

Zoltán Németh, Magdalena Roguska-Németh, Anna Buncler,
Łukasz Sommer (eds.), *Oblicza romantyzmu*,
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The year 2022 was exceptional for the Department of Hungarian Studies at the University of Warsaw. The celebration of its 70th anniversary gained a special dimension by coinciding with the Year of Sándor Petőfi, commemorating the bicentenary of the eminent Hungarian poet whose works left a lasting mark on Romantic literature and Hungarian culture. The academic conference provided an opportunity for scholars from diverse fields and countries to exchange insights. The reviewed volume, *Oblicza romantyzmu* [Faces of Romanticism], which serves as a post-conference publication, is an inspiring and interdisciplinary summary of the event.

The volume contains articles in three languages – Polish, Hungarian, and English. This multilingualism highlights the international character of the conference and its openness to collaboration with researchers beyond Poland. The linguistic diversity also makes the publication accessible to a broader audience, which is a significant advantage. The topics of the articles span literary studies, linguistics, cultural studies, and history. This wide range allows Romanticism to be presented not only as a literary phenomenon but also as a cultural and historical one, shaping the national and artistic identities of various countries. The volume includes reflections on Hungarian Romanticism as well as Finnish and Estonian literature and culture, which hold a significant place in the publication.

The Finnish and Estonian themes, which are particularly relevant and eagerly anticipated from my perspective as a scholar of Finnish literature, go far beyond scattered examples in linguistics articles on Finno-Ugric languages. They are explored in-depth in three articles representing diverse research approaches. Anna Buncler, in her linguistic article *Tryb życzący i Kalevala* [Optative Mood and Kalevala], examines the grammatical aspects of the Finnish language through the lens of the national epic *Kalevala*. Martyna Kokotkiewicz, in her historical-biographical piece *Lydia Koidula – dziennikarka, poetka, dramatopisarka estońskiego narodowego romantyzmu* [Lydia Koidula – Journalist, Poet, Playwright of Estonian National Romanticism] portrays a pivotal figure in Estonian history, linking her literary and journalistic work with the construction of Estonia's national identity. Meanwhile, Łukasz Sommer, in his bold article *Racial Homelands Revisited: From Romantic Linguistics to Modern Populism*, analyzes the Finno-Ugric kinship theory, presenting its historical and contemporary interpretations in the context of Hungary's current political climate. These articles are well-written and represent a valuable contribution to the broader field of Fenno-Ugric studies.

Anna Buncler's article, *Tryb życzący i Kalevala* [Optative Mood and Kalevala], provides a fascinating exploration of the influence of the *Kalevala* on the development

of Finnish grammar, particularly in the creation of the optative mood. Before the publication of the *Kalevala* in 1835 and 1849, the only mood used to express requests or commands in Finnish was the imperative, which appeared in various forms depending on dialectical differences. Buncler shows how Elias Lönnrot, in his compilation of *Kalevala*, popularized the optative mood, expressed with the suffix *-ko*, as a way to convey wishes or desires across all persons, introducing a new grammatical mood into Finnish.

What makes Buncler's article particularly compelling is her careful examination of the historical and linguistic significance of Lönnrot's innovation. By drawing on forms already present in folk poetry and introducing new ones, Lönnrot established a precedent that would later influence Finnish grammar textbooks, with the works of Collan (1847) and Eurén (1849) incorporating the optative into Finnish grammatical paradigms. Buncler traces the gradual distinction of the optative from the imperative in 20th-century Finnish grammar, highlighting how certain forms, like the 3rd person imperatives *tulkoon* and *tulkoot* ("let him/her come" and "let them come"), were reclassified as jussives, marking a clear morphological and syntactic shift. The article provides valuable insight into the intersection of literature and linguistics, showing how *Kalevala* not only shaped Finnish literary identity but also played a key role in the evolution of the Finnish language itself.

Martyna Kokotkiewicz's article, *Lydia Koidula – dziennikarka, poetka, dramatopisarka estońskiego narodowego romantyzmu* [Lydia Koidula – Journalist, Poet, Playwright of Estonian National Romanticism] offers a thorough and insightful examination of one of the most significant figures in Estonian National Romanticism. Kokotkiewicz delves into the life and works of Lydia Koidula, whose contributions to Estonian literature and theater have made her a key figure in shaping the country's national identity. As the author of over 300 poems and numerous prose pieces, Koidula's influence extends beyond literature, earning her the title of the "mother of Estonian national theater." Kokotkiewicz highlights how Koidula's work has inspired not only Estonian authors but also her Fenno-Baltic counterparts in Finland yet remains somewhat underrecognized in broader international literary circles. The article aims to bridge this gap by offering a detailed exploration of Koidula's life and literary legacy, bringing her closer to both readers and scholars unfamiliar with her work. With this paper, the author contextualizes Koidula's significance within Estonian and Finnish literary traditions, while emphasizing her role in the formation of national identity in Estonia. By connecting Koidula's contributions to broader cultural and historical developments, Kokotkiewicz provides readers with a deeper understanding of her importance, not only as a literary figure but also as a key cultural symbol in Estonia's romantic nationalist movement. The article serves as a valuable introduction to Koidula's works, encouraging further engagement with this influential yet often overlooked figure.

Lukasz Sommer's article, *Racial Homelands Revisited: From Romantic Linguistics to Modern Populism*, offers a striking and thought-provoking analysis of how intellectual traditions from the Romantic period continue to influence contemporary

political rhetoric. Using Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's 2022 statement about the war in Ukraine and the "threat" of foreign races as a starting point, Sommer traces the intellectual roots of such rhetoric, particularly focusing on the 19th-century philosophy of language by Johann Gottfried Herder. He argues that Herder's ideas about the connection between language, culture, and national identity were incorporated into Romantic nationalist and academic discourses, often conflating linguistic and racial categories. Although modern discourse largely abandoned this view, Sommer demonstrates how it endures in cultural imagination and resurfaces in public discourse. The article stands out for its interdisciplinary approach, merging historical linguistics, philosophy, and political analysis to show how Romantic-era ideas about linguistic kinship and racial identity still inform today's populist ideologies. Sommer skillfully links the historical origins of these ideas to contemporary political figures, showing their lasting influence on how national identity and "otherness" are constructed in the modern world. His analysis is both rigorous and accessible, offering important insights into the persistence of Romantic nationalism in today's political climate.

The volume excels in terms of editorial quality. The layout is clear, facilitating the reader's navigation through the articles. The introduction, which outlines the context of the conference and its main goals, serves as an essential point of reference for the subsequent chapters. Each article includes footnotes and a bibliography, underscoring scholarly rigor and enabling further exploration of the topics discussed.

Oblicza romantyzmu [Faces of Romanticism] is a publication of high academic value. It exemplifies an interdisciplinary approach to Romanticism studies and an openness to diverse cultural contexts. The articles not only document the achievements of the anniversary conference but also introduce new perspectives on studying the Romantic era in Central and Northern Europe. The volume's international nature makes it a must-read for scholars specializing in literature, language, and culture of this period, as well as for those interested in the cultural specificities of Hungary, Finland, and Estonia.

The volume, resulting from the anniversary conference of the Department of Hungarian Studies at the University of Warsaw, is not only a tribute to history and tradition but also an example of openness to new research challenges. Thanks to its thematic diversity and varied research perspectives, the publication allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of Romanticism as a universally significant era. Its high academic standard, editorial precision, and interdisciplinary approach make the book a valuable contribution to the advancement of Romanticism studies. We know about it well at the University of Gdańsk, where the late Prof. Maria, one of Poland's most recognized researchers of Romanticism, worked for years.

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