

The Motive of Death in the Austrian Novel of the Late 1920s and Early 1930s

Seibel N., Shastina E., Volokitina N., Ziganshina N.
Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kremlevskaya 18, Kazan, Russia

Abstract

© 2016 AesthetixMS. The article is devoted to the study of the motive of death in the Austrian novels of the turn of the 1920s-1930s when a generation of rationalist writers appeared in the literature. Attention is drawn to the fact that Werfel, Musil, Broch, and Canetti were originally engaged in exact sciences, production, and commerce. Therefore, the meanings of the motives of death, which were used in modernistic literature even a little theoretically, were irrelevant for them. It is pointed out that writers, while addressing the issues on human destiny, boundaries of existence, life and death, look for new solutions and often find them in connection with the motive of warning, caution. Death becomes a shock, setting new goals to the living, or an indicator of moral fall of an indifferent character. The novels included in the study material are Franz Werfel's "Barbara or Piety" (1929), Hermann Broch's "The Sleepwalkers" (1928-1931) and Elias Canetti's "Auto-da-Fé" (also known as the "The Blinding") (1931-1932). The comparative methodology allows drawing conclusions about the author's individual features of the solution of the ontological issues considered by the authors and provides the typological presentation of the functioning of the motive of death in the above-mentioned novels.

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Keywords

Broch, Canetti, Motive of death, The Austrian novel, The imaginary and the true, Transformation, Werfel

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