not aware of her, they ignore her. This stops when she becomes able to stand up for herself in front of others, when she can express her thoughts, opinions, desires and doubts without spicing them with fine irony or humor"* [Zólya 2020b]. Her gradually increasing critical horizon helps her in achieving this, and as a result she starts to better perceive the narrow-mindedness, faults, and weaknesses of others.

A significant experience of the work is the bipolarity of poverty and wealth. In Lilla's memories this is joined by moving multiple times and the defenselessness she is subjected to by the previous landlords and later by the mean stepfather [Parti 2020]. The latter is the reason for why they are buying the cheapest milk, but also he was the one who kept the mother's empty coffin in the attic – since it might be useful in the future – after she was buried in another one. In a self-reflecting way Lilla's humble background is also represented by the fact that in connection to most of her friends she talks about their good financial situation, however, with this she also reports on the deficiencies of her own surroundings. Admitting poverty is taboo, though. It is causing a big dilemma whether Lilla can accept a secretly offered coat from one of her "well off" teachers. These and similar situations motivate the reader, too, to continually provide answers.

Money gets interpreted as a significant "hinterland" also when one classmate's family gives a couch, which they discarded from home, as a present to the class. *"When her father leaves, he lays across the couch and he puts his shoes on it, too. I feel like this piece of furniture is never going to be owned by the class. Kinga subjugates us and in light of this now she seizes a big part of the room"* [Lipták 2020, 34–35]. She conquered Lilla's previous seat as well as girlfriend in the same way, and Lilla could not do anything about it since she was faced with unchangeable facts. Through all this we get an insight into the economical dimension which organizes the hierarchy of teenagers, and which also reflects the society of adults. Money indirectly becomes the basis of being cool. They are the ones who the "lower strata" is trying to please, creating another defenselessness horizon for themselves. Lilla does the same and in the meantime she neglects those who are less cool and are on the same level as her, or maybe even lower. Therefore the challenges of finding one's place are multi-dimensional. One of the most important momentum and lesson of the novel is the recognition of these processes and the phrasing of the reflections relating to them through pushing them into enough distance. And



also by realizing how easily can a certain position and its “hinterland” foundation shake due to a very ordinary change of life-situation, for example due to divorce. “*As I look over there and I see the kind of practices she is deploying in order for us to notice that shitty phone, suddenly it seems so lame that I almost pity her. The pathetic nature of this behavior rises to view and it fills me with satisfaction that I can recognize it, and the unsettling envy changes into this other feeling: satisfaction*” [Lipták 2020, 118–119]. These are the motivating motives of true maturity. Although Lilla’s life does not become ideal by the end of the story, and she also does not always make the best decisions, it becomes clear that she walks with open eyes, she manages, and no matter how her family is like, they are always there next to her, and besides the hardships, she has some happy moments too [Peer 2020]. It is just that one should pay a bit more attention to them and value them more. But then Lilla has already learned how to do this – and together with her maybe we did too.

Summary

The form variants of speculative fiction (in our case Huszti’s sacred superhero novel and Rojik’s climate fiction) provide the already traditionally pronounced tendency of the post-millennial young adult literature, however, in 2020 the diary-like, confession-saturated updated girl novel became even more emphasized. These homodiegetic narratives working with diverse time techniques greatly bear the effects of visual culture and have an intermedial nature at numerous places of the text. Balássy imitates the camera movements of romantic comedies, Janikovszky’s diary is distilled by the various legacy materials, Lipták’s teenager consciousness-modeling and simple confessions are enriched by minimalist figures, and Rojik also opens a window through literature to the creation of comic books. A common experience of the works is that the knowledge and references of their narrators are not based anymore on classical (literary), but on popular (film, gamer) culture, which they reflect upon as well.

Although on different front lines, but each work aims at detabooing, whether it is about being a girl or about the challenges of everyday hardship. The works like the questions of existential philosophy, but they do not wish to provide ready answers – they leave them for the reader. These answers might greatly contribute to finding faith or our place in the world and to overcome our invisibility and uncertainty. The analyzed novels do not really have cloudless endings, hence they are life-like and also point out that even though there are always new challenges ahead, with persistence, self-irony, and by highlighting the little joys of everyday life we have a good chance for getting along in life. The arts also function as excellent clinging ropes, they rise in the narratives to be the tools of self-actualization and therapy.

The most important common feature of Hungarian young adult literature of 2020 is the self-reflective nature of the language use of their protagonists. However, this not only refers to their characters, but it reflects on the peculiarities of their world as well. Convincing examples and the most pronounced poetic features of the volumes are the archaic, vulgar and gamer language of Huszti’s characters, the broken speech of Rojik’s protagonist, Éva’s early silliness and her later becoming somber with the escalation of war, Balássy’s and Lipták’s teenage language saturated with exaggeration and honesty as well as simplicity respectively. Therefore, besides these works being dynamic and rich in plot, dealing with heavy social (poverty, climate change, polarization, manipulation) and personal challenges (compulsive compliance, abuse, lack of communication, broken family background, distorting effect of media), and working with shaded characters, they are high standard works from a language-aesthetic perspective as well. Their authors did not only write exciting stories for the youth, they wrote literature.

REFERENCES

- Balássy F.** *Hol is kezdjem* [Where do I start]. Budapest: Tilos az Á Könyvek, 2020. 192 p. In Hungarian.
- Bárdos J.** A gyermekirodalom fogalma [The notion of children’s literature]. In: Bárdos József, Galuska László Pál (eds.): *Fejezetek a gyermekirodalomból*. Budapest: Nemzedékek Tudása Tankönyvkiadó, 2013, pp. 11–22. In Hungarian.
- Bárdos J.** A lányregény [The girl novel]. In: Bárdos József, Galuska László Pál (eds.): *Fejezetek a gyermekirodalomból*. Budapest: Nemzedékek Tudása Tankönyvkiadó, 2013, pp. 182–186. In Hungarian.
- Böszörményi Gy.** *Belekkukkantani egy leánykor titkaiba – Janikovszky Éva naplójáról* [A peek into the secrets of the girl era – about the diary of Éva Janikovszky]. Librarius, 2021. URL: <https://librarius.hu/2021/01/04/belekkukkantani-egy-leanykor-titkaiba-janikovszky-eva-naplojarol/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.
- Dési J.** Az úgy volt... [What happened was...]. In: Janikovszky Éva: *Naplóm 1938–1944*. Budapest: Móra Könyvkiadó, 2021, pp. 191–194. In Hungarian.
- Görbe H.** *Segítség, felnőttem!* [Help, I have grown up!]. Alföld online, 2021. URL: <http://alfoldonline.hu/2021/03/segitseg-felnotttem/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Hegedűs O. *A mágia szövédéke. Bevezetés a magyar fantasy olvasásába I.* [The web of magic. Introduction to the reading of Hungarian fantasy I.]. Dunaszerdahely, Lilium Aurum, 2012. 176 p. In Hungarian.

Hubby Év Gyerekkönyve Díj 2021 – shortlistek [Children's book of the year award 2021 – shortlists]. In: *Hubby*, 2021a. URL: <http://hubbyinfo.blogspot.com/2021/05/ev-gyerekkonyve-dij-2021-shortlistek.html> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Hubby Év Gyerekkönyve Díjak – 2021 [Children's book of the year awards – 2021]. *Hubby*, 2021b. URL: <http://hubbyinfo.blogspot.com/2021/06/ev-gyerekkonyve-dijak-2021.html> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Husztí G. *Mesteralvók hajnala* [Master sleeper's dawn]. Budapest: Ciceró, 2019. 336 p. In Hungarian.

Husztí G. *Mesteralvók viadala* [Master sleeper's encounter]. Budapest: Ciceró, 2020. 296 p. In Hungarian.

Janikovszky É. *Naplóm 1938–1944* [My diary 1938–1944]. Budapest: Móra Könyvkiadó, 2021. 208 p. In Hungarian.

Johns-Putra A. Climate change in literature and literary studies: From cli-fi, climate change theater and ecopoetry to ecocriticism and climate change criticism. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews Climate Change* 2. 2016, pp. 266–282. In English.

Kaiser Zs. *Nemlétezés-érzés* [Non-existence feeling]. *Kreatívek*, 2021. URL: <https://kreativkek.blog.hu/2021/04/05/nemletezes-erzes> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Karafiáth O. *Balássy Fanni: Hol is kezdjem* [Fanni Balássy: Where do I start]. *Magyar Narancs*, 2020. URL: <https://magyarnarancs.hu/konyv/balassy-fanni-hol-is-kezdjem-134869> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Kemény Zs. *Hol is kezdjem* [Where do I start]. *Alföld online*, 2020. URL: <http://alfoldonline.hu/2020/11/hol-is-kezdjem/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Keresztési J. *Janikovszky-jegyzetek* [The Janikovszky notes]. In: *Élet és Irodalom* 31. 2011, pp. 13. In Hungarian.

Kiss J. *Bevezetés a gyermekirodalomba* [Introduction to children's literature]. Kolozsvár: Ábel Kiadó, 2008. 92 p. In Hungarian.

Kocsis K. *Csak neked akartunk jót* [We just wanted good for you]. *Kultúra.hu*, 2020. URL: <https://kultura.hu/csak-neked-akartunk-jot/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Komáromi G. *Mesék, meseregények, gyerektörténetek* [Tales, tale novels, children's stories]. In: Komáromi Gabriella (eds.): *Gyermekirodalom* [Children' literature]. Budapest: Helikon, 1999, pp. 207–231. In Hungarian.

Kovács G. „Kezdem ott, hogy egy regényben azt olvastam egyszer...” [“I start by saying that once I have read in a novel that...”]. *Mesecentrum*, 2020. URL: <https://igyic.hu/mesecentrum-kritikak/kezdem-ott-hogy-egy-regenyben-azt-olvastam-egyszer.html> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Kovács G. *Két kétségbeejtő jövőkép* [Two Desperate Visions]. *Mesecentrum*, 2020. URL: <https://igyic.hu/mesecentrum-kritikak/ket-ketsegbeejto-jovokep.html> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

László L. *Időcsavar* [Time-twist]. *Prae online*, 2021. URL: <https://www.prae.hu/article/11919-idocsavar/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Lipták I. *Csak neked akartunk jót* [We just wanted good for you]. Budapest, Csimota, 2020. 132 p. In Hungarian.

Lovász A. *Amiről nem lehet beszélni, arról is beszélni kell. Avagy képmutató-e a kortárs ifjúsági irodalom* [What cannot be talked about must be talked about. AKA is contemporary young adult literature hypocritical]. In: Hansági Ágnes – Hermann Zoltán – Mészáros Márton – Szekeres Nikolett (eds.): *Mesebeszéd. A gyerek- és ifjúsági irodalom kézikönyve*. Budapest: FISZ, 2017, pp. 251–262. In Hungarian.

Lovász A. *Felnőtt gyerekirodalom. Tanulmányok, kritikák és majdnem lexikon* [Adult children's literature. Studies, reviews and an almost lexicon]. Budapest: Cerkabella, 2015. 224 p. In Hungarian.

McLuhan M. *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*, Cambridge – London: MIT Press, 1999 [1964]. 389 p. In English.

Mendlesohn F. *Rhetorycs of Fantasy*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008. 336 p. In English.

Mészáros M. *Young adultként olvasni. A Holtverseny példája* [Reading as a young adult. The example of Dead heat]. In: Hansági Ágnes, Hermann Zoltán, Mészáros Márton, Szekeres Nikolett (eds.): *Mesebeszéd. A gyerek- és ifjúsági irodalom kézikönyve*. Budapest, FISZ, 2017, pp. 289–305. In Hungarian.

Pagony *Nem tudtam szabadulni attól a képtől, hogy megnyitom a csapot, és nem jön belőle semmi. Interjú Rojik Tamással* [I could not get rid of the image of me opening the tap and nothing coming out of it. An interview with Tamás Rojik]. *Százhold*, 2020. URL: <https://www.pagony.hu/cikkek/rojik-tamas-szarazsag-interju-klimakatasztrofa-ivoviz-climate-fiction> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Parti J. *Kabátgondok* [Coat troubles]. *Mesecentrum*, 2020. URL: <https://igyic.hu/konyvajanlok/kabatgondok.html> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Peer K. *Dehogy akartatok ti jót! Kamaszlélektan szépirodalmi köntösben* [You were far from wanting good for me! Youngster psychology in a literary gown]. *Prae online*, 2020. URL: <https://www.prae.hu/article/11614-dehogy-akartatok-ti-jot/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.



Petres Csizmadia G. *Fejezetek a gyermek- és ifjúsági irodalomból* [Chapters from children's and young adult literature]. Nyitra: Nyitrai Konstantin Filozófus Egyetem Közép-európai Tanulmányok Kara, 2015. 256 p. In Hungarian.

Polgár A. *Korzózás, zsúrok és egy félkarú vőlegény* [Promenade walks, parties and a one-armed groom]. Új Szó, 2021. URL: <https://uj szo.com/kultura/korzozas-zsurok-es-egy-felkaru-volegeny> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Rajewsky I. O. Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate about Intermediality. In: Elleström Lars (eds.): *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 51–68. In English.

Rojk T. *Szárazság* [Drought]. Budapest: Tilos az Á Könyvek, 2020. 272 p. In Hungarian.

Steinmácher K. N. *Akiket szentnek mondanak* [Who are said to be saints]. Dunszt, 2019. URL: <https://dunszt.sk/2019/10/02/akiket-szentnek-mondanak/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Szekeres N. *Rém érdekes élet* [Awfully interesting life]. Magyar Narancs, 2020. URL: <https://magyarnarancs.hu/sorkoz/rem-erdekes-élet-134838> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Uzseka N. *Husztai Gergely: Mesteralvók hajnala* [Gergely Huszti: Master sleeper's dawn]. Ekultura, 2019. URL: <http://ekultura.hu/2019/07/31/husztai-gergely-mesteralvok-hajnala> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Vass E. *Mágia kis dózisokban. Interjú Husztai Gergely íróval* [Magic in small doses. An interview with author Gergely Huszti]. Kultúr, 2019. URL: <https://www.kulter.hu/2019/06/magia-kis-dozisokban/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Vojnics-Rogics R. *Mozaikok egy kilencedikes lány naplójából* [Mosaics from a diary of a ninth-grader girl]. *Bárka* 2. 2021, pp. 114–115. In Hungarian.

Wolfe G. K. *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy. A Glossary and Guide to Scholarship*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1982. 198 p. In English.

Zólya A. Cs. *(Örök)zöld gyerekkönyvek (I.)* [(Ever)green children's books (I.)]. Dunszt, 2020a. URL: <https://dunszt.sk/2020/08/24/orokzold-gyerekkonyvek/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Zólya A. Cs. *(Örök)zöld gyerekkönyvek (II.)* [(Ever)green children's books (II.)]. Dunszt, 2021a. URL: <https://dunszt.sk/2021/01/08/orokzold-gyerekkonyvek-2/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Zólya A. Cs. *A békés egymás mellett élés farkastörvényén innen és túl* [Within and beyond the pack rule of living peacefully next to each other]. Dunszt, 2021b. URL: <https://dunszt.sk/2021/07/31/a-bekes-egymas-mellett-eles-farkastorvenyen-innen-es-tul/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

Zólya A. Cs. *Mégiscsak létezem...* [I exist after all]. Dunszt, 2020b. URL: <https://dunszt.sk/2020/09/21/megiscsak-letezem/> (accessed February 3, 2022). In Hungarian.

* During the writing of the study, all three authors received the Young Teaching Fellowship (Fiatal oktatói ösztöndíj, 2022–2023) supported by the Tempus Public Foundation. In addition to this, L. Patrik Baka was also a grantee of the International Visegrad Fund. No. 52310166.

Received 08.02.2023

Baka L. Patrik

PhD in Literature, Senior lecturer

Department of Hungarian Language and Literature J. Selye University

3322, Bratislavská cesta, Komárno, 94501, Slovakia

E-mail: bakap@uj s.sk

Istók Béla

PhD in Linguistics, Senior lecturer

Department of Hungarian Language and Literature J. Selye University

3322, Bratislavská cesta, Komárno, 94501, Slovakia

E-mail: istokv@uj s.sk

Lőrincz Gábor

PhD in Linguistics, Senior lecturer

Department of Hungarian Language and Literature J. Selye University

3322, Bratislavská cesta, Komárno, 94501, Slovakia

E-mail: lorinczg@uj s.sk



Патрик Бака Л., Бела Иштюк, Габор Леринц

ТЕНДЕНЦИИ В ВЕНГЕРСКОЙ МОЛОДЕЖНОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ В 2020 ГОДУ

DOI: 10.35634/2224-9443-2023-17-4-520-530

Настоящая статья посвящена венгерской молодежной литературе и определяющим ее произведениям, написанным в 2020 году. Нами изучаются литературные труды, авторы которых были претендентами на премию «Писатель молодежной литературы года» или получили эту премию: роман «Поединок магистров сна» Гергея Хусти, роман «Засуха» Тамаша Ройика, роман «С чего же мне начать» Фанни Балашши, произведение «Мой дневник 1938–1944 гг.» Евы Яниковски, роман «Мы только хотели добра тебе» Илдико Липтак. В рамках анализируемых нами корпусов произведений проявляются две характерные жанровые тенденции: спекулятивная беллетристика и актуализированный роман для девушек. Эти нарративы, использующие разнообразные способы изображения времени, носят в себе влияние визуальной культуры; местами тексты имеют интермедийный характер. В результате анализа произведений мы приходим к общему выводу о том, что знание и сопоставления авторов (нарраторов) основываются уже не на классической (литературной), а на популярной (фильмовой, game) культуре, что они (нарраторы) и делают предметом рефлексии. Общим романо-поэтическим характером произведений является саморефлексивный характер употребления языка главных героев, что отражает не только их собственный характер, но и характеристику их мира.

Ключевые слова: венгерская молодежная литература 2020, современный роман для девушек, спекулятивная фантастика, интермедийность, саморефлексивная поэтика романа

Citation: Yearbook of Finno-Ugric Studies, 2023, vol. 17, issue 4, pp. 520–530. In English.

Поступила в редакцию 08.02.2023

Бака Л. Патрик

доктор философии (PhD), языковедение
старший преподаватель, кафедра венгерского языка и литературы
Университет им. Яноша Шейе
94501, Словакия, г. Комарно, Братиславска цеста, 3322
E-mail: bakap@uj.s.sk

Иштюк Бела

доктор философии (PhD), языковедение
старший преподаватель, кафедра венгерского языка и литературы
Университет им. Яноша Шейе
94501, Словакия, г. Комарно, Братиславска цеста, 3322
E-mail: istokv@uj.s.sk

Леринц Габор

доктор философии (PhD), языковедение
старший преподаватель, кафедра венгерского языка и литературы
Университет им. Яноша Шейе
94501, Словакия, г. Комарно, Братиславска цеста, 3322
e-mail: lorinczg@uj.s.sk