

The famous contemporary German playwright Botho Strauß is also a prominent author of philosophical and aphoristic short prose, among others a volume named Paare, Passanten (Pairs, Passers by), which has been examined from the standpoints of formal, topical and ideological particularities.

From the formal standpoint, the book is distinguished by occurrence of mixed literary forms dominated by short reflective, philosophical and personal notes, narrations and “portraits of moments”, which bear both aphoristic and essayistic styles. The transitions between individual literary forms are often unclear and inconspicuous, even within an individual text. The texts are loosely connected to each other, yet they form a sophisticatedly composed series.

The style of Strauß’s texts is heavily enigmatic, fantastic and often allegorical. The texts are distinguished by a multilayered, at least dual structure (compare Welsch 26), which is typical for post-modernistic literature and offers to the reader a great variability in interpreting the allegorically encoded abstract phenomena, while the actual contents of these texts mainly depends on the contents of reader’s mind.

The central topic of the volume is the necessity, perceived by the author, to convey a historical continuity, which is to form a basis for creating a new entirety, and related contemporary possibilities of the literature, the language, the author, the profession, and the art. At the same time, the author uses the interconnecting motif of the distant observer character that criticises the phenomena and processes being described by the author, to convey to the reader author’s criticisms of many contemporary phenomena.