

UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Doctoral School of Literary Studies

Fruzsina Hoványi-Nagy

„And what if parergon were the title?”
(Parergonality in the Literature and Art of English Romanticism)

Theses of the Doctoral Dissertation
/Summary/

Supervisor:

Professor Mr. György Fogarasi PhD, associate professor

2020

1. The aim the of the doctoral dissertation

The dissertation explores the question of designating the borders between the art and literature of English Romanticism, and seeks the consequences of the violation and transgression of borders. The paper starts out from an aesthetically special case of framing, the phenomenon of so-called parergon. Its aim is to point out the changes of this phenomenon in the history of literature and art. Parergon mainly touches on the problem of borders and bordering. Parergon always means the remainder, the subordinated, the external, something that does not belong to the inner, complete representation of the object, but is “only” its complement or subsidiary. It emerges around the object. The literal translation of the compound of the Greek parergon (*πάρεργον*, para-ergon) can also be rendered as ‘something that appears beside the work; a thing that is primarily subordinate and secondary’. The roots of the notion date back to Antiquity, when in verbal and visual arts it meant those parts of the work of art that were subordinated, secondary and subsidiary to the main unit of the work. This is why parergon concerns the problem of bordering, the question of what belongs to the inner, complete representation of the work and what function as external, complementary elements. This is why the changes concerning the history of interpretation of the notion of parergonality are related to how closed we regard the frames and autonomy of the work of art. According to Kant, parergon is always a secondary element; it does not have an aesthetical value on its own: it appears as the physical frame of the picture, or as the cover, the table of contents or appendix of a literary work, and its function is to help the receiver recognize the patterns of the work. Contrary to Kant’s opinion, Derrida formulates that parergon is not an external form, but rather something that is organically part of the work, a hybrid of outside and inside. Thus, one of the aims of the paper is an aesthetical historical review, which briefly outlines the traditions of the artistic phenomenon of parergonality of various ages and orientations, and includes works in the discourse that already asked interpretive questions about the phenomenon before Kant. The synthesis of the differences emerging between the interpretations of the notion provides a possibility for the thesis to reflect on the claims of the Derridean history of reception, some of which are provable, while others seem deceptive. The dissertation does not aim to reveal and eliminate the (self-)contradictions in the history of the notion outlined from its first antique records until today, but much rather attempts to recognize and synthesize the differences between the interpretations, opening a discussion of parergonality from different points of view. At the same time it is essentially important that the paper does not only discuss the notion as part of a theoretical context, but interpretations of specific works of art establish that we can

ask more complex questions about the aesthetical nature of parergonality. The interpretive chapters following the works of art concentrate on two aspects in the dissertation: 1. first, what the artists and the movements they represent believe and accomplish from the point of view of bordering and parergonality; 2. secondly, how the theories about parergonality from the Antiquity until the 20th century can reread and show the works in a different light. Rereading the notion, the review tries to offer new possibilities for interpretation by fitting into the line of interpretations of parergon and at the same time keeping distance from them.

2. The structure of the dissertation

After clarifying the theoretical foundations of parergonality, the dissertation reviews the more notable interpretations of the notion from the Antiquity. The chapter discussing the history of the notion divides the interpretation history of parergonality into two larger traditions: 1. In the first tradition, the interpretation of parergon starts from the designation of a closed system most of the times, in which the clear separation of different spaces has a prominent role. Therefore, parergon itself always occupies a constant, unchanged space: it appears as the picture's physical frame or as the cover, table of contents or appendix of a literary work, and its role is to help the receiver recognise the principles of the work. This concept is represented by, among others, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Immanuel Kant and Georg Simmel. 2. The other tradition of the history of the notion starts from the proposition that parergon is a phenomenon that is part of the work, or if it cannot be considered as closely part of the work, it does not stand outside of it, but rather fulfils an intermediary role between the work and the receiver. According to this concept, parergon does not help the receiver designate the work's autonomy, but helps ergon to introduce itself as a work of art. Plato's, Jacques Derrida's, Jean-Claude Lebensztejn's or Luis Marin's conception of parergon can be considered as belonging to this tradition.

The first interpretive chapter of the dissertation starts from the history of literary and artistic representation of Medusa's head and follows the changes in the representation of Medusa's figure. The chapter specifically deals with the interpretation of a Medusa-image attributed to Leonardo da Vinci and the related poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley describing the picture. Shelley wrote only one ekphrasis all his life, which was later published in a posthumous volume edited by his wife, Mary Shelley. Shelley's poem, as every ekphrasis, carries the question of bordering and subordination and parergonality. This, on the one hand, follows from the temporal primacy of the visual work; on the other hand, it is a result of the illustrative nature of the genre, since due to the fact that the verbal work of art explains and interprets the picture,

it places the original work into focus again and again. Furthermore, the dissertation quotes the last stanza of the poem published by Neville Rogers in 1961 and its Hungarian translation, which can be considered as an additional stanza to the poem. Mary Shelley did not regard it as part of the poem in her husband's first posthumous publication, and opinions vary among literary scholars if it can actually be considered as part of it. As far as I am concerned, it is part of the work, on the one hand because it provides a frame structure together with the first stanza, and it refers to the frame of the painting; on the other hand, because Shelley thematises his views on fragments in this stanza.

The other chapter reveals the connections between the representation of the sublime and space in the artistic works of William Turner, and by this, highlights how the demand for borders and their removal changes in certain works claimed to be sublime. William Turner's oeuvre, however, does not only include artistic, but also literary works, as it has been pointed out in the last fifty years of research, though very rarely. During his life, Turner attached a poetic work of his own or a quotation from contemporary or classical authors to more than 53 pictures. The comparison of these literary works with the pictures forms the main part of the chapter. The interpretation of the texts attached to the paintings could provide vitally important additions to the opinions of the Turner-reception evolved so far. The aim of the dissertation is to offer internationally relevant, and at the same time new information for the Hungarian aesthetical and literary discourse.

3. Methods and theses of the doctoral dissertation

The dissertation is committed to the field and research methods of comparative literature. It begins with a historical and interpretive chapter of the notion, outlining the attempts at definition, which occurred parallel to each other and many times got into competitive fights concerning the phenomenon of parergonality. During the review of the aesthetical forms of parergon, the dissertation is not only limited to literary works, but also examines artistic ones; in addition, it undertakes the comparative interpretation of non-verbal works of art. The dissertation carries out the research on the myths and symbols of Medusa's head from the Antique to the Romantic forms of representation.

The theses of the dissertation includes the claim that Medusa's story can also be read as the conceptual example of the question of parergonality. The representation of the mythological figure in a fragmented woman body highlights this the most, where the remaining limbs do not even appear, or provide a frame as ornamental elements to the dialogue about the head and the

glance. The fragmentary Medusa, the head of a woman deprived of her body represents completeness with its own deficiencies; it represents everlasting beauty. The Medusa head is the symbol of a fragmentary poem. Fragmentation is a basic element constituting meaning in Shelley's conception. Shelley considers precisely this incompleteness, openness and unfinished quality the most valuable feature of Romantic creation.

The other interpretive chapter compares the literary and artistic works of William Turner. The translations and aesthetical, interdisciplinary and intertextual interpretations of the poems unknown for the Hungarian audience may contribute to the Hungarian reception of English Studies examining the English literature and poetry of Romanticism. The dissertation does not isolate the lyrical works from the pictures, but rather handles them as parerga which broaden the borders and scope of meaning of the paintings by amplifying the hidden contents underlying the picture surface. The poems are parerga that offer different approaches to the interpretation of the paintings, and mediate between picture and receiver as a verbal frame.

The dissertation does not exclusively handle the question of parergonality as the frame of verbal or visual works; it does not exclusively define parergonality as a paratext or frame, but a border that emerges between literary and visual works. It does not examine parergonality as only the supplement of certain works, but as a question of comparison, as a dialogue between the works.

4. The Publications of Fruzsina Hoványi-Nagy in the Field of the Thesis

„To Err is Human, in *Hitetek mellé tudományt*, szerk. Zila Gábor, KRE, L'Harmattan Kiadó, Budapest, 2015, 245–255.

„Borders of a notion: parergon”, *Acta Universitatis Christianae Partiensis. Studia culturale*, Partium Kiadó, 2. 1 (2020). [megjelenés alatt]

„A (hiány)pótlás alakzata: a parergon (Vernet, Turner, Hoepker)”, in *Szövegek között 20.*, szerk. Fried István, Kovács Flóra, Szabó István Zoltán, SZTE Összehasonlító Irodalomtudományi Tanszék, Szeged, 2016, 1–14.

„A határtalan kerítése: William Turner költészete és festészete”, *Tiszatáj*, 74. 5. (2020), [megjelenés alatt]

„A veszedelmes Szépség. Az antik Medúza-fő irodalmi és képzőművészeti ábrázolásai”, *Ókor* (2020), [megjelenés alatt]

Nagy Fruzsina (Irodalomtudomány)

1.

Nagy, Fruzsina

A határtalan kerítése: William Turner költészete és festészete

TISZATÁJ: IRODALMI MŰVÉSZETI ÉS TÁRSADALMI FOLYÓIRAT 74 : 5 (2020)

Közlemény:31198485 Jóváhagyott Forrás Folyóiratcikk (Szakcikk)

2.

Nagy, Fruzsina

A (hiány)pótlás alakzata: a parergon: (Vernet, Turner, Hoepker)

SZÖVEGEK KÖZÖTT 20 pp. 1-14. , 14 p. (2016)

REAL Teljes dokumentum SZTE Publicatio

Közlemény:3085395 Érvényesített Forrás Folyóiratcikk (Szakcikk)

3.

Nagy, Fruzsina

Narráció és navigáció: Julio Cortázar: Az elfoglalt ház című művében

SZÖVEGEK KÖZÖTT 19 pp. 128-140. , 13 p. (2015)

Kiadónál SZTE Publicatio

Közlemény:3019393 Érvényesített Forrás Folyóiratcikk (Szakcikk)

4.

Nagy, Fruzsina

A bálvány áldozata: El Kazovszkij Két párka a háromból című festményén pp. 59-70.

In: Cserjés, Katalin; Szauter, Dóra (szerk.) Merőleges viszonyok : El Kazovszkij-tanulmányok
Szeged, Magyarország : JATEPress Kiadó, (2015)

SZTE Publicatio

Közlemény:2882024 Érvényesített Forrás Könyvrészlet (Szaktanulmány)

5.

Hoványi, Márton ; Nagy, Fruzsina

Olvasható kapcsolat: Avilai Szent Teréz levelei pp. 4-11.

In: Hoványi, Márton; Nagy, Fruzsina (szerk.) Avilai Szent Teréz Levelek I-II.

Székesfehérvár, Magyarország : Magyar Sarutlan Kármelita Rendtartomány, (2014) p. 1415

REAL

Közlemény:2581097 Admin láttamozott Forrás Könyvrészlet (Szaktanulmány) Nyilvános idézők
összesen: 1 Független: 1 Független: 0

6.

Hoványi, Márton (szerk.); Nagy, Fruzsina (szerk.)

Avilai Szent Teréz Levelek I-II.

Székesfehérvár, Magyarország : Magyar Sarutlan Kármelita Rendtartomány (2014) , 1415 p.

ISBN: 9786155218019 REAL

Közlemény:2566228 Admin láttamozott Forrás Könyv (Forráskiadás)

7.

Nagy, Fruzsina

To Err is Human

In: Zila, Gábor (szerk.) Hitetek mellé tudományt

Budapest, Magyarország : L'Harmattan Kiadó, (2014) pp. 245-255. , 10 p.

SZTE Publicatio

Közlemény:2945101 Érvényesített Forrás Könyvrészlet (Szaktanulmány)

8.

Thomas, Bremer ; Kanizsai, Ágnes (Fordító) ; Nagy, Fruzsina (Fordító)

Irodalom és anyagiság

TISZATÁJ: IRODALMI MŰVÉSZETI ÉS TÁRSADALMI FOLYÓIRAT 8 pp. 60-68. , 9 p. (2014)

Teljes dokumentum Egyéb URL SZTE Publicatio

Közlemény:2716465 Érvényesített Forrás Folyóiratcikk (Szakcikk)

9.

Nagy, Fruzsina

Medúzáról Jót vagy Semmit

TISZATÁJONLINE Paper: 44442 , 7 p. (2013)

Kiadónál

Közlemény:2945613 Admin láttamozott Forrás Folyóiratcikk (Recenzió/kritika)

10.

Nagy, Fruzsina

Az ébrenlét álmai

TISZATÁJONLINE Paper: 26387 , 5 p. (2013)

Kiadónál

Közlemény:2945606 Admin láttamozott Forrás Folyóiratcikk (Recenzió/kritika)

11.

Nagy, Fruzsina

Az ismétlés szemiotikája: Szent Teréz belső várkastélyában

VALLÁSTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE 9 : 4 pp. 43-53. , 11 p. (2013)

Teljes dokumentum Matarka SZTE Publicatio

Közlemény:2882027 Érvényesített Forrás Folyóiratcikk (Szakcikk)

12.

Nagy, Fruzsina

Egy zsiráfról szól. Nem, nem az afrikaiéről. Ez egy cseh-szlovák zsiráf története lesz

TISZATÁJONLINE Paper: 20043 , 3 p. (2012)

Kiadónál

Közlemény:2918083 Admin láttamozott Forrás Folyóiratcikk (Recenzió/kritika)

13.

Nagy, Fruzsina ; Bagi, Anita

Nyelvtörésben: Hajnóczy Animal Farmja pp. 151-162. , 11 p.

In: Cserjés, Katalin; Nagy, Tamás (szerk.) Énekelt, és táncolt mint egy szatír : nem szűnő párbeszédben : Országos Hajnóczy-konferencia

Szeged, Magyarország : Lectum Kiadó, (2012) p. 230

SZTE Publicatio

Közlemény:2882025 Érvényesített Forrás Könyvrészlet (Szaktanulmány) Nyilvános idézők

összesen: 1 Független: 1 Független: 0