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REWRITING TRADITIONS AND EXPRESSING ANXIETIES: THE DARK ACADEMIA GENRE

Kulcsszavak: *kortárs észak-amerikai irodalom; gótikus irodalom; queer irodalom; irodalom-történet; trauma*

The term “dark academia” emerged on the social media site Tumblr around 2015 as a trend in aesthetics and enjoyed increasing popularity as it made its way through various social media sites before becoming popular on TikTok during the COVID-19 pandemic. Academic interest in dark academia, both as a sociocultural and a literary phenomenon, is also on the rise with essay collections and thematic journal issues being dedicated to the subject. Dark academia’s roots are traced back to academic and campus novels, and to one novel in particular, Donna Tartt’s *The Secret History* (1992), which inspired a new generation of writers and laid the foundations of a new literary genre. Many recurring motifs and symbols found in dark academia novels are part and parcel of “traditional” American Gothic fiction – such as the portrayal of violence, mental health problems, and substance abuse. After outlining the genre’s origins and the common motifs and elements these novels share, I will investigate the way these novels express contemporary anxieties surrounding academia, arguing that by using the Gothic as a framework and shifting the focus onto the psyche of the characters, the genre is able to offer a critique of the academic environment.