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On the Advantages of Minority Condition in the Romanian-Hungarian Cultural and Literary Relations

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Abstract. This study analyses the way in which cultural and literary Romanian-Hungarian relations have evolved since World War I in the context of the rapport between majority and minority. Our aim is to analyze, from an interdisciplinary and diachronic perspective, the implications related to culture and identity of the process studied. We raise the problem of bilingualism and its manifestation at the level of bilateral cultural relations, in general, and literary criticism, in particular.

Keywords: collective identities, literary criticism, Transylvania, minority-majority, regionalism.

Paradoxically, the ones that lost may be considered winners (or the winning side) and the ones that won, losers. This is the formula that summarizes the rapport between the advantages and disadvantages of the historical events of the twentieth century, especially the two World Wars, on the cultural and literary Romanian-Hungarian relations, in general, and the Transylvanian case, in particular. Certainly, our approach is diachronic. We took no interest in the exceptions, gaps or breaks, but in the developments of the cultural phenomenon, its metamorphoses and possibilities to endure through time.

With much visionary spirit, in a Transylvanian-Hungarian society going through collective identitarian depression of identity caused by the passage of Transylvania under the administration of Romanian authorities in Bucharest (Olcar 2011, 10), the reformed priest and publicist Dezső László (1904–1973) optimistically described the cultural advantages of minority life. To the Hungarian scholar, the new political and administrative realities of interwar Transylvania were an occasion for Hungarian culture to flourish beyond a national state, under other forms and submitted to conditions different than before. Far from accepting

the idea of minority culture, submissive to the new Romanian dominant culture or incapable of witnessing the dissolution of the Hungarian national specificity, László militated for a new form of cultural manifestation of Transylvanian Hungarians centred on the ethnic condition of minority. In the Calvinist vision of the reformed priest, the minority status of Transylvanian Hungarians may be accepted and dealt with via a process of evaluation and acknowledgement of specific values, as well as acceptance of one's historical destiny. In this way, László was convinced that the Hungarian people may live and create beyond the political borders of the Hungarian state (2003, 126).

For László, there were no fatal consequences for the Transylvanian Hungarians' culture and identity after World War I; on the contrary, it was an occasion to develop a new life meant to bring benefits not only to the ones that had the status of minority, but also to Hungarians on the whole. Thus, minority condition has become a quality, not a flaw, a chance to enrich the national vein by means of contacts and exchanges with alterity. Despite the fact that the old Hungary was broken into pieces which were given to other national states, László believed in the unity of soul and destiny for Hungarians that crossed political borders (2003, 127–129).

The ideas developed by the Hungarian priest and publicist were expressed in the context of ideas triggered by the manifesto signed in 1921 by Károly Kós (1883–1977), *The Shouting Voice. To the Hungarians of Transylvania, Banat, Partium and Maramureş!* In this seminal text, the Transylvanian architect and cultural figure embarked on the tough mission of encouraging the Hungarian population of the Romanian state, militating for the continuation of the cultural life and Hungarian identity by work, dignity, character and power to resist (Kós 2003, 45–47). Starting from the idea of an “eternal” Transylvania – which existed before the Treaty of Trianon and afterwards – that implied a distinct consciousness, culture and moral obligation on the Hungarians from Transylvania, Kós pleaded for an integration of Hungarians into Romania by work, with the condition of respecting Hungarian national autonomy based on the historical past. Thus, the Hungarian minority will continue to produce cultural and material values with national/regional specificity whereas Romania will benefit from a cultural and material creation that it has not had before 1918 (Kós 2003, 49–50).

The interwar generation of Romanian intellectuals from Transylvania who studied Hungarian literature and the cultural and literary relations between Romanians and Hungarians were especially formed within higher education institutions in Budapest or other cities of the Dual Monarchy. Before World War I, all Romanian intellectuals had a minority ethnic status and studied in Hungarian or German at the university. So, even if the political context changed, their cultural inheritance and intellectual habit persisted throughout their lives. Thus, their minority condition became the one of a majority after 1918 without

their departure from the intellectual and cultural environment in which they were raised. This generation was marked by the personality of Ion Chinezu (1894–1966), author of the first renowned synthesis on Transylvanian Hungarian literature. *Aspects of Transylvanian Hungarian Literature (1919–1929)*, published in Cluj-Napoca in 1930, had a positive echo in the Hungarian press due to its documentary and scientific value. Moreover, Chinezu's paper was considered by the critics of the time and by critics today [!] (Pomogáts 2002, 46; Nagy 2015, 11) the best systematic analysis of the Transylvanian Hungarian culture of the first decade after the Great Union; his performance could not even be equalled by the ethnic Hungarian literary critics of the time (Balotă 1981, 444).

Chinezu's book tackles the (trans)formation period of Hungarian literature due to the new political realities. The university professor György Kristóf (1878–1965) felt the same need for analysis and published the volume of papers *Ten Years of Hungarian Literature in Romania* (Pomogáts 2002, 39–40). The passage of the intra-Carpathian region under the administration of the authorities of Bucharest freed the cultural life of Transylvanian Hungarians from the pressure of centralism exerted by the Hungarian capital. If before 1919 great culture had only been achieved in Budapest, afterwards the regional culture of Transylvania started to become much more active, consistent and original. Particularly marked by the group of writers gravitating around the Cluj review *Erdélyi Helikon* that gave them conceptual unity, Transylvanian Hungarian literature was attracted by local or regional themes, overcoming the pre-war conflictual duality between traditionalists and modernists. Chinezu was the witness and the interpreter of the deprovincialization process of Transylvanian Hungarian literature during paradoxical times, when Hungarians had the status of minority (Balotă 1981, 447–448). In other words, a process of literary and cultural *centrality of periphery* was achieved in Transylvania, despite its position on the edge of a centralized political system; it won its *aesthetic autonomy* by artistic creation with regional specificity accomplished in a language different from the official one.

After World War I the political centre was shifted from Budapest to Bucharest, yet Transylvanian Hungarian literature took a different path. For Hungarians, Bucharest was less attractive than Budapest because it was not loaded with the same national purport. Developing in a medium other than the monopolizing and dominating one of Hungarian culture, Transylvanian Hungarian literature had the chance of building a stronger national specificity within Romanian culture and distinguished itself from it particularly via the language. Therefore, Ion Chinezu defined well the status of provincial Hungarian literature during the Austro-Hungarian period as well as the new conditions that facilitated the development of an original and qualitative Hungarian literature in Transylvania:

During these decades in which the aim of Budapest was to achieve political and cultural unity with the death of the soul in highly traditional regions as the price to be paid, we cannot speak of a Transylvanian Hungarian in the sense we do nowadays, i.e. of a literature defined by local content, the tendency to state a specifically regional character or at least the external criterion of a more reputed literary group. New talents felt the need to be acknowledged by the capital and the few writers that insisted on remaining here such as the gifted short story writer István Petelei (1852–1910) ended by almost being forgotten by the Hungarian public whose attention and taste were definitely conquered by the ruling of Budapest. / However, things have changed since Transylvania joined Romania. The new state formation also brings along several new problems for the Hungarians, imposing a spirit of cooperation, along with a radical change of mentality and the the necessity to find the appropriate attitude to deal with the new conditions. It is only now that Transylvania is discovered as a topic for literature, in the true sense of the word. (Chinezcu 1930, 6)¹

Regionalism was the path for Transylvanian Hungarian literature to build its own identity in terms of regional geography and history. This concentration on its own values made possible the distancing from leveling canonical models given by the official literature of the Centre. Transylvanism² provided local means of communication (especially via the cultural reviews of Transylvania's cities) between Romanians and Hungarians without external or distant (inter)mediation. The main promoters of Transylvanism were Hungarian intellectuals who militated for a closer and more genuine relation between Transylvanian Romanians and Hungarians. In this sense, the historian and literary critic Béla Pomogáts argued that

The writers for the review *Erdélyi Helikon*, far from considering the cultural closeness of Transylvanian ethnicities a political compromise, sincerely believed in the power of the idea of Transylvanism, along which national reconciliation and literary cooperation became possible [...]. The representatives of the literary group writing for *Erdélyi Helikon* took on this noble role, purporting to achieve solidarity between Hungarian, Romanian and German literature from Transylvania. (2002, 32–33)

The minority condition afforded the Hungarians from Romania this “soft” openness towards alterity as before World War I the actions meant to Hungarianize

1 The translations from Romanian specialist literature are my own throughout the article – A.M. P.
 2 Regionalistic movement in Transylvania with important political, cultural and artistic implications; mostly popular during the interwar years among Hungarian, Saxon and Romanian intellectuals.

Romanians represented a true “hard” state policy. Therefore, during the interwar years Romanian intellectuals with regionalistic views were less enthusiastic about promoting cultural Transylvaniam and particularly reluctant to the likely political (revisionist) implications of this movement of ideas (Todor 1983, 303–304). At the end of the 1930s, when the nationalist and xenophobic right party rose, Transylvaniam lost a significant part of the support of Romanian intellectuals, further maintaining the imbalance in availability for intercultural dialogue and mutual cognition (Pomogáts 2002, 46; Dávid 2012, 157). The revival of Romanian-Hungarian cultural relations and, as Pomogáts put it, “the rebuilding of bridges” were only accomplished after World War II; consequently, between 1945 and 1948 the literary and cultural cooperation between Hungarians and Romanians was extremely fertile (2002, 68).

An explicit affiliation with cultural or literary regionalism was avoided by the Romanians because the word itself was compromised or could have been compromising (Trifescu 2011, 370). Against this background, the literary critic Alexandru Dima coined the alternative concept of *creative localism*, which aimed at stimulating the rise of a Romanian literature inspired by the current living realities of the place. In the opinion of the literary critic, not the general vague approximate and stereotypical features of the province but the place and its specific identity needed exploring in literature. The approach was a plural, mosaic, fragmentary and broken one with many local and zonal peculiarities (Manolache 2006, 53). This (alternative) form of manifestation of Romanian cultural/literary regionalism is actually, in a paradoxical manner and to a great extent, an *anti-regionalist regionalism*. The localist form(ula) of literary manifestation was considered sufficiently intense to destabilize the cultural and political unity of the young Romanian state. However, cultural regionalism was deemed to be a movement with a high destabilizing potential and no clearly defined consistency which could be explored for political, revisionist interests. In this sense, Dima believed that

as far as the formula of ‘creative localism’ is concerned, we need to accept from the beginning that it is neither an absolute equivalent for the more frequently used expression ‘cultural regionalism,’ nor does it have its notional coverage. ‘Localism’ makes theory and militates on the basis of an immediate, living and concrete socio-geographic reality of the ‘place,’ whereas regionalism is founded on the more general and vague existence of the ‘region,’ hence its unreality. Finally, the term ‘regionalism’ acquired such ill fame by the mixture of its elements of centrifugal politics that its elimination from the sphere of culture would be more than desirable. (1935, 1)

It is worth mentioning that *creative localism*, coined by Dima, as an alternative theoretical reply to both the regionalist literature of Transylvania and the centralist

one of Bucharest, does not block Romanian-Hungarian literary relations and the openness to alterity. In the scenographic horizon marked by the geography of various Transylvanian counties and lands, the Romanian literary critic also traces the vertical axis of literatures with regional/local specificity which makes them thorough and legitimate. Therefore, it may be stated that history brought Hungarians and Romanians together in time, their interaction leading to original and autonomous Romanian literary productions created outside any gravitational influence of centralism.

Creative localism has always dominated Romanian culture; in any quantitative and qualitative case, localist literary movements scored better than centralist ones. In this respect, we can bring into play a series of characteristic literary moments, illustrating the idea that cultural centres generally did not coincide with the political ones. The first Romanian book, *The Lutheran Catechism*, was printed in 1544 in Sibiu. Deacon Coresi's numerous printings were not published in the capital of Transylvania or Wallachia, but in Braşov, where he found his refuge in the sixteenth century. (Dima 1935, 7)

In spite of the fact that Dima's view on writing literature draws on a national Romanian vein, it is a minority one due to its anti-centralism. We could argue that Dima had the mindset of a Romanian minority figure within the Romanian culture itself. Through his attitude, similar to the one of regionalist Hungarian ethnic figures, the Romanian literary critic opposes the (literary, cultural and political) centre represented by Bucharest. The intention was that of non-assimilation, non-enrolment, autonomy, dissidence and liberation with respect to levelling centralism from an aesthetic, ethical and identity-related viewpoint. Starting from Virgil Nemoianu's *theory of the secondary* and the *phenomenon of recessivity* described by Mircea Florian, the literary historian Gheorghe Manolache argued that "whether 'transparent' or not, *the literary province* remains a secondary structure and – precisely because of the tension it maintains with the *centre [Bucharest!]* – dependent on the way 'hard thought' operates. Even if they do not annihilate each other, *the province and the literary centre* do not fuse to achieve *cultural synthesis!*" (2006, 15).

We could say that on the long term, after almost one hundred years from the end of World War I, Hungarian-Romanian literary and cultural relations embarked on a journey without any possible way of return. From the beginning, the process of linguistic and cultural compatibility of Transylvanian Hungarians with the new political, administrative and cultural realities of Greater Romania was a slow and difficult one; in the end, Hungarian intellectuals became an actively and functionally integral part of the Romanian literary and cultural organism. In this context, the researcher Enikő Olcar claimed that

cultural relations between various ethnicities were hardened by the fear of communicating with the “other,” taking cover in an invented shell with a defending mechanism of its own for the universe in question. Then, a great part of Hungarian literary figures started to master the Romanian language, carried out excellent translations, reviewed books and wrote articles on Romanian cultural life for Romanian periodicals and militated for a closer cultural relation and a better acquaintance of the two. Knowledge of the Romanian language by the Hungarian ethnic minority remained a basic requirement for a continuing peaceful development of their own culture and writing in Hungarian which led to remarkable progress of Hungarian literature and culture. (2011, 15)

As far as the Romanian part is concerned, there can be noticed a considerable diminution of the number of Romanian intellectuals proficient in Hungarian and still interested in Hungarian literature and the cultural relations between the two ethnic groups of Transylvania, the Romanian and the Hungarian one. Despite the ideological appearances and prejudices or dominating political correctness nowadays, communist Romania witnessed the publication of extremely important volumes on the literary and cultural Romanian-Hungarian relations which significantly overcome qualitatively and quantitatively the Romanian historiographic production from the past years. The activity of Kriterion Publishing House in Bucharest needs to be particularly emphasized in this sense. However, along with the death of several Romanian intellectuals such as Avram P. Todor (1899–1978), Gavril Scridon (1922–1996) and Nicolae Balotă (1925–2014) – born before 1919 or during the interwar years in a society in which Hungarian was still a language of culture for the Romanian elites of Transylvania –, who dealt with the literary and cultural Romanian-Hungarian relations, the popularity of this topic of research started to decline at an alarming rate. Its last active Romanian representative has been Mircea Popa (born in 1939).

It can be assessed that the study of Romanian-Hungarian literary relations (with all its cultural implications) has become an essentially Hungarian field of interest for the past couple of years as the Romanian majority no longer have access to alterity because they do not know the language. Thus, the study of Romanian-Hungarian relations willy-nilly has become a topic monopolized by the Hungarian minority, and there are no Romanian papers to compete with the recent scientific contributions of researchers such as Enikő Olcar (born in 1980), Enikő Pál (born in 1983) or Imola Katalin Nagy (born in 1975). We are witnessing a process of impoverishment of the Romanian culture because “not knowing the other is not knowing one’s own identity!” (Trifescu 2015, 733); the only possibility of dialogue between the two cultures is a “second hand” one mediated via the filter of translations from Hungarian into Romanian or from Hungarian into international languages.

The age of “no interpreters” (Beke 1972) in which almost all intellectuals were bilingual has passed; the age of constructive or degenerative polemics between two national opposite sides that knew each other well is gone (Trifescu 2015, 732–733), not to mention the period of “rebuilding bridges” from the communist period (Pomogáts 2002). As a manifestation of the impossibility to have a real intellectual dialogue, the Hungarian minority need to express themselves in Romanian to be understood. The three eminent pieces of research published in the “language of the other” are representative in this sense (Olcar 2011; Pál 2014; Nagy 2015). At present, we are witnessing the dawn of an entire Transylvanian cultural tradition in which openness towards dialogue, plural thought and knowledge of the other only live through the Hungarian minority in Romania. However, in a near future, not knowing the other and the inability of cultural dialogue will silence Romanian culture, pointing at its inability to understand alterity. On the other hand, it will show great spiritual and intellectual impoverishment specific to the “carcase man” in an era of homogenized masses with no specific traits (Ortega y Gasset 2002).

Translated by Ana-Magdalena Petraru

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The Image of Transylvania in the Works of Two Contemporary Romanian Historians. Translation and Related Views on History

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Abstract. “As every inhabited area, culturally Transylvania can also be conceived of mainly as a symbolic space. Starting from its physical, material reality, our perceptions are made up into a subjective image of the area in question. This is the *real* Transylvania, or rather, the place in connection with which we formulate our ideas and to which we adjust our deeds. This image may seem so real also because it is equally shared by many, occasionally several millions. If many see things in the same way, we could say, this means that they are so in reality, though most of the time we only share prejudices, clichés and misunderstandings” – Sorin Mitu writes. Comparative imagology examines the formation of these collective ideas as well as the issues of identity and attitude to the Other. As a member of the imagology research group at the Department of Humanities of Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Miercurea Ciuc, Romania, I translated one chapter of Sorin Mitu’s volume entitled *Transilvania mea* [*My Transylvania*]. During the translation process it became obvious to me that if translation is not only linguistic but also cultural transmission, it is especially true for the translation of historical works and that it would be worth examining whether some kind of rapprochement could be detected between the Romanian and Hungarian historical research of the past decades; if yes, whether this is reflected in the mutual translation of the respective works.¹

Keywords: imagology, history, translation, cultural transmission.

History is a multifaceted term, it is not easy to provide suitable definitions for it; what is considered important in the concept of history and angle from which this highly versatile phenomenon is approached vary by age, trend, discipline,

1 The present study is the edited version of the lecture with the same title held at the 8th International Congress of Hungarology organized in Pécs, Hungary in 2016.

what is more, also by the historian. Who can pursue history as a discipline? If we only regard the names of disciplines which contain the term “history” (history of politics, culture, philosophy, literature, language, navigation, mentality, international relations, the history of any kind of discipline, etc.), we can see how diverse the range of professionals dealing with particular aspects of history is.² Imagology is a research area that also belongs to this sphere: it examines the mutually formed and distributed images of peoples, ethnic groups and communities not only synchronically, but also diachronically. Thus anyone pursuing a particular discipline can get into contact (and this contact is often unavoidable) with the history of the given field and also of related disciplines.

History, however, is not only the subject of scientific investigations; it is also part of everyday life, it enmeshes our life from the private history and that of the family, through the history of narrower and wider, formal, informal or non-formal communities, to the stories and histories distributed by them. Besides, texts on history are of interest to the wider public as well; what is more, due to their topic, accessibility of approach, smooth style and fortunate timing, particular scientific works may even become bestsellers.

As a member of the imagology research group at the Department of Humanities of Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Miercurea Ciuc, Romania, I have come into contact with issues of alterity, otherness, images of nations formed about themselves and about others. Within a related research I examined the conflict with, and image of, the other in the Romanian and Hungarian versions of a Romanian type of ballad (Lajos 2011, 60-71). It is also among the objectives of the mentioned research group to translate and thus make accessible for the Hungarian reading public the important volumes and studies of the specialist literature of imagology. As part of this, I translated a chapter of one of Sorin Mitu’s books and published it in an omnibus volume containing studies on imagology (Mitu 2016b, 103–131). During the translation process it became obvious to me that if translation is not only linguistic but also cultural transmission, it is especially true for the translation of historical works and that it would be worth examining whether some kind of rapprochement could be detected between the Romanian and Hungarian historical research of the past decades; if yes, whether this is reflected in the mutual translation of the respective works. Romanian and Hungarian languages share the drawback that the scientific products written in these Eastern European languages remain isolated; the one who intends to break out of this confinement is compelled to write in a foreign language of wide circulation or to have his work translated or to write on a topic that attracts

2 Not to mention the names of disciplines which contain the term “historical” or the ones which do not include either form but it is obvious that the historical perspective prevails in them: historical grammar (as well as the history of the distinct parts of grammar, such as historical phonetics, etc.), ethnography, sociology, etc.

international attention and thus his work will be translated. If we look at the studies of Romanian historians written in foreign languages and the specialist literature used in them, we can see that most of their works have been written in, or translated into, French and French bibliography is dominant. English language bibliographical items have been relatively rare even in the past years. German language is predominant in the Hungarian scientific discourse; English has recently acquired an ever increasing emphasis both as the target language of translation and in bibliographical items; French is almost entirely absent. The situation is slightly different in the very case of Transylvanian scientists, where German turns up on the Romanian side as well and the members of the young generation use English as the language of transmission more and more frequently.

The other condition of rapprochement, in my view, is the common base in the fields of using sources, methodology and theoretical framework. It is hard to maintain a dialogue in other disciplines as well; it is especially difficult in the field of history if its representatives conceive of these issues very differently. Thus it is perhaps also worth examining to what extent the Romanian and Hungarian historians whose works have been translated into the other language are related in terms of methodology.

The history of Transylvania and, less frequently, the studies on the history of the other nation are the shared issues of Romanian and Hungarian historiography that often stir debates, disagreements and conflicts. At first sight it seems that historical works which are mutually translated are the ones that correspond to the view on history of the target language culture, apparently supporting the fact that there are thinkers of similar vein also among the scientists of the other country. Works with different standpoints are either not presented to the target language reading public or stir great dispute among the members of the profession (with an echo in the press), while controversial works are simply not translated. The press reaction to historical works and debates reaches the wider public, beyond the professional sphere, thus forming the image of the particular communities about the other community's attitude, intentions, beliefs and convictions. This certainly shapes the image formed about the other as well as the other community's image and thoughts about their own community. Our research group has considered it important to translate two chapters of Sorin Mitu's book entitled *Transilvania mea [My Transylvania]* (2006) (and later the translation of the whole volume, which is in progress), because, on the one hand, it is partly, theoretically also related to imagology (see the chapter entitled *Comparative Imagology: the Project of a Synthesis Discipline*, translated by Judit Pieldner and Zsuzsa Tapodi [Mitu 2016a, 45–83]). On the other hand, some of its chapters (e.g. the one translated by me, entitled *Transylvanian Friends and Enemies: Romanians, Hungarians and the Image Formed about Each Other* [Mitu 2016b, 103–131]) surprisingly coincide with the Hungarian standpoint, reinforcing the idea that there is a chance of joint

reflection. When I say “surprisingly,” I certainly refer to the prejudice living in the Hungarian common consciousness against Romanian historiography.

I have examined whether the image distributed about the history of the other nation (and about the nation itself), its formation history as well as ideological and methodological background are reflected on among historians after 1989. I would like to highlight two works of this kind, one from Hungarian and one from Romanian historiography respectively. On the Hungarian side, I would mention Nándor Bárdi’s plenary lecture held at the RODOSZ conference in Oradea, Romania, on 28–29 April 2016 (conference title: *New Challenges and Results in the Transylvanian Historical Research*; lecture entitled: *Great Topics and Research Projects of Hungarian Specialist Literature after 1989 Dealing with the History of Transylvania, Romania and the Hungarian Minority from Romania*).³

In this survey the keynote speaker presented the works related to Romania of twentieth century Hungarian historiography by period, topic, school and trend; he spoke about interpretive frameworks and institutional conditions. This results in an image which shows that in the works related to Romania of Hungarian historiography (including both Hungary and Transylvania) the issue of the Hungarian minority from Romania occupies a significant place, and it is mainly in relation to this that the history of the Transylvanian Romanians comes into play. He mentions six works expressly related to Romanian history, written by Hungarian authors (ed. Gáldi–Makkai 1941; Hunya–Réti–Süle–Tóth 1990; Raffai 1989; Miskolczy and Trócsányi 1992; Szász 1993; Balogh 2001). In connection with pluralist traditions the lecturer mentions the topics and phenomena which are common/similar in the history and historiography of the two nations, among others, that in both cases the debunking of national myths and characterologies has commenced; on the Romanian side he mentions the names of Sorin Mitu and Lucian Boia, and that of Balázs Trencsényi on the Hungarian side. It is interesting that in Trencsényi’s selected bibliography there appear volumes edited together with Romanian authors who are outstanding (sometimes controversial) figures of Romanian historiography and who promote the rapprochement also discussed here: Sorin Antohi, Dragoş Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Marius Turda and Constantin Iordachi, also teaching at the CEU together with Balázs Trencsényi.

The two latter Romanian authors sign a comprehensive study with a thematic bibliography on the perception of Hungary in Romanian historiography (Iordachi and Turda 2000). This text appeared in Hungarian and was translated by Ida Bálintfi and Ottó Bálintfi in the periodical *Regio*. It was published in Romanian in the same year in the October issue of the periodical *Alterra* from Târgu Mureş. In their opinion, in spite of the changes after the fall of communism, the mutual images

3 The short title of the presentation accessible on the Internet: *The Image about Romania of 20th Century Hungarian Historiography*. https://www.academia.edu/24874562/Rom%C3%A1nia_a_XX._sz%C3%A1zadi_magyar_t%C3%B6rt%C3%A9net%C3%ADr%C3%A1sban_v%C3%A1zlat

of the countries in this region have not altered significantly; they continue to be mainly determined by myths and prejudices. While the conflictual relationship at the beginning of the nineties had been replaced by political reconciliation and cooperation by the end of the decade, the images formed earlier live on in the public opinion of the two countries. “Hackneyed commonplaces, prejudices and mutual stigmatization persist in collective memory, in public discourse and – what is even more noteworthy – also in the historians’ professional discourse” Iordachi and Turda remark in the introduction (2000, 130). The authors outline the historiographic context of the issue and present the work synthesizing the history of the Romanians by three Romanian historians in order to illustrate what types of attitude prevail, on the part of historians, in the image of Hungary in these works. Their conclusion is that in these works the image of Hungary is superficial and it becomes evident that there is no book on the history of Hungary written in Romanian that could be referenced. Not even the highly controversial 1986 book on the history of Transylvania was translated into Romanian (ed. Köpeczi 1986). Besides, the historical discourse on Hungary is limited to Transylvania (Iordachi and Turda 2000, 135).

The representatives of the latest trend taking shape by the end of the decade (who do not belong to just one generation) already examine the theoretical backwardness of Romanian historiography, its insistence on factology as well as the lack of dialogue with the trends of Western historiography. This new discourse has appeared in textbooks, the media and political disputes; however, in each case it met with resistance among the adepts of the nationalist view of history⁴ (Iordachi and Turda 2000, 138). The conclusion of the survey carried out in 2000 is that Romanian-Hungarian political reconciliation (characteristic of that time; it is a question whether it still holds true today) has not brought along the historiographic reconciliation of the two countries; historians with views deviating from the nationalist canon can hardly find their places in spaces that really matter in scientific discourse, for instance, at universities. The reform of Romanian historiography has not been implemented at a theoretical level either. In historiographic works the mutual images of the two countries are still dominated by the nationalist view, though there have also turned up approaches that wish to debunk myths, stereotypes and prejudices. In addition, at the end of the century there emerged groups of young intellectuals whose research projects and interpretive strategies suggest that there is hope to reform this discipline. In his interview published in Székelyhon in March 2016 Zoltán Csaba Novák comes to a similar conclusion as regards the historiography of the present; thus, not much has changed in this field since 2000 (Novák 2016).⁵

4 See the textbook entitled *Istorie. Manual pentru clasa a XII-a (History. Textbook for the 12th Grade)*, edited by Sorin Mitu, which stirred huge scandal in the Romanian media (Mitu 1999).

5 Novák, researcher at the Gheorghe Sincai Institute for Social Studies, Târgu Mureș, of the

Let us continue with the view on history, the attitude towards Romania and, within, Transylvania, of the two Romanian historians discussed in the present paper. I focus in particular on the response their works triggered and the way this reaction manifests – if at all – in the choice of languages these works are translated into. Lucian Boia was born in Bucharest in 1944, thus he belongs to the older generation of historians; with his works, interpretive methods, topics and, not least, his style he earned the status of the “star historian”; his works have been translated into English, German, French, Hungarian, Spanish and Slovak. Still, I would start my argumentation with Sorin Mitu; though he belongs to the younger generation (he was born in Arad in 1965), he takes precedence from the perspective of the present study, as it was through his work that I got in contact with the topic.

The starting point of the conferences on imagology biannually organized by our department was comparative literature; the participants of the conference examined the ways in which the image of the Romanians appeared in Hungarian literature, and vice versa. The bilingual conferences also assumed that these issues needed to be explored based on the knowledge of each other’s specialist literature. This is how we got in contact with Andrei Oișteanu’s book published both in Romanian and Hungarian, which deals with the issue of the imaginary Jew (2001, 2005).⁶ At the same time, we also came across Sorin Mitu’s volume (Mitu 2006), which, through its assumed subjectivity, Transylvania-related topic, knowledge and use of international specialist literature as well as consciously applied imagological viewpoints proved to be a valuable tool for our research group. Concurrently, we thought that its style and readability also made it worth transmitting the book to the Hungarian public (professional and “lay”, interested in the topic) not knowing the Romanian language. The fact that historiographic texts approaching in a balanced and objective manner a delicate issue that has been the buffer zone of Romanian-Hungarian historiography for long decades (slowly amounting to a century) can be read in full length in their mother tongue can play a role in establishing closer ties between the *two* communities (in terms of type and language).⁷

Romanian Academy, belongs to the younger generation of historians and thinks that the shift that can be detected in a few issues in the present state of historiography can partly be assigned to the fact that there is indeed a tendency of rapprochement, there is an ever more systematic communication between young Romanian and Hungarian historians; the members of this generation are mutually present in each other’s institutions in the course of further trainings, doctoral and postdoctoral studies. The question remains, however, when these approaches transgressing the boundaries of classical and dogmatic Romanian historiography will become part of common consciousness (e.g. education).

6 Oișteanu’s book originally appeared in 2001, it has had several editions ever since (in 2005 it was also published by Humanitas, in 2012 by Polirom, Iași); in 2005 it was published in Hungarian at Kriterion, in Zsuzsa Hadházy’s translation.

7 Alina Mungiu-Pippidi noted in 1999, “which is the issue that arouses the most primitive feelings in us if not Transylvania? This region is the core of the political disputes, nation and identity building endeavours of the two nations, upon which the self-esteem of all of us depends” (1999, 11–12).

The volume opens with an eleven-page introduction presenting the author's involvement and personal relation with the topic (in what sense the discussed topic is "my Transylvania"), his attitude towards historiographic trends, the Austro-Hungarian domination's effects on Transylvanian culture, his family traditions' relation to the East and to the West, as well as his personal intellectual journey from Romanian nationalism (defining his childhood) to intellectual liberalism. In Romanian humanities this type of self-reflexive attitude to a research topic is unusual. After outlining the different chapters of the book, he also addresses the issue of spelling Hungarian proper names specifying that "in the spirit of grammatical civility" and according to the traditions of Transylvanian Romanian orthography the surname precedes the first name. Reading such an introduction, the Hungarian reader speaker of Romanian language feels – might feel that the volume is probably not only about the author's, but also about the reader's, the Hungarian reader's Transylvania, something refreshing in the context of our prejudices with reference to Romanian historiography.

To offer you a taste of the structure of the book to be translated: it consists of six chapters, the first of which analyses the relevant topics of Romanian historiographic discourse and refers to bibliography relevant to the topic. Among the works on the status of historians and historiography we will find authors and works also mentioned in the present study such as Sorin Antohi, Constantin Iordachi, Trencsényi Balázs and others (Murgescu 2000; Zub and Antohi 2002; Iordachi and Trencsényi 2000). The topic that seemed so relevant at the millennium has not lost its relevance six years later either, and the author of any historiographic work cannot avoid reflecting upon the parallel existence of the conservative group with its mentality built on the basis of communist nationalism and the liberal one whose mentality nears modernism. This is also the chapter addressing the problems of identity, the relations among archives, the public and historians, the methodology of comparative imagology,⁸ as well as the image of the Other in symbolic geographies.

The second chapter deals with issues where Transylvania played the role of a buffer zone between cultures: the decentralization of Transylvania, its autonomy, the debate on its federative reorganization starting from 1997, the conflicts with reference to the University from Cluj-Napoca, and the ones in connection with the 1848 revolution. The third chapter discusses the fundamental topics of the history of modern Transylvania: concepts such as the homeland, Europe, revolution and holiday. The titles of subchapters ("The Structure of the Concept of Homeland in the Case of Romanians from Transylvania"; "The Image of Europe for Romanians from Transylvania"; "Why the Romanian Peasants Stirred a Revolution"; "The Media and the (Counter)Revolution"; "Holidays, Alterity and

8 This is part of the chapter also published in translation, as has been mentioned earlier (Mitu 2016b: 45–83).

Social Conflict”) well illustrate the thread of the chapter and perhaps they also provide an insight into its approach.⁹ The fourth large chapter uses the tools of the history of mentalities to discuss issues of Transylvanian history: the status of love in the mentality of Transylvanian peasantry, the phenomena of ecclesiastical celibacy in the Greco-Catholic Church, the image of the Austrian emperor in the minds of Transylvanian women and national feelings, as well as Avram Iancu’s Hungarian lovers are the topics discussed in the chapter. The fifth chapter bears the title “Transylvanian Friends and Enemies: Romanians, Hungarians and their Image of Each Other.” Out of the eight subchapters of this part I have translated three, and maybe already the title in itself explains why I have chosen this chapter to translate: it uses the tools of imagology to discuss the very topic that interests us, Hungarians from Romania and from elsewhere, the most. Based on the Hobsbawm theory of “invented tradition” it attempts to create an introduction to a Romanian-Hungarian imagological history (this being the title of the first subchapter), while the following two subchapters comprise the historical analysis of the stereotypical image of Hungarians in the Romanian mentality,¹⁰ as well as of the image of Romanians in Hungarian consciousness (the titles of the subchapters are: “Romanian Stereotypes about Hungarians” and “Romanians in the Eyes of Hungarians: the Creation of an Ethnic Image”). The further subchapters deal with the following: the presence of the Horea-uprising in Hungarian historiography, the analysis of the Unitarian minister Sándor Ürmösy’s journals about his travels in Wallachia and the image of Romanians created in the journal, the point of view with reference to Romanian history conveyed by the historiographic works of László Kóváry, the presentation of Mór Jókai’s journalistic and literary works on the topic of Romanians, the image of Romanian women in Hungarian works, and the analysis of the autobiographical work of József Dálnoky Incze about the 1848 Revolution. The topic of the sixth large chapter is the image of the West for Romanians from Transylvania: the image of the French in the mentality of the medieval Transylvanian peasantry, the appearance of this image in official propaganda and in folk mentality, the image of Italy in the public opinion of the 1850s, relations between the Carbonari movement and the Romanian revolutionary movement, the nineteenth century relations of the Irish model and the Romanians from Transylvania, the image of the American and within it that of Benjamin Franklin for Romanians from Transylvania. The first paragraph of the

9 In the third subchapter the author – being not the only one among Romanian historians to do so – adds an almost one-page-long footnote discussing the reasons why the events denoted as the 1848 Romanian revolution cannot be called a revolution, and what other terms could be used for these historical events. The title of the fourth chapter also alludes to the same thing.

10 The first sentence: “The images of Romanians about Hungarians constitutes a topic missing almost entirely from the literature of our field.” A footnote also expresses the author’s intention to conduct a wider research in this respect, an endeavor that faces the primary obstacle of the lack of prior research (Mitu 2006, 229; in Hungarian: Mitu 2016b, 109).

closing remarks returns to raising awareness to the theoretical framework, and states the following:

We live under a generous epistemological constellation. Our research is led by the most varied models, questions and theories teaching us about how to search for the thousands of faces of the truth. This far too wide space also hides traps, and undoubtedly it has an unsettling effect on those historians who got used to their so comfortably respectable truths. However, no doubt that methodological pluralism and relativism causes one important satisfaction: the joy of unlimited free thinking, the delight that we can sail freely the seas opened up in front of our curiosity. (Mitu 2006, 431)¹¹

From the point of view of translation those chapters prove to be a particularly difficult task where the author quotes lyrical folkloric texts to illustrate the different images of Otherness apparent in folk mentality. Such chapters and subchapters are yet to be translated and most probably they will lead to conclusions interesting also from the perspective of translation theory and practice.

I have considered it important to add to the present paper these review-like two pages to illustrate what type of text we consider worth translating. I believe, namely, that it is extremely important to provide access to larger Romanian works concerning the common topics of Romanian and Hungarian history not only for a narrow professional readership, but also for the larger public, something that may be ensured first of all through their Hungarian translation.

Among the Romanian historians the most popular today and out of the older generation whose most works have been translated to Hungarian as well is Lucian Boia, belonging to the myth-deconstructing historians, something that makes him extremely popular among both Romanian and Hungarian readers interested in history. In addition, his style is also highly readable and lively, it is free of the usual heaviness of the Romanian scientific discourse, it almost offers itself up for translation.¹² The bookshop of the Gutenberg Publishing House from Miercurea Ciuc distributes Boia's works both in their Romanian and Hungarian versions and to my enquiry with reference to their popularity among the Hungarian reading public, the owners of the bookshop informed me that there has been a high demand for them among both Hungarians from Hungary and from Transylvania, some of the buyers requesting books by their titles, others asking for Boia-works translated into Hungarian. Although only a narrow layer of the readers is characterized by this phenomenon, it is still significant: it is the interest manifested of the already narrow layer of those who buy books. The promotional strip of paper around Boia's volume entitled *Winners and Losers – A Reinterpretation of World*

11 My own translation.

12 See the list of Lucian Boia's works translated into Hungarian in the Works Cited.

War I, says: “World War I through the Eyes of the Romanian Star-Historian.” In his works he manifests a relativist perception of history, and although such a perspective has long been accepted in Western Europe, it was a novelty in Romanian historiography in the second half of the nineteen-nineties. In some of this works he examines those axioms of Romanian historiography the questioning of which was for decades taboo and even today this approach has caused a stir among nationalist circles. However, this breaking down of taboos has largely contributed to the development of a dialogue between the Romanian and Western historiography and to the bridging of the gap between the conflicting images of history of the Romanian and the Hungarian reading public.

Among the revised myths we find, for example, the Daco-Romanian continuity-theory, the myth surrounding the national unification act of Voivod Mihai Viteazul, the myth of nationalism, the myth of Romanian unity, the myth of the Romanian spirit and national particularity, the myths of the different historical ages with reference to foreign nations (the image of the French, the Germans, the Roma, the Jews, the Hungarians in the public opinion of the given era and of today), the myths of the figures in the national pantheon.¹³ Out of the topics listed here almost all touch upon the “sensitivity” of the Hungarian minority from Romania, to mention just a few examples: with reference to the historical affiliation of Transylvania, dogmatic historiography calls the Hungarians from Transylvania immigrants on the basis of the theory of continuity and in times of ethnic crises this is the basis upon which they are sent back to Asia by extremist public speeches. Mihai Viteazul’s act of 1599-1600 through which he united the rule of the territories of Moldova, Wallachia and Transylvania in one hand appears in communist historiography as the first unification of Romania, a proof of the fact that the pursuit for the unification of the country and an awareness of Romanian unity existed already in the sixteenth century, that already in those times Transylvania was a Romanian country, thus this date also figures as a national holiday in the Romanian calendar.

Boia, Mitu and more and more of the Romanian historians have been demolishing the walls of these myths, they have pointed out their mythic character, they have positioned them in that historical-ideological context in which they have become myths, they have followed their changes through the different historical ages, and they have also analyzed the functions these myths fulfill today (see also Mitu 1998, 2008). A balanced approach, and the objective handling of historical documents have become more and more important also for the Romanian public. Also the Romanian readers’ reviews of such books and articles show that there is demand for such works and such endeavors are positively appreciated. Thus, it is highly important to make them accessible for the Hungarian reading public as well. And in this respect the translator(s) have/may have an important role, as well as the existence of a supporting medium and institutional strategy.

13 The list of these myths follows the structure of Boia’s 1977 volume (in Hungarian Boia 1999).

Historian Csaba Zoltán Novák considers these to be of utmost importance in the case of larger, monographic works, and this seems to be happening in the case of more popular historians. Among the Romanian publishing houses the Humanitas from Bucharest and the Polirom from Iași are the ones where one can detect a conscious undertaking for the publication of these works. Among the Hungarian publishing houses from Romania the Koinónia from Cluj-Napoca and the Kriterion publishing house with headquarters in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca have been publishing these works in Hungarian. Among the latest generation of Hungarian historians from Romania there are those who ensure themselves that soon upon their publication their works appear also in Romanian or English, given that within the group of professionals publication in English also helps the exchange of information. Thanks to this there is an increase in the number of those young Romanian historians who reference in their works the studies published by their Transylvanian Hungarian colleagues. This is first of all true with reference to the history of contemporary times. For the larger Romanian reading public, however, only works translated into Romanian are accessible, and this would be of primary importance for the bridging of the gap between the two different images of history not only within the limited group of professionals but also among the larger public interested in these issues. I cannot detect any editorial or research forum that would have taken on this task. Thus, the process seems somewhat one-sided: there have been made primarily Hungarian (and within that Transylvanian Hungarian) effort for the transmission of the significant achievements of Romanian historiography towards the larger public. From the Romanian side there seems to be lesser tendency on the part of publishing houses to publish the achievements of Hungarian historiography in Romanian language (first of all press news report on the more important publishing events, the manual entitled *The History of Szeklerland* [ed. Hermann 2012] has been translated into Romanian, but it does not clearly state who its translator was¹⁴).

And finally, we have to state the fact that the most powerful tools for the demolishing of prejudices, stereotypes and taboos are school history classes. If these perspectives infiltrated into education, then there would be a chance for the true transmission of historical images. And this might be the most difficult thing to do: what is needed is a change of perspective for university professors, in the curricula, in manuals and for teachers, and such a process is a slow one even in the case of emotionally-ideologically less affected subjects.

I am commencing my paper with the statement of Hungarian historian from Cluj-Napoca Radu Lupescu, professor at Sapientia Hungarian University from Transylvania made in 2013, in order to illustrate how the above issue is on the mind of many, and in the process of its slow solutioning (for I do believe that

14 The translation can be found here: <http://www.cotidianul.ro/manualul-de-istorie-a-secuilor-240856/>

that is what the future will bring) languages, linguistic mediation will play an important role:

Transylvanian historians are worthy partners of both the Romanian and the Hungarian community of professionals. Since the system change there have been published a whole series of so far missing Transylvanian reference books. The only real problem consists in the fact that reference books on the past of Transylvania are only published in Hungarian, thus they are not accessible for the Romanian language professionals. [...] this is a transition state, upon the publication of Hungarian reference books there will soon come the time when the Transylvanian past will figure emphatically in English language literature and will also be accessible in Romanian. We could step out of this vicious circle with the collaboration of Hungarian historians from Transylvania if our profession takes the role of the bridge between Romanian and Hungarian historiography seriously. Lucian Boia's successful books may prepare the ground for the opening. There is no other path, for – as Boia phrases it – societies built on lies have no future. (Lupescu qtd. in Makkay 2013)

In implementing the recognized bridge-role of Transylvanian Hungarian historiography translators may be of assistance, who would not only translate the important works of Romanian science into Hungarian, but would also translate into Romanian those works of Hungarian science that could play a role in making this branch of science into the space of dialogue.

Translated by Judit Pieldner and Boróka Prohászka-Rád

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Imre József Balázs and the Romanian Culture

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Abstract. Imre József Balázs is a Hungarian poet, literary critic, editor and literary historian from Romania. His main subject of interest and research area is the Hungarian avant-garde from Romania. His research and work prove his attachment to Romanian literature as well – especially with the avant-garde. For example, he deals with Gellu Naum’s poems for children and their translation. Thus, he fulfils the role of a mediator between Hungarian and Romanian literature not only through his studies and academic papers written in Romanian, but also through his contributions to the appearance of Hungarian poets in literary anthologies written in Romanian language. Furthermore, he plays an important role in publishing the Hungarian translations of Romanian poetry, thus becoming a mediator between the Hungarian and Romanian cultures.

Keywords: multiculturalism, translation, cultural intermediary.

1. Introduction

From a formal point of view, the birth of the Hungarian literature in Romania is linked to the 1st of December 1918, when Transylvania was attached to the already united principalities of Moldova and Wallachia. Kántor and Láng place the date and place of birth of the Hungarian literature in Romania as follows: 1919 Romania, in a narrower sense Transylvania (1973, 5).

Unquestionably, manifestations of Hungarian elements in the Romanian culture can be found even before this time, as there are always interferences and connections between neighbouring nations. György Gaál states the following:

Mutual influences between the Romanian and Hungarian literatures can be dated from the period of the Reformation, starting with Bálint Balassi’s poetry, which is particularly rich in folklore. The conscious creation of relations starts during the last period of and following the 1848 Revolution and freedom fight (Caesar Bolliac, Nicolae Bălcescu). (2010a, 1)

Along the historical events which confine literature within boundaries, Béla Pomogáts believes that all European literatures have their own regional workshops – each one with particular aspects: the literature from the Paris area differs from that of Provence, the one in Munich is not the same as the one from Berlin. Similarly, Hungarian literature, which has been present in Europe since the foundation of the Hungarian state in the ninth century – as many folkloric works testify – and in written form since the thirteenth century, we can talk about a Hungarian literature west from the Danube – the one that came into contact with Western literatures, and about Hungarian literature in Transylvania, etc. However, the division of Hungarian literature is not based solely on regional considerations, but also on historical ones. After World War I, two-thirds of the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was divided between other states, as a result of which one-third of the Hungarian population received other citizenships. The same author points out that literatures of this nation were not born at the time of the redrawing of the state-boundaries because they had already developed their own features hundreds of years earlier. The Hungarian literature in Transylvania has followed its own course since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (2005, 1-3).

2. Miniatures of Hungarian Literature in Romania

2.1 Hungarian Literature in Romania

The term “Hungarian literature in Romania” has its own history, its use going back as far as the 1930s. Contemporaries used a much older term, “Hungarian literature in Transylvania”, which differentiated a regional literature within the Hungarian national one. In the years immediately following World War I neither the Hungarian press from Transylvania, nor the other mass media seemed to use new concepts to mark the differences caused by the new borders. National identity was rather expressed in political and cultural articles – at an institutional and possibly an economic level. At a cultural level ideas such as unity, socio-economic and cultural development were promoted, primarily through education.¹ This is because, as already mentioned above, the existing specific characteristics of the Hungarian literature from this area became even stronger.

The term “Hungarian literature in Romania” was first used in the third decade of the twentieth century by Gábor Gaál, a future member of the Romanian Academy, professor in Cluj. He introduced the term bringing geographical arguments and showing that the expression “Hungarian literature in Transylvania” did not cover the reality, arguing that this term was a historical one, but, at that moment [in 1937], it was no more than tradition. It did not conform to reality because

1 Especially the journal *Erdélyi Szemle*.

it excluded the Hungarians living in other geographical areas of Romania. He pointed out that the vast majority of [Hungarian] writers, indeed, lived in Transylvania, but the sphere of readers, without whom literature could not exist, stretched across the whole of Romania (1937, 214). However, the usage of the term remained sporadic, and its naturalization can rather be connected to Lajos Kántor and Gusztáv Láng who defined it in the work entitled *Romániai magyar irodalom 1944-1970* [*The Hungarian Literature in Romania 1944-1970*] as follows:

[...] The Hungarian literature in Romania refers to the literature written in Hungarian on the territory of Romania after 1919. Its social determinant is the Romanian social reality and the situation of the Hungarian minority in Romania. Both characteristics show differences from the literature written in Hungary, although they are strongly linked by language and by common cultural traditions, in a broad sense of the word. (1973, 7)²

2.2 Romanian-Hungarian Cultural Relations after 1919

All the above leads us to the problem of the contextualization of the Hungarian literature in the Romanian space, underlining the Hungarian-Romanian relations. I would mention only a few notable examples illustrating the real necessity of bilateral relations materialized in different frames. The evidence of this relationship can be observed in tournaments, conferences, literary evenings, literary circles³, anniversaries and commemorations, theatre projects⁴, etc., while in written forms magazines included surveys, studies and essays, translations and reviews.

Monolingual magazines (*Korunk*⁵, *Erdélyi Szemle*, *Erdélyi Helikon*, *Boabe de grâu*⁶, *Familia*⁷, etc.) were supplemented by multilingual ones – published mostly

2 Quotation translated by Anikó Majla.

3 One of the resolutions of the first meeting of the *Work Collective Helikon*, founded in Brâncovenesti (1926), says that its main cultural task should be the presentation and translation into Hungarian of the Romanian and German literary works written in Transylvania.

4 In 1920 Hungarian theatre companies started showing plays by Romanian authors translated into Hungarian (Caragiale, Lucian Blaga, etc.) and Romanian theatres played some Hungarian works as well (Ferenc Molnár or Menyhért Lengyel, Imre Madách, etc.).

5 The February number from 1936 is a “Romanian edition” in which collaborators from Bucharest (Andrei Șerbulescu, Ilie Cristea, etc.) or Brașov (Vasile Munteanu) were asked to contribute, these sending studies on the socio-economic and political life in Romania.

6 Editor Emanoil Bucuța participates at the meetings of “Helikon” and publishes translations of Hungarian authors.

7 Magazine founded in Budapest which – even after moving to Oradea – supported the promotion of Hungarian writers through surveys (1935 – 13 Hungarian intellectuals and 12 Romanians, from Hungary and Romania responded positively to the question concerning the collaboration between Romanians and Hungarians), translations, studies. It must be mentioned that in 1935 the staff initiated a meeting between the Romanian and Hungarian writers at Stâna de Vale.

in Transylvania – such as *Barátság* (Cluj-Napoca), *Aurora* (Oradea) founded by George Bacaloglu, president of the “Societatea Cele Trei Crişuri,” who wanted to follow “the cultural and literary movements on both sides” by translating the two literatures, by studies about the Hungarian-Romanian relations, with personalities interested in these relations: Ernő Ligeti, Justin Ilieşiu and Ion Lupu (RMIL, 107-108); the trilingual (German–Hungarian–Romanian) magazine *Banatul* (Timişoara); *Cultura* (Cluj) with articles published in Romanian, Hungarian, French and German; *Culisele – A Kulissza* (Cluj), etc. In the interwar period some publications were preserved, and new ones were founded. Árpád Bitay was among those who were concerned with and supported the cultural relations between Romanians and Hungarians:

His [Bitay’s] book entitled *A román irodalomtörténet összefoglaló áttekintése* [*An Overview of Romanian Literary History*] was a groundbreaking work, published in Alba Iulia in 1922, written from the Hungarians’ point of view, which he translated into Romanian (Cluj, 1924). To satisfy the needs of the respective period, in 1923 he published the work entitled *Rövid román nyelvtan* [*Short Romanian Grammar*] in Cluj. Knowing his work, Nicolae Iorga invited him to the Free University of Vălenii de Munte, where for fifteen years he had held conferences in Romanian about the history of Hungarian literature and culture. (Gaál 2010a, 5)

Beside the above mentioned names, I would add the names of József Méliusz, Sándor Keresztury, Ferenc Szemlér, László Gáldi, Aurel Ciupe, Octavian Goga, George A. Petre and, last but not least, Ion Chinezu, who in 1930 defended his doctoral thesis entitled *Aspecte din literatura maghiară ardeleană. 1919-1920* [*Aspects of the Transylvanian Hungarian Literature. 1919-1929*].

In the post-war period, the number of ways to promote these relations increased considerably. At the first congress of the Hungarian People’s Union held in May 1945, Gaál pointed out that the Hungarian writers in Romania were responsible for closing the gap between Hungary and Romania. Propaganda leaflets, like the *Román-magyar kultúrkapcsolatok* [*Romanian-Hungarian Cultural Relations*] appeared. Moreover, during this period the number of translations increased, they became more regular and improved in terms of their stylistic value. In 1955 the collection *Román klasszikusok* [*Romanian Classics*] was launched including over one hundred titles, and in 1981 the collection *Román költők* [*Romanian Poets*] was published. With the setting up of the Kriterion Publishing House Romanian translations of Hungarian, German, Ukrainian and Hebrew authors’ works were published, as well as collections of studies on them (Gaál 2010b, 2). During this period numerous poetry, prose and drama anthologies were published in Budapest and in Bucharest. I would mention one of the first major instances: during 1961-

1964 in Hungary, thanks to Michael Gafița and László Lőrinczi, the work entitled *A román irodalom kis tükré* [*A Small Mirror of Romanian Literature*] was published in five volumes, which is a selection of the most important writings from folk literature to contemporary Romanian literature. Anthologies appeared as well, where translations of Hungarian writers were included alongside their Romanian, German, etc. colleagues in Romanian editions. Among other ways of promotion one can mention studies, university courses, literary histories, monographs and bibliographies. The list of personalities who supported these relations seems endless. For further studies, Gaál mentions some fundamental works for those wishing to explore this area: *A román irodalom magyar bibliográfiája. 1831-1960* [*Hungarian Bibliography of the Romanian Literature. 1831-1960*], also *1961-1970* (1978), edited by Sámuel Domokos, as well as the volume *Magyar irodalom románul. 1830-1970* [*Hungarian Literature in Romanian. 1830-1970*] published in 1983 elaborated by Andor Réthy and Leona Váczy; *The Bibliography of the Relations of the Romanian Literature with Foreign Literatures in Periodicals* published by the Romanian Academy (1980-1985); the volume of interviews by György Beke published in Hungarian and Romanian, which comprises fifty-five writers: *Tolmács nélkül* [*Without an Interpreter*] (1972), *Fără interpret* [*Without an Interpreter*] (1972), but also Nicolae Balotă with the volume *Scriitori maghiari din România 1920-1980* [*Hungarian Writers in Romania 1920-1980*] (1981) or Avram P. Todor, *Confluente literare româno-maghiare* [*Romanian-Hungarian Literary Confluences*] (1983). The number of multilingual magazines increased, numerous student journals were founded, of which we mention the one with the strongest tradition – the *Echinox*, launched in 1968 (Gaál 2010b, 3-6).

2.3. An Insight into the Hungarian Literature in Post-Revolutionary Romania

The overthrow of a regime – especially of an oppressive one – always represents possibilities for the manifestation of hitherto hidden or repressed artistic inclinations, even if the literature which falls under a dictatorial regime feels the need “to deceive it,” thus leading, among others, to the diversification of expression, innovative solutions that contribute to the birth of artistic formulae that would not exist in other socio-political conditions. Freedom of expression, once gained, is doubled by pioneering moments characterized by enthusiasm, beatitude, live polemics and, not infrequently, radicalism. It is the period of manifests and declarative speeches, of creating groups and literary circles, of printing texts hidden until then, of associations and dissociations – most of them having already existed during the regime, at the moment of the revolution or in the years immediately following the regime change.

Hungarian literature in Romania is not an exception to the rule. An important moment was the initiation in 1991 by Attila Sántha and Ferenc Bréda of a group called “Transzközép”, a term which can be translated as “transmedian” – made up of the words “transz”, Transylvanian and the Hungarian translation of (aurea) mediocritas. In 1993 the authors grouped around these two personalities devoted a whole number of the magazine *Echinox*⁸ to this literature, which included, besides the texts of the founders, the first *Transmedian Manifest*. Among the chief representatives we can mention Attila Gál, Zsolt Karácsonyi, László Lázár Lovétei, Vince Fekete, Noémi László, János Dénes Orbán, Imre József Balázs, Éva Farkas Wellmann, Endre Farkas Wellmann, Attila Zsolt Papp. It can be considered the first and also the last major trend of Hungarian writers of the post-revolutionary Romania.

In 1991 the writers grouped around Bréda and Sántha established the “Gaál Gábor Irodalmi Kör” [“Gábor Gaál Literary Circle”]⁹ in Cluj-Napoca which, at the initiative of Péter Egyed, in 1993 changed its name into the “Bretter György Irodalmi Kör” [“György Bretter Literary Circle”]. The medium where they published their writings, the literature and art magazine *Előretolt Helyőrség* [*Advanced Garrison*]¹⁰ appeared in Cluj-Napoca between 1993 and 1995, after which it became a publishing house, in association with *Erdélyi Híradó*. An institutionalized form of this generation is E-MIL / Erdélyi Magyar Írók Ligája [HWLT / Hungarian Writers’ League of Transylvania],¹¹ where an important role is played by the transmedians.

3. Imre József Balázs

3.1 The Outward Bound

Imre József Balázs,¹² Péter Demény – mainly being concerned with journalism – and Zsuzsa Selyem break away from this group and go with the flow. Today there is a strong trend that develops primarily against the League, transmedianism and the values promoted by them. Perhaps this rebellion – the red wire, perhaps the only link besides the biological age, which connects the generation to come – is an index of the “institutionalization”, “canonization” of the League, and of

8 *Nagy Transzközép-Szám* [*The Big Transmedian Number*], in *Echinox*, 1993/3.

9 Translations of titles, names of journals, institutions, etc. in round brackets exist in Romanian, and those between square brackets belong to the author of this article.

10 It generates new literary groups – “Serény múmia” [“Industrious Mummy”] and “Előretolt Helyőrség” [“Advanced Garrison”] – with their own headings.

11 9th February 2002, Cluj-Napoca.

12 Imre József Balázs was born on 9th January 1976 in Odorheiu-Secuiesc. He graduated from the Faculty of Philology, Babeş–Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca (1998, Hungarian-English section) and is associate professor at the Department of Hungarian Literature of UBB.

the transmedian orientation. Balázs is the initiator of the “new wave”, which turns its back on its own masters and consciously tries to form a new generation of writers and poets¹³ represented by Előd Benjámin Horváth, Zsolt Visky, Orsolya Láng, András Borbély, Zalán Serestély, Noémi Jáncsó, etc., who leave behind the “lagging poetics.”¹⁴ This generation is promoted by magazines such as *Látó*, *Helikon* or *Korunk*, literary portals like Nappali Menedékhely (blog of contemporary literature), Eirodalom.ro or magazines from Hungary.

3.2 Imre József Balázs and *Korunk* – How to Become a Mentor

Since 1999, Balázs has been the editor of the literature and criticism column of *Korunk* magazine issued in Cluj-Napoca, and between 2008 and 2012 he worked as the editor in chief for the same magazine where, at the beginning of 2006, he initiated a section dedicated to young poets and debutant writers entitled “Generator”, the conception being “special because, besides each piece of writing, a biographical sketch of the author was published, together with a short interview¹⁵ about the work and about more general questions related to the author’s concept on literature” (n.a. 2008). In 2008, Balázs coordinated an anthology entitled *A meghajlás művészete* [*The Art of Curtsy*], published by the Komp-Press publishing house, Cluj-Napoca, which included poems and prose works by eleven young authors (Tamás Bálint, Pál Nagy Várad, Ilka Papp-Zakor, Előd Benjámin Horváth, Réka Szalma, Szabolcs László, Orsolya Fülöp, Jutka Tünde Bekő, Boróka Kósa, Orsolya Láng, Zsolt Visky). Perhaps choosing the number of authors was not accidental, the first conscious generational¹⁶ manifestation of poets, prose writers and essayists in Hungarian literature in Romania was *Tizenegyek antológiája* [*Anthology of the Eleven*]¹⁷ or *Erdélyi fiatal írók antológiája*¹⁸ [*Anthology of Young Transylvanian Writers*], published in Cluj in 1923. The title of Balázs’s anthology *A meghajlás művészete* [*The Art of Curtsy*] can also be understood as a tribute to the pioneers.

In September 2007 the *Korunk Akadémia* was established – jokingly called *Kakadémia* (*kaka* meaning excrement in Hungarian)¹⁹; its aim was the training of

13 What emerged after the transmedians is difficult to define in terms of poetics, says Zalán Serestély, a young writer of the post-transmedian generation.

14 From the post transmedians generation’s point of view.

15 The interviews were conducted by Balázs.

16 According to Béla Jancsó, one of the authors in the anthology.

17 Authors: Ferenc Balázs (introduction, program and short stories), István Dobai, Zoltán Finta, Géza Jakab, János Kemény, Albert Maksay, László Mihály (poetry), Sándor Kacsó, Sándor Szent-Iványi, Áron Tamási (short story), Béla Jancsó (studies).

18 The full title is *Tizenegy fiatal erdélyi írótól erdélyi művészek rajzaival. Versek–Tanulmányok. (Erdélyi fiatal írók antológiája)* [*Poems – Stories – Studies by Eleven Young Transylvanian Writers with Transylvanian Artists’ Drawings. (Anthology of Young Transylvanian Writers)*].

19 Explanation of the translator.

young intellectuals and the reconversion of the older generation through a range of accredited courses in areas that were missing, or were considered incomplete at university level. The areas covered were history, philosophy, sociology, psychology, book- and magazine editing, creative writing – a workshop also coordinated by Balázs;²⁰ translation of scientific as well as literary texts. At the same time meetings with various writers were organized.

3.3 Ambassador of Hungarian-Romanian Cultural Relations

Balázs's effort to establish Hungarian-Romanian cultural relations can be seen in his translations and in his encouraging other Hungarian writers to translate from/into Romanian. As mentioned above, the promotion of Romanian literature in the Hungarian space happens through translations and studies, through editing and coordinating bilingual anthologies and through studies dedicated to Romanian authors. In this respect, Balázs's work can be divided as follows: contributions to editing books, anthologies and intercultural projects; studies of literary criticism and history, along with reviews or articles in various publications; translations and also a keen interest in the reception of Hungarian literature in the Romanian milieu.

3.3.1 Coordinator

Bilingual anthologies. A first anthology edited by Balázs begins with the volume entitled *Travers. O antologie a literaturii maghiare din Transilvania* [*Travers. An Anthology of Hungarian Literature in Transylvania*], a volume edited together with Ciprian Vălcan, which appeared in 2002 in the series *The Third Europe* at the Polirom Publishing House, Iași. The volume contains eleven contemporary poems translated by Paul Drumaru (poems by Sándor Kányádi, Aladár Lászlóffy, László Király, András Visky, Ferenc András Kovács, Károly Jánk, János Dénes Orbán), four short stories (by Ádám Bodor, István Szilágyi, Zsolt Láng, Vilmos Molnár) translated by Ildikó Gabos, Marius Tabacu and Tibor Szász. A strength of the anthology is the preface written by Balázs – “Lecturi paralele ale aceleiași fenomen” [“Parallel Readings of the Same Phenomenon”]²¹, and three studies on Hungarian literature in Romania, “Séta egy definíció körül” [“Walk Around a Definition”], written by literary historian Gusztáv Láng, “Gyöngy és homok” [“Pearl and Sand”], author Éva Cs. Gyimesi, both translated by Szabolcs Szonda, respectively “Egyidejű korszakok az erdélyi magyar irodalomban” [“Simultaneous Epochs in Hungarian Literature in Transylvania”], written by Balázs, translated by Ildikó Gabos. Balázs

20 The works resulting from the participation at these workshops were later also published.

21 Balázs's study offers an overview of the anthologies of the Hungarian literature in Romania published so far, while at the same time it also outlines trends and authors of the 1990s.

hoped that this way some of the major living Hungarian authors (including Ádám Bodor, István Szilagyi, Zsolt Láng, Sándor Kányádi, András Ferenc Kovács, András Visky, János Dénes Orbán) would occur in an exegetical context that could serve as a starting point for the Romanian readers, not losing hope even after a year from the appearance of the anthology: “I haven’t met comprehensive reviews, direct echoes about this volume yet – though I hope that the excellent network of the Polirom Publishing House will fulfil the expectations and the volume will reach the readers” (2003, 129).

The next step was the editing of the *Antologie bilingvă de literatură maghiară* [*Bilingual Anthology of Hungarian Literature*] as a special number of *Echinox* (2/2011). The anthology contains eighteen texts by seven young authors (Noemi Jáncsó, Szabolcs László, Nagy Pál Váradi, Orsolya Láng, László Potozky, István Takács, Tünde Vízi). The texts were chosen by Zalán Serestély and Árpád Kulcsár, the selection criteria being that these authors had not yet had editorial debut. Serestély said that they wanted to publish a much larger number of authors, some of whom gave up being afraid of not being able to translate their texts properly (many of the texts were translated by the authors themselves and later reviewed by the Romanian editors). In the evening the volume was launched – where László Potozky, Nagy Pál Váradi and Tünde Vízi, Rareș Moldovan attended – Serestély said that, taking into account the length of the anthology, he was convinced it would rather draw attention to the still extremely low number of Hungarian poems translated into Romanian than fill this gap. “This kind of cultural mediation is still the task of a narrow layer of intellectuals” Serestély also said (quoted in Varga 2012, 4). In the anthology there can be found mini interviews with the authors as well, through which the poets’ impressions and opinion with reference to translation in general are revealed.

Project coordinator. His work as a coordinator widens the sphere through his interest in intercultural projects. In his vision the collaboration between the editors of the *Apostrof* and *Korunk* in Cluj is significant, given that they have already organized a whole series of conferences on topics relevant to both parties. The transcribed texts of these conferences appeared in the *Apostrof*, and since then the *Apostrof* has shown continuous concern regarding Hungarian culture (Balázs 2003, 129).

3.3.2. *Studies and Articles of Literary Criticism and History, Reviews*

Balázs’s studies on Romanian culture have appeared mainly in Hungarian, becoming a kind of promotion. I must mention that his main field of interest is the avant-garde, especially the avant-garde as it appears in the Hungarian literature in Transylvania, this period being the topic of his doctoral dissertation. In this regard, he is preoccupied with the wave of new

research²² on Romanian avant-garde and lists young Romanian researchers concerned with this topic (Simona Popescu, Ovidiu Morar, Paul Cernat, Emilia Drogoreanu, Dan Gulea) and with the new approaches suggested by these authors. The article “A román avantgárdkutatás új hulláma. Popescu, Morar, Cernat, Drogoreanu, Gulea” [“The New Wave of the Romanian Avant-Garde Research”] published in no. 2/2010 of *Korunk* magazine proves not only his knowledge of the Romanian literary avant-garde, but also of Romanian research in this field. This knowledge is exploited in other articles and studies such as “Akik megölték halottaikat. A román avantgárdirodalom hatástörténeti helye” [“Those Who Murdered their Dead. The Position of the Romanian Avant-Garde Literature”] in which the author follows how the history of Romanian literature builds the place of the historical avant-garde in the literary tradition, respectively the features that enhance constructivism, which occupied an important place in the Hungarian avant-garde literature, too. One of the greatest strengths of this study is its comparative approach, the author completing his research with Hungarian references. This direction is kept in other articles such as “Az álom antológiája. Vázlat a román és a magyar szürrealizmus mitologikus elemeiről” [“A Dream’s Anthology. A Sketch on the Mythological Elements of Romanian and Hungarian Surrealism”] – concerned with the logic of dreams, alter-egos, myths and trips in the works of Robert Reiter, Tibor Déry, Andor Németh, Tristan Tzara, Ilarie Voronca, Gherasim Luca, Geo Bogza, Max Blecher, Paul Păun, Sașa Pană, Gellu Naum. For the latter ones the author shows a keen interest in articles, reviews such as “Válogatott képek a Gellu Naum-mitológiából” [“Selected Images of Gellu Naum’s Mythology”]²³ or “Apolodor és Zebegény. Gellu Naum gyermekirodalmi munkáiról és fordításairól” [“Apolodor and Zebegény. About Gellu Naum’s Works on Children’s Literature and on their Translations”];²⁴ “Szürrealisták randevúja” [“Surrealist’s Rendezvous”]. Obviously, avant-garde writers are followed by other authors that have aroused his interest: Mihail Sebastian,²⁵ Mircea Cărtărescu²⁶ or Bogdan Ghiu,²⁷ and he reviews their texts. His

22 Also see the review “Hogyan épült be a társadalom hálózataiba a román avantgárd” [“The Way the Romanian Avant-Garde Infiltrated Society’s Networks”] in which he presents the book of Stelian Tănase, *Avangarda românească în arhivele Siguranței* [*The Romanian Avant-Garde in the Siguranței Archives*] (*Korunk* 2009/2. 101–104.)

23 The article, besides touching upon translation problems -- like all the writings of Balázs related to Romanian literature -- is concerned with the archetype of the journey in “pohemul” *Vasco da Gama*.

24 The study was also published in Romanian in *Caietele Avatgardeii* [*Notebooks of the Avant-Garde*] (5/2015). It focuses on the character of Apolodor, its history and its metamorphoses, but also the problems encountered in the translation.

25 “Újraolvasott barátságok. (Mihail Sebastian: Napló)” [“Reread Friendships. (Mihail Sebastian: Journal)"] appeared in *Élet és Irodalom* [*Life and Literature*] on the 7th of May 2010.

26 “Milyen is a Loch Ness-i szörny? (Mircea Cărtărescu: Postmodernizmul românesc)” [“What Is the Loch Ness Monster Like? (Mircea Cărtărescu: The Romanian Postmodern)"] appeared in *Korunk* 11/1999.

27 “Mit lát az üvegszem?” [“What Does the Glass Eye See?”] appeared in *Korunk* 11/1998.

role of mediator would not be complete without his work in the “other direction”, to promote Hungarian culture, especially Hungarian literature, among the Romanians. Here I would mention his reviews published in the *Observatorul cultural*, *Apostrof*, *Echinox* or the article from the bilingual magazine *Provincia*²⁸ about which he states that “it showed – especially in its first numbers – a real appetite for dialogue, which sometimes had a polemic accent. In this magazine [...] you can and could carry on a conversation about values, a well thought discussion based on real arguments” (Balázs 2003, 130). The works reviewed by him have been translated into Romanian by Anamaria Pop and Marius Tabacu, and appeared at prestigious publishing houses like the Humanitas, Editura Paralela 45 or Est. Still, the number of Hungarian works translated into Romanian has remained low, and often works to be translated were chosen on the basis of their authors becoming famous first in Western countries – for example, Nobel Prize winner Imre Kertész, as well as Ádám Bodor, Attila Bartis, the last two born in Transylvania, but emigrated to Hungary. Regarding this matter, Balázs shows that there are reviews on such authors as Péter Eszterházy, Péter Nádas, György Konrád, that *A Treia Europă* magazine contains interpretations of prominent representatives of Hungarian modernism, such as Dezső Kosztolányi, Gyula Krúdy, Sándor Márai, etc., but that “still, the reception (through studies, articles) of the Hungarian literary phenomenon in Romania has to be improved. (Those listed above are all authors from Hungary.) This would, of course, be useful for Hungarian literati from the region, to see their faces in a new, well-polished mirror” (2003, 129).

3.3.3 The Reception of Hungarian Literature by Romanians

Balázs’s opinions about the reception of Hungarian literature in Romania can be detected from his various surveys, interviews or articles. One of his articles on the subject starts from the question posed by Daniel Vighi in the survey of the *Vatra* magazine in August 1999: “Still, what the hell, so to speak elegantly, have written the Hungarians in Transylvania and in Banat after the Great Coup in December 1989?”, which he reformulates like this: what does a Romanian writer know about Hungarian literature in Romania? And “the conclusion proved to be simple as this: nothing” (Balázs 2003, 129). The reasons are manifold: first, the lack or poor circulation of information sources – translations, anthologies or literary histories. Balázs draws our attention to the fact that such sources do exist, even if they are not sufficient (Balázs 2002b, 5). Sources he names are *Aspecte din literatura maghiară ardeleană (1919-1929)* [*Aspects of Transylvanian Hungarian Literature (1919-1929)*] by Ion Chinezu (1930), *Scriitori maghiari din Romania 1920-1980* [*Hungarian Authors from Romania – 1920-1980*] by Nicolae Balotă

28 The article “Ce număr poartă la pantofi literatura maghiară din Transilvania?” [“What’s the Shoe-Size of Transylvanian Hungarian Literature?”] was published in *Provincia*, no. 4/2000.

(București, Kriterion, 1981), and *Istoria literaturii maghiare din România* [*The History of Hungarian Literature in Romania*] by Gavril Scridon²⁹ published by the Promedia Publishing House in 1996 in Cluj at that time the most recent among such literary histories. In the meantime the list has been completed by Szabolcs Szonda's work, *Literatura maghiară din România. Aspecte cronologice și noțiuni de bază* [*The Hungarian Literature in Romania. Chronological Aspects and Basic Notions.*], published in 2008 at the RHT Publishing House Bucharest-Sfântu Gheorghe, which has the advantage of having chapters about the post-revolutionary Hungarian literature as well.

Balázs's text "Receptare fără studii și articole" ["Reception without Studies and Articles"] from the no. 6-7/2003 of the *Vatra* magazine shows similar preoccupations. This article was born in response to an investigation of a graduate student (2003) from the "Petru Maior" University in Tîrgu-Mureș, Judith-Izabella Gall, who wrote her final paper entitled *Receptarea literaturii maghiare în revistele românești* [*The Reception of Hungarian Literature from Romania in Romanian Journals*]. This work included a survey of Hungarian writers, the investigation meant to highlight the "feelings of the receptors" (Cistelecan 2003, 128). Among the interviewees there was Balázs, who said that "one cannot speak of an authentic perception if no interpreting context is created around the translated works" (2003, 130). He points out that the lack of studies leaves the reader face to face with just a text and the name of the author, most often unknown. This issue presents problems arising from each other: the reader "does not know how that author is quoted in the other culture, whether he/she integrates into any literary trend, whether he/she is young or old, whether that work is representative of his oeuvre, etc." (2003, 130). Thus the text may only be reported to pre-reading contingencies and "even after reading the text, the reader will not know what that literature looks like – he/she will only know whether he/she likes that work or not" (Balázs 2003, 130). The above mentioned anthology *Travers* constitutes a telling illustration of this belief, in which literary texts are complemented by studies, although this does not guarantee a wider reception.

In his essay "Un Frankfurt ardelean sau ce vede scriitorul român din literatura maghiară din România" ["A Transylvanian Frankfurt or What a Romanian Writer Sees from the Hungarian Literature in Romania"] he reflects on the results of the investigation initiated by Daniel Vighi in the *Vatra* magazine and tries to find answers to the cultural "parallelism". He shows that the situation reflected by the

29 Balázs pinpoints the merits of this literary history as follows: its quasi-comprehensive character, prompt reporting of existing Romanian editions of the works of Hungarian writers, and as a shortcoming, the language and content of the book have suffered because the manuscript of the book was ready for publication in 1984, but because of some changes that the author refused to make, the study could not appear until 1996. Subsequently, an update of the material could have been done, and the value system to which Hungarian literature in Romania was reported remained unchanged (2002b).

survey is accurate, but not definitive, more exactly the translated volumes are not sufficient and sometimes they are not representative and the Romanian reader must have “working tools” in order to form an opinion about the Hungarian literature in Romania (cf. Balázs 2003, 130).

In an interview given to Melinda Varga about the special number of the *Echinox* magazine (bilingual anthology of young Hungarian poets) he talks about the readers’ attitude, pointing out that the majority of the public receptive to such issues is made up of Romanian poets. Here he also emphasises that, from a poetic point of view, the selected texts show similarities with contemporary Romanian literature and, upon the publication of the anthology, a real interest in contemporary Hungarian poetry could be noticed.

3.3.4 *Translated...Translator*

Even if translation is not one of Balázs’s main concerns, it still constitutes part of his work. The magazines where he works as editor have sections of literary translation which promote, quite massively, Romanian literature. From a theoretical standpoint, he is concerned with the avant-garde of Hungarian literature in Romania, his interest extends to the avant-garde of Romanian literature, not only through the already-mentioned studies, but also through the translations of authors such as Gellu Naum, Virgil Teodorescu, Ilarie Voronca, Sesto Pals (Simon Şestopal) or Jonathan X. Uranus (Marcel Avramescu). He has also translated Max Blecher and the contemporaries Ion Stratan, Mircea Cărtărescu, Rareş Moldovan. At the same time, some of his own texts have been translated into Romanian, especially his academic work, by Francisko Kocsis, “Avangarda în literatura maghiară din România” [“The Avant-Garde in Hungarian Literature in Romania”], published by Bastion Publishing House from Timișoara in 2009, respectively into English – the volume of studies *Avant-Garde and Representations of Communism in Hungarian Literature from Romania* by Didactică și Pedagogică Publishing House, Bucharest 2009.

Conclusions

Hungarian literature in Romania has a special status given that from a socio-economic, political and historical point of view it is part of Romanian literature and from a linguistic point of view it belongs to Hungarian literature. It is the sum of social, economic, political and historical aspects of the two cultures, allowing to be considered much richer and flexible thanks to the multiple influences. Thus, the ways of communication, but also the mediators, cultural ambassadors are not only welcome, but necessary.

Poet, critic and literary historian, translator, university teacher Imre József Balázs has become not only a prominent figure of Hungarian journalism in Romania by creating innovative literary sections, writing and editing publications and specialized volumes, but also of contemporary literary life, coordinating literary workshops and mentoring and promoting young authors. Thus he is a mediator of the Hungarian-Romanian cultural relations and his belief is that “what can bind these cultures is a very pragmatic approach to the realities in which we live, [because] sometimes we seek answers to the same scientific and everyday questions” (2003,129). Through his translations, publishing of bilingual anthologies, through articles and studies concerning the literature of other nations – especially Romanian literature – he manages to open channels of intercultural communication highly needed among the circumstances in which – despite the “massive amount of accumulated translation” (see the *Introduction* to the August 2004 issue of *Korunk* magazine) – we still do not truly know each other’s literature.

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Surrealist Hybrids – Contemporary Hybrids Árpád Mezei and the Late Surrealist Theories of Hybridity

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Abstract. Árpád Mezei (1902–1998) was a Hungarian art theoretician and psychologist. In the 1940s he was co-founder of the Európai Iskola (European School), the most important assembly of progressive Hungarian artists and art theoreticians of the period. His readings in art theory and his friendship with the Surrealist painter and writer Marcel Jean (who lived in Budapest in the period between 1938 and 1945) had a strong impact on his intellectual profile: he co-authored with Marcel Jean three volumes that became important for the understanding of the international Surrealist movement. The paper analyses Mezei's concepts and tries to reconstruct his interpretative framework where several aspects of culture including mythology, history, literature, art and history of architecture communicate with each other, and hybridity is one of the key concepts. Being used to describe contemporary shifts in culture and identity by authors like Peter Burke, hybridity is of great interest to contemporary culture. The paper points out possible links between late Surrealist theories of hybridity and contemporary culture.

Keywords: hybridity, Lautréamont, Minotaur, organic, Surrealism.

The Material Dimensions of the Sign

Just like coins, words also have two faces: they are simultaneously signs and what they signify. [...] A word is [according to Plato and Leibniz] constructed from particular functions that provide it with a structure that is analogous to the structure of the object it expresses. [...] Surrealism was born out of the discovery that reality is constructed in its entirety on the principle of equivalence. The term 'Surrealism' expresses precisely this double nature of reality. Dadaism, the current that preceded Surrealism, corresponded

quite simply to the uncertainty principle, opposing the principle of identity: Dadaists used the two facets of words indistinctly. Surrealism starts from the distinct realities of the conscious and the unconscious and goes towards the synthesis of these components.¹ (Mezei 1947, 59–61)

These words exploring the possible connections between sounds and signification, material aspects and meanings, can be found in the catalogue of an important Surrealist exhibition, *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, and were written by Hungarian art theoretician Árpád Mezei, co-author with Surrealist painter Marcel Jean of several volumes on Surrealism and its contexts: *Maldoror* (Paris, 1947), *Genèse de la pensée moderne* (Paris, 1950), *Histoire de la peinture surréaliste* (Paris, 1959). In my paper I will argue that a re-reading of Surrealist texts and images could be inspired by one of Mezei's key concepts: hybridity. It is important to identify the historical role of such conceptualizations within Surrealism itself (that is, the role of hybrids in postwar Surrealist art), but this concept may also help to individualize Surrealism among other currents of avant-garde or modernism. With the increasing interest of scholars in the theories of hybridity within the context of globalization and multiple identities, the theories rooted in Surrealism may add another dimension to the issue. Transferring Surrealism from its interwar period to the postwar context was a difficult task in itself, many artists considering at that time and also in later interpretations that Surrealism had lost its relevance in postwar society. Therefore we have to speak here about a sort of double transfer if we want to explore the subject.

The starting point for Mezei in his essay is psychoanalysis, but if we consider his interpretative framework, we can notice that within it several aspects of culture including mythology, history, literature, art and architecture communicate with each other, and the concept of hybridity stresses on the *organic* side of the types of multitude that the author is considering. As he states elsewhere: "Surrealism conceives of man as being in the process of eternal change – he is therefore essentially a hybrid being" (Mezei 1983, 14). One of the most important goals of Surrealists was the attempt to wipe out all kinds of dualisms in culture – therefore we can see in the conceptualization of the "hybrid" a central element of their views. The "hybrid" beings of ancient mythologies are revived in Surrealist journals like the well-known *Minotaure*, and incorporate an inner alien, giving a material dimension to it.

1 Translations from French and Hungarian are my own throughout the article except where explicitly specified.

The Contexts of the 1947 International Surrealist Exhibition

Mezei entered the international scene of art criticism in 1947, publishing two texts in the catalogue of the Surrealist exhibition – one of them was the above cited *Liberté du langage*, the other an essay about the sixth canto of *Maldoror* by Lautréamont, this latter text being written in cooperation with Marcel Jean. This was to become a chapter of a whole book on *Maldoror*, published in the same year in Paris, in a collection directed by Maurice Nadeau (Jean–Mezei 1947). His works were well received within Surrealist circles – decades later, Sarane Alexandrian mentioned him in one of his reference books on Surrealism noting his perseverance: “In Hungary, the psychologist Arpad Mezei was an assiduous correspondent of the Parisian group, in whose work he participated” (1974, 236).

In the context of the 1947 exhibition the question of the “liberty of language” as formulated by Mezei seemed for André Breton, who conceived the structure of the catalogue, a statement supporting his own vision of postwar Surrealism. One of Mezei’s most important arguments in his text, correctly pointed out by Alyce Mahon in a recent reading, is that words as signs are often rooted in ancient referents and therefore are loaded with special powers and potentialities (2005, 138). Surrealism grew more and more interested during these years in mythology and magical rituals. André Breton’s reaction to the war was an urge to reshape human mentality, hoping for a renewal, trying to mark this shift also at a ritual level, in his theoretical texts but also by organizing the 1947 exhibition. His attempts to deal with the “latent content” of an age besides dealing with its “manifest content” – a remark formulated initially before the war, in 1938 (Breton 1967, 26–27) – showed an interesting convergence with Mezei’s analysis of the nature of language. The international surrealist exhibition marked Breton’s return to the French art scene, and a reformulation of Surrealist goals, the current being challenged at that time more and more strongly by communists and by existentialists in France. As Mahon points out in her book about late Surrealist theories and practices:

They responded to the horrors of the war by bringing together an international field of artists, the art of the insane and non-western art, to insist upon the need for creative rebirth. Through display and installation, a thematic focus on myth and magic, and lengthy essays in the accompanying catalogue, the exhibition reflected Breton’s determination, explained in 1941, to turn to Eros as a means of ‘re-establishing that equilibrium’ broken by the war. The 1947 exhibition marked surrealism’s re-entry to French culture and its belief that art and the exhibition should act as a forum within which the spectator could be initiated into a new world vision. (2005, 109)

Mezei's texts that appeared in the catalogue supported Breton's ideas and objectives in an indirect way: his text about the "liberty of language" insisted on the "multidimensional" character of words, where the materiality of the utterance is in a way the meaning itself – this is where he sees a decisive analogy between the surrealist and the magical approach to language (Mezei 1947, 61). Terms like "dialectical logic" or "synthesis" (of the realities rooted in the conscious and the unconscious) also show that Mezei was aware of the links of his approach to previous stages of Surrealism.

The joint interpretation of the Sixth Canto of *Maldoror* also aimed to highlight the possibility of a synthetic approach – this time between the "scientific" and "irrational" elements, compared here to the dual characteristic of light. Indeed, the text of the Sixth Canto itself announces a new level of consciousness and of "materiality:"

Would you then assert that because I have insulted man, the Creator, and myself in my explicable hyperboles, and with such whimsicality, that my mission is accomplished? No; the most important part of my work is nonetheless before me, a task remaining to be done. Henceforward the strings of the novel will move the three characters mentioned above; they will thus be endowed with a less abstract power. Vitality will surge into the stream of their circulatory system and you will see how startled you will be when you encounter, where at first you had only expected to see entities belonging to the realm of pure speculation, on the one hand the corporeal organism with its ramifications of nerves and mucous membranes and, on the other, the spiritual principle which governs the physiological functions of the flesh. It is beings powerfully endowed with life who, their arms folded and holding their breath, will stand prosaically (but I am sure the effect will be very poetic) before your eyes, only a few paces away from you, so that the sun's rays, falling first upon the tiles of the roofs and the lids of the chimneys, will then come and visibly shine on their earthly and material hair. [...] You will touch with your own hands the ascending branches of the aorta and the adrenal capsules; and then the feelings! (Lautréamont 1978, 91)

For Mezei and for Marcel Jean, these lines mean that Lautréamont passes in this Sixth Canto from the method of perception to the method of coordination, assuming a new role, that of the creator (Jean–Mezei 1947, 117). For this creator the material element is crucial as far as the outcome of creation is concerned (it is some sort of "proof," dedicated to empirical minds), although, as Mezei and Jean point out, the superiority of the spiritual principle is not denied by Lautréamont (1947, 115). Meanwhile, the authors assume that the Sixth Canto proves in a

psychological approach that Lautréamont is able to exit his personal labyrinth represented in the first five cantos, accessing a higher level of consciousness.

Psychoanalysis and the Organic

The metaphors used by psychoanalysis in describing man rely very much on an ontogenetical logic. In one of his papers Mezei states, commenting on Freud's views: "the personality develops ontogenetically: innate properties are modified by experiences incurred in the course of a life cycle. [...] The consecutive phases through which the personality with its threefold structure evolves mark the stages in a gradual process during which the psyche permeates particular body parts and their functions" (1983, 11–12). The process is described through the oral, anal, oedipal, narcissistic and motor stage – with the stress on different parts and functions of the body. In fact, Mezei and Jean present Lautréamont's text as a sort of self-accomplishing work, the different cantos representing different stages of prenatal life, of infantile life and of genital life, with the sixth canto that leaves this pattern and becomes a reflexion upon creation itself.

Of course, the authors do not claim the structure of *Maldoror* to be just as simple as that – instead of linearity they associate it rather to a spiral movement presented at the beginning of the Fifth Canto by Lautréamont himself: the movement of the flocks of birds.

Flocks of starlings have a way of flying which is peculiar to them, and seem to move according to a regular and uniform plan such as that of a well-drilled company of soldiers punctiliously obeying the orders of their one and only leader. The starling obey the voice of instinct, and their instinct tells them to keep on approaching the centre of the main body, whereas the rapidity of their flight takes them incessantly beyond it; so that this multitude of birds, thus joined in their common movement towards the same magnetic point, incessantly coming and going, circling and criss-crossing in all directions, forms a kind of highly turbulent eddy, the entire mass of which, though not moving in any definable direction, seems to have a general tendency to turn in upon itself, this tendency resulting from the individual circling movements of each one of its parts, in which the centre, endlessly tending to expand but continually pressed down and repulsed by the opposing force of the surrounding lines which weigh down on it, is constantly tighter, more compact, than any one of these lines which themselves become more and more so, the nearer they come to the centre. (1978, 75)

In their interpretation of the Fifth Canto, Mezei and Jean consider this movement to be a basic characteristic and a recurring motif of the whole work and they try to identify the centre of this movement (which symbolizes, among other things, the complexity of the self) as the present moment (1947, 132). This means that, according to their views, human nature is essentially a dynamic one, undergoing constant transformations. This representation coincides, of course, with the Surrealists' representations of the human personality, and partly also explains their fascination with Lautréamont's works.

As they put it: *Maldoror* has a labyrinthic structure, and in the centre of labyrinths there awaits a hybrid being, half-animal and half-man, the Minotaur. The encounter of Theseus with the Minotaur is, as many interpretations argue, an encounter with oneself (Jean–Mezei 1947, 88–90). But the hybrid identity, as the myth itself suggests, is not a static one – the labyrinthic movement is essential to it: Theseus has to perform a specific, spiral movement before meeting the other side of himself. Although Theseus kills the bull-headed beast, his victory does not mean that the ideal, static type of man has overcome the other model based on discontinuity. Theseus himself is the one to lose Ariadne after his victory, and indirectly to kill his own father. It seems as if, in the long run, the Minotaur had only lost a battle. Therefore, as Mezei and Jean suggest, a sort of synthetic process is needed to survive the storyline provided by the myth, where the Minotaur (representing a variant of the unconscious side) and Theseus (representing the conscious side) would cooperate. Mezei's statement is finally that the Surrealists viewed the Theseus-model of the "pure man" as a fiction, and they considered instead a model where the Minotaur is himself part of human nature and has to be dealt with (Jean 1959, 231; Mezei 1993, 72–73). That is what they found in the text of *Maldoror*, where such a world vision incorporating hybrids and shapeshifters prevails. And this also explains why one of the most important journals of Surrealists was entitled *Minotaure*. As the author of *Surréalisme et mythologie moderne* has formulated recently, "the Minotaur became the emblem of surrealism, its most reliable ally in its fights against the excesses of rationalism. [...] *Minotaure* marks the entry of surrealism into its 'mythological age'" (Ottinger 2002, 47–49).

What I find essential in the metaphor of the *hybrid*, used by Mezei and Jean, is that it is based on an organic structure: if we compare it to other models like that of the *collage* (often used by other avant-garde movements, including Surrealism itself) or, from a later time, that of *bricolage*, we can see that this model maintains the belief that the hybrid organism is *alive* besides being *functional* – it is not an artificial product. A Surrealist collage (like the ones made by Max Ernst) is very likely to hide the fact that it is made from fragments – it simulates and creates the impression of a totality. As Pál Deréky points out, Surrealism maintains the principle of montage of earlier avant-garde currents, but transfers, at least partly,

its structuring laws to the realm of the unconscious or of the dream. A Surrealist poem acts *as if* the elements of a metaphor or of a montage would come from the unconscious, and the effect on the reader is that his attention is not drawn upon the fragmentary nature of the work (Derék 1992, 165).

If we return to a contextualization of such Surrealist techniques and approaches within the postwar historical situation, we may note that it can be viewed as a signal of hope: the renewal of human mentality and the re-establishment of the equilibrium in the world was approached and expressed by the postwar Surrealists at another level than French communists or existentialists did it.

Conclusion: Surrealist vs. Contemporary Hybrids

The contemporary world is often described as an age of cultural encounters, and of economic and cultural globalization which is strongly connected to a process of hybridization (Burke 2009, 2). As Peter Burke points out, there is a terminological debate concerning the accurate description of this process, with dominant metaphors coming from the fields of economics, zoology/biology, metallurgy, food and linguistics. These are: borrowing, hybridity, the melting pot, the stew and translation/creolization (Burke 2009, 34). As we can see, all of these are connected to human actions, but only one of them is an organic metaphor: hybridity. It is important to see, of course, what are the objectives that we want to reach through the use of such concepts and what is the standpoint that we take by making a choice between these metaphors and these fields.

I would argue that an organic metaphor, like the one coming from the field of zoology/biology can be suitable when addressing problems at an individual level, either anthropologically or psychologically. While organic essentializations should be avoided, the concept of man as a hybrid opens up some possibilities as compared to those postulating identities directly or through metaphors as static and unchangeable.

The Surrealist experiments with the hybrids do not hide the conflicting aspects: the famous Surrealist games of the “cadavre exquis” or the lines in *Maldoror* beginning with “*beau comme*” are good examples of violent and disruptive differences incorporated into one single entity. However, the organic metaphor suggests something very important: that the multitude is not to be avoided and is not something that can be “fixed” like in the case of a machine or of a mechanical object. One should consider the reactions of a living organism when dealing with it.

Authors like Mezei trace back the question of hybridity to mythological times and stories (mainly of Greek and Egyptian mythology), offering to their readers an insight that reaches beyond short-term comparisons. Their activity proves that Surrealism maintained its basic positions concerning the importance of dealing

with the conscious and the unconscious levels of the human psyche also in the postwar period, experimenting with new conceptualizations and with new methods where objects, bodies and performed rituals gained a greater significance than before.

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Utopist with Common Sense. Self-Narration and Career Making in the Works of Ferenc Balázs

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Abstract. My study focuses on the self-narration of the young Transylvanian writer and social activist of the first part of the twentieth century, Ferenc Balázs, based on his personal correspondence and his autobiographical works. The medieval tradition of peregrination becomes a journey around the world which later will offer the ideological background of his work, and an evergoing clash between cultural traditions. Both his literary work and social achievement are characterized by premodern nostalgia for rural life mixed with utopian socialist ideas. The task of shaping a traditionalist, rural community according to modern idea becomes a token of individual achievement in his works. Balázs's self-narration is contrasted in the memoirs of his wife and co-worker, Christine Frederiksen (*The Alabaster Village*), narrated from the special point of view of the stranger. Her interpretation comes to complete a story filled with complex interactions of cultural representations.

Keywords: cultural representation, self-narration.

My essay aims at presenting the career history of Unitarian minister, writer, poet, publicist, cooperative association leader, etc., Ferenc Balázs. He was one of the ideologists of the volume entitled *Tizenegyek Antológiája* [*Anthology of the Eleven*], which gathered the first-generation authors of post-1919 Transylvanian literature. Although impressive in its complexity, his career history was not entirely extraordinary in his own time. Among theology students, taking study trips abroad was relatively common and it kept the tradition of peregrination alive. In Ferenc Balázs's case, however, the study trip became a round the world trip by which he established the ideological background of a lifestyle that combined premodern nostalgia towards the countryside with elements of utopian socialism, where the key to individual progression was the improvement of community life.

It would be hard and perhaps inadequate to examine the complex and diverse life and work of authors like Ferenc Balázs based only on their literary activities.

It would be equally misguided to focus only on Ferenc Balázs, the Unitarian theologian, then minister, the “folk expert,” the rural development advocate, the college curator, the church restorer, the founder of the cooperative movement (and we could further enumerate the domains of his activity). The various areas of activity interfere, therefore they can only jointly outline the authorial career, a career in which the literary works are not only inspired by certain other activities, but they frequently become the fictionalized, metaphorized expressions of these activities. His most well-known work, *A rög alatt* [*Under the Clod*], which is a memoir of a rather undetermined genre full of sociographic descriptions, is actually the depiction of the same coherent and consequent undertaking of improving society also present in his articles, publicistic works (e.g., “Isten völgye” [“The Valley of God”]) and in his novel *Zöld árvíz* [*Green Flood*]. In his correspondence with his wife Christine Frederiksen,¹ he turns the process of getting from theoretical preparation to the realization of his goals into a coherent story. “I know that deep down I am the same as I used to be back then, but my soul no longer manifests itself in a theoretical search for truth, but in the realization of the truth that I have found. This truth is the individual’s full and rich life within the community’s full and rich life” (Balázs n.y., n. p.).

Based on data regarding dates and locations, below I will try to give an outline of Balázs’s career history, a history that, in subsequent interpretations, becomes a coherent narrative of his personal fulfilment through serving his community.

From a temporal perspective, Balázs’s life story falls between the years 1901 and 1937. The major historic and economic events of the era (World War I, Transylvania’s annexation to Romania as the result of the Treaty of Trianon, the global economic crisis) provide a frame to his particular life events. From a spatial perspective, his life story can be portrayed along the path Kolozsvár – Budapest – Oxford (England) – Berkeley (California) – Tokyo – Osaka – Beijing – Shanghai – Bombay – Calcutta – Bagdad – Kolozsvár – Székelykeresztúr – Mészkö – Torda.

Balázs’s name is mostly linked to this notion of the adventurous trip abroad, especially since his first significant work – after his *Mesefolyam* [*Fairy Tale River*] from the year 1922 – *Bejárom a kerek világot* [*Wandering All Over the World*, 1929] commemorates these trips. The point of this rather irregular itinerary is self-discovery and not a discovery of the world. “In my journeys I was guided by one goal: to realize my humanness”² – says the introductory chapter of the book entitled *Kikiáltás* [*Proclamation*] (Balázs 1975, 5). For that matter, the contemporary reception sensed that they were not dealing with a

1 Their correspondence went on from the beginning of their acquaintance in 1925 to Ferenc Balázs’s death in 1937, and it accurately outlines the author’s undertakings in his active years and his reflections on them.

2 The translations from Balázs’s texts (except quotations from his letters, which he wrote in English) and from Hungarian specialist literature are my own throughout the article.

regular travelogue, but with a psychographical story of personal development projected onto the map of the world. In his review, Gábor Gaál emphasizes that Balázs's attention "is captured in each country only by the things somehow related to his quite special view of life embedded in socialism, religion, racial beliefs, panhumanism and panpacifism" (qtd. in Bolyai 1930, 478–479). László Szabédi (then László Székely) exemplifies this using the description of the time spent in Japan:

Japan, for example, does not appear as Japan, but as a country made of the fusion of two heterogeneous elements: one that Ferenc Balázs likes: the healthy element, meant for development, and one that contradicts his beliefs: the element of decay. We cannot get an image of the various cultures surrounding the Transylvanian wanderer because we can only see Ferenc Balázs's image everywhere. We can see it blurrily under Mount Fuji, while the image is much clearer on the frame of the Buddha sculptures. The Sphinx is not even visible, we can only see a busy Ferenc Balázs hurrying towards home. (1930, 74–75)

The tradition of peregrination would suggest a pattern according to which, after visiting the foreign schools, the young man returns home and tries to put his acquired experience and knowledge into practice within different circumstances. According to this model, globetrotting (his studies at Oxford and Berkeley and the Oriental journey itself where he had the chance to meet influential thinkers like Japanese Toyohiko Kagawa and Indian Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi) was in fact a theoretical preparation for the work that Balázs tried to accomplish after returning to Transylvania. He had a painfully small amount of time for carrying out this activity, the work that he describes in *Under the Clod* as guiding the village into the transition to common economy.

Today Balázs is primarily known as a writer, which is not entirely unjustified as he began as one of the first ideologists and organizers of the early twenties' (Hungarian) Transylvanian literature headed towards institutionalization; however, after returning home in 1928, he clearly considered the renewal of society much more important. From this point forward his whole literary activity was practically subordinated to his pacifist and utopistic socialist principles according to which development is formed on the basis of cooperative associations, and class conflicts should be resolved through self-development and mutual cooperation. The main character of all of his works is he himself, the educator of the people, the village manager, the community developer. As his friend Imre Mikó – who later became the keeper of his life work and co-author of the monography on Balázs – humorously formulated it: "Ferenc Balázs dedicated his health to community work and his illness to literature" (1975, 32),

as he mostly wrote when his progressive pulmonary disease kept him in bed. It is perceptible in all of his works that his target audience primarily consisted of young readers who were committed to social changes and who appreciated voluntary activities. He considered the emancipation of villagers through work in cooperative associations to be the only chance for positive social changes, and that is why, for him, peasantry was the foundation of a new society that could live in harmony with nature and with one another.

Although journeys in life story narratives traditionally appear as moments of self-discovery and experience, in Balázs's case it would be wrong to state that all his society developing activities accomplished in the ten years of his active life and all his publicistic and more or less fictional literary works "promoting" these activities solely arose from his theoretical and practical experience acquired abroad. A portion of this (e.g., the emphasis on cooperative associations, pacifism, utopistic socialism) may partially be considered a phenomenon specific to the era, thus it is perceptible in the case of many of Balázs's generation (the so-called second generation). A significant part of the principles that he propagated had actually been crystallized before his journey, consequently the study trip can primarily be interpreted as a process of collecting examples and experience.

In his book entitled *Otthon és haza* [*Home and Homeland*] Nándor Bárdi discusses the characteristic worldview of second generation Transylvanian intellectuals based on three main aspects: the expansion of the concept of nation towards the working class and peasantry, social sensitivity and an increased emphasis on both political and economic self-organization.

Self-organization and embourgeoisement were central thoughts in their circles, regardless of differences in worldview. The organizers of the Hungarian minority's cooperative movements are among them as well. By the thirties it became clear that national autonomies could be established within the given circumstances. Therefore, developing their own (i.e., Hungarian) social organizations, education system, cooperative movement, education of elites, etc., was brought into prominence in the process of national confinement. They did not conceive national autonomy merely within a legal framework, as given "from above;" combining the notion of the Hungarian alliance with contemporary corporativism, they thought it was possible to establish by means of self-organizing social institutions. (Bárdi 2013, 552)

The ideas of social sensitivity and the urgent need for the economic, cultural and political emancipation of people (in most cases the word refers to the peasantry) were actually present in the literary aesthetic ideology of the Eleven, formulated by Balázs in 1923. The first manifestation of a generation based group in the history of Transylvanian literature, the *Anthology of the Eleven*, gathered

young authors like Balázs, István Dobai, Zoltán Finta, Géza Jakab, Béla Jancsó, Sándor Kacsó, János Kemény, Albert Maksay, László Mihály, Sándor Szent Iványi and Áron Tamási. The anthology was published in a period when, after the Treaty of Trianon, the institutions of interwar Hungarian literature in Transylvania were not yet established or strengthened, a period called the “heroic age” by Ernő Ligeti in his memoir *Súly alatt a pálma* [*Palm-Tree Grows under Burden*]. A sensitivity to self-organization was shown even by the self-effort and the direct marketing methods of reaching the audience with this generational anthology, an anthology that for many authors represented the frame of their authorial debut.³ The first article of the anthology is Balázs’s piece *Az erdélyi magyar irodalom* [*The Hungarian Literature of Transylvania*], which provides a literary programme. This literary programme clearly promotes Transylvanian, moreover, Szekler literature. Balázs promotes a programme that mythifies the notion of “race,” being Szekler and the countryside. The attitude of popular literature and the pragmatical, village oriented, society developing attitude of the Transylvanian youth is emphasized; however, a necessary common sense is present as well: “Transylvanianism in itself, without creative talent is not a value” (Balázs 1923, 16).

From the perspective of literary history, publishing the anthology was not an important momentum; out of its authors, the only one who became an outstanding writer was Áron Tamási, who had already been building his authorial career regardless of the anthology. The author of the related chapter in the monography on Balázs, the contemporary Mikó, does not express appreciation for its literary/aesthetic values either; instead, he discusses its role in bringing the generation together and its function of proclaiming a set of common values in the very period of their emergence.

Publishing the anthology of the Eleven was by all means the sign of an era. An indisputable merit of the Anthology is that it launched a new generation of Hungarian writers in Romania who – using their audible or less audible voices – promoted a new kind of orientation in the reality of Hungarians from Romania and in the Hungarian literature of Romania. [...] They were the ones who took the path which later would be followed by the Hungarian youth of Romania between the two World Wars. (Mikó, Kicsi and Horváth Sz. 1983, 79)

Shortly after publishing the anthology, Balázs travelled to study first to Oxford, then to Berkeley. The opportunity for a foreign study trip is not surprising as many

3 Using Áron Tamási’s elaborate lines, the eleven young authors (all men) of the anthology asked the girls they knew to collect subscriptions to the future anthology. The first appeal was published on 22 April 1923, and on 5 July every subscription collector got a second appeal in which they were asked to provide the addresses of their girl acquaintances in order to increase the number of subscription collectors. The operation proved to be successful as the anthology of mostly unknown young authors was sold in 3,200 copies.

of the Eleven – which can be considered a circle of friends, too – went abroad to study at that time (e.g., Áron Tamási, Albert Maksay, Sándor Szent Iványi, etc.). The monographer Mikó (who also spent two years in Paris), adapting to the political conditions of the time the monography was published, discretely leaves us in the dark regarding how Balázs could study abroad and, more importantly, regarding who financed his trip: “he obtains the two year fellowship of the Oxford Faculty of Unitarian Theology. In autumn, together with his colleague Zsigmond Máthé (who got the fellowship of the Manchester Unitarian College) they are ready to go see the world” (Mikó, Kicsi and Horváth Sz. 1983, 80). It is likely that Balázs was able to travel to England with the help of the Unitarian Church and the financial support of the Hungarian government’s finance policy called “Eastern Action.” The Hungarian state’s “political aids were clearly managed by the Hungarian National Party; the division of the subsidy among the different social, primarily educational institutions was done by the representatives of the historic Hungarian churches through the Interdenominational Council” (Bárdi 2013, 367). This seems to be confirmed by the recollections of Miklós Mester, who worked for the Popular Literature Association as a student, and later, between 1936 and 1949, he was the director of the dorm called Foreigners’ College or Szekler Dorm, where the financial aids could be received on the third floor. Balázs’s name appears among the figures of the Transylvanian literary and cultural life whom Mester remembered seeing at the dorm (2012, 519).

The years spent in Oxford and Berkeley, his connections to and participation in the local student movements and pacifist movements consolidated and modulated his already powerful intentions of shaping society. (He did not travel eastward only on his own initiative; he was delegated by the World Peace Preparatory Congress, travelled to China, Japan, India and finally back to Kolozsvár.)

As we can see in his correspondence with Christine Frederiksen and in the related chapters of *Travelling All Over the World*, he was not shaped by random experiences, he was deliberately looking for relevant information adaptable to the circumstances in Transylvania. As an Oxford student he believed that the point of the Cooperative Society was to form small producer communities and produce goods depending on their own needs. He considered “England’s one-sided industrialization” (Balázs 1975, 67) and the fact that he saw no sign of cooperative tendencies in the economy of the United States of America alarming.

In 1927, when travelling eastward he started his journey towards home, he shaped his itinerary based on his interest in cooperative associations and self-supporting economic models. During the journey he visited (in their own homes/schools) three of the most important political/economic/philosophical thinkers of the contemporary Japan and India.

Toyohiko Kagawa (1888–1960) was a Christian reformer, pacifist and labour activist who, among others, worked in the squatter areas around Kobe as a social

worker and sociologist. Balázs did not merely make him a respectful courtesy visit, but he spent several days at his school and accompanied him to some of his lecture tours; moreover, he also performed at these lectures. Thus, he got direct information on the cooperative associations established by Kagawa in the early twenties as a demonstration of the theorems of his book, *Brotherhood Economics*. According to the correspondence, Balázs was mainly impressed by Kagawa's energetic, colourful lecturing style and the persuasion based on visual demonstration, a practice used by him one year later when he held lectures for young villagers around Székelykeresztúr. As Balázs puts it in his letter to his fiancée written on 21 November 1927 in Hanamatsu, Kagawa

is one of the best speakers I have ever heard, he uses American methods like demonstration. He shows different statistical or other types of boards to his audience. He draws or writes on huge white sheets of paper using a paint-brush dipped in Indian ink. [...] When, due to his realistic method, the audience identifies with the situation, his smile disappears, serious words are used, a conclusion or invocation follows. (n.y., n. p.)

When he was in India, he visited Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, the two most important political/cultural figures of the “modern” India then struggling for independence. He immediately reported on both encounters to his fiancée, and later he wrote detailed portrayals of both using his diary entries. (These appear on the pages of *Travelling All Over the World* and in a separate article published in *Erdélyi Helikon*.) It is worth emphasizing that out of all his experiences in India, he found the natural teaching method of Tagore's Shantiniketan ashram and his village development site, Shriniketan, to be the most exciting experiences:

However, I was much more interested in Tagore's village development site Shriniketan than in the school. When I found out that the poet, thinker, master of the art of living Tagore didn't forget about the thing most poets, thinkers and masters of the art of living don't even find out, my joy was infinite. [...] He does not make reproaches to the government about letting the village perish, he does not recite allocutions to society about saving the village because the village is India, and if it perishes, India perishes. He is not satisfied by establishing schools where attendees can learn about protecting the people. He himself joins the workers. He has to show the opportunities of a more human life to the 10–12 villages in the neighbourhood of his site. He immediately sets up a hospital and employs paid doctors. He provides free medication. He organizes the youth of the villages, he makes them burn down the reeds where the nests of the disease-spreading mosquitos are, he makes

them clean the water pools. He launches spinning and weaving courses. And, in order to educate the villagers regarding economics, he complements the site with a poultry farm, a dairy-farm, an olericulture garden, a fruit garden and a workshop for processing leather. He employs professionals to manage these, to give the necessary instructions to the villagers and to train people for carrying out an even wider range of work. (Balázs, 2002, 243)

After going back to Transylvania, Balázs wanted to get a parsonage and begin his community service mission as soon as possible, but instead he got a supervisor job in the dorm of the college from Székelykeresztúr. At first on his own, then by recruiting helpers among the young villagers, between November 1929 and March 1930 he visited one hundred villages and held one hundred and sixty lectures using projected images (Mikó, Kicsi and Horváth Sz. 1983, 118). His lectures consisted of presenting and explaining seven series of pictures. The locations seen by Balázs during his trips were among these (e.g. Fabulous India, New York, etc.), but he also held general educational lectures on apiculture, agriculture, glass-making, etc. After becoming enthusiastic over the success of his lectures, together with some of his friends, he organized a one-week training course, first for the young villagers around Keresztúr, then for those who lived along the river Homoród. Beside Balázs, the lectures were held by young Unitarian ministers, highschool teachers and a doctor; the audience was of approximately two hundred people.

Based on the reports about his lectures and the Youth Days organized by him in the summer of 1930 in Kobátfalva, Siménfalva and Kissolymos (these reports can be found on the pages of *Under the Clod*, as well as in the magazines *Kévekötés* or *Erdélyi Fiatalok*), we get a picture similar to that of Kagawa's lectures or Tagore's ashram from Shantiniketan. Now the person drawing on huge sheets of paper was Balázs himself:

More than two hundred young people from 20 villages came to the assembly. In one of the classrooms of the highschool, I wrote the main thought of the assembly with ornate letters on a sheet of wrapping paper: What is required for the realization of God's Kingdom? Below it I numbered the building blocks in order: 1. Sound body. 2. Sound mind. 3. Well-being. 4. Beauty. 5. Knowledge. 6. Love 7. Religiosity. (Balázs 1975, 243)

It is worth noting how these needs were ranked like in a type of Maslow-pyramid, beginning from physical and mental health and economic well-being to religiosity. It is also important to point out that during these trainings, as part of educating people to live healthy lives, he also provided sex education to girls and to boys separately, which was a pioneer effort in his time. The importance of

hygiene, health and other types of education, respectively the consequences of their lack are demonstrated in Balázs's letters from Mészkö written to his wife in America and in his wife's memoir, *Alabaster Village*. The latter gives a shocking image of the physical and psychical misery considered natural by the villagers, a misery primarily salient in the lives of infants and women, as well as in the extremely high infant mortality rates.

In order to clarify why I call Balázs a utopist with common sense, we should compare his unconventional village monography to his wife's book entitled *Alabaster Village. Our Years in Transylvania* (Morgan 1997). If *Under the Clod* is a self-discovery novel with sociographic descriptions, *Alabaster Village* is a memoir written with anthropological accuracy. While the former is not concerned with the reality of the actual world, but with what it is supposed to become, the latter focuses on individual human fates. *Alabaster Village* is a story based on the letters Christine sent home to America during her years spent in Romania (the period approximately overlaps with the years of her marriage with Balázs). While she includes in her work plenty of paraphrases and quotes from the letters, she sometimes adds short comments to them (e.g., she reports on the subsequent fates of certain characters, she complements the parts where her opinion changed regarding the problem in question, etc.).

The idea of writing a book practically first arose at the time of writing the letters. One of the addressees, Lucy Morgan, who visited Christine and Ferenc Balázs in Mészkö (accompanied by her husband Arthur Morgan, director of Antioch College) and thus knew the location and the obstacles of their activity, already recommended the publication of Christine's letters in 1933. However, the idea could not be put into practice due to their concern about possible political retaliations. Nevertheless, we cannot exclude the possibility that Christine already had the publication of a book in mind as she was writing her extremely detailed letters rich in precise descriptions based on a wide range of information. (Some general reports on their life and work in Mészkö were published in different Quaker and Unitarian magazines, mostly with the intention of obtaining financial support or reporting on how they had used previous aids.)

Even though Mészkö becomes the main location of both *Alabaster Village* and *Under the Clod*, the outsider does not only face the otherness of village society and life; the circle in which Christine Frederiksen and – in a different way and to a different degree – Balázs participate as outsiders is much broader. They are people with strong identities, concrete visions and conceptual backgrounds, who see things according to their worldviews, while their introspections are never autotelic, they are always motivated by the intention of changing things for the better. Balázs and Christine Frederiksen were idealist society reformers who were horrified by the “barbarity” of the culture unknown to them and who did everything in their power to create “more human” conditions. In many cases,

these were indeed vital assignments in which they took over the role of the non-existent social network (e.g., sanitary arrangements, infant care, cultural and art education, economic changes favouring the transition to cooperative associations, etc.). They both considered folk art and some elements of popular culture extremely important (e.g., Balázs put great effort into convincing the villagers to preserve their church in its traditional form); however, they were not at all susceptible to the portion of popular culture related to popular beliefs and superstitions, thus, in the name of “modernity” they despised and fought against its manifestations.

Balázs was a utopist with common sense, in fact, he was not interested in the actual Mészkö, but in “the valley of God,” i.e., the village it could become after the necessary changes. In order to achieve this, he desperately tried to induce changes, mostly at a rate neither he nor people around him could keep up with. Christine Frederiksen’s attitude was more pragmatical, she planned to achieve long term changes at a slower rate; at the same time she was much more open to a two-way communication, to investigate the community’s own self-proclaimed needs.

Aside from personal/authorial attitudes, the reason for this must be that Christine appeared as a stranger in the village, without any clerical status that could have entitled her to take a leading position, thus her relationship and communication with the villagers was multi-dimensional, and it facilitated a process of mutual learning. The formula is more complicated than in the case of the young minister who was engaged in serving and educating the community. The women working in the household gave directions to the inexperienced wife of the minister regarding the customs of the village and the local conditions; they taught her the trickeries of gardening and managing a household, which must have seemed rather primitive compared to the American practices she had been familiar with. In exchange for the information regarding these practices (usually improved or worn out by consecutive generations) she provided up-to-date knowledge about anything they were interested in, from infant care to dairy-farming, based on modern sources like Encyclopaedia Britannica. She usually faced difficulties due to the lack of proper conditions needed in order to perform these activities according to modern, scientific knowledge, thus, most of their innovations could not be used by the villagers. The crafts and cultural activities, lectures and reports based on personal interactions and sharing experiences (which are much closer to ancient forms of communication and obtaining information) proved to be much more successful.

In *Alabaster Village* we find a complicated interplay of fitting in and being an outsider, of passive observation and active participation, of identity and alterity. We get an authentic picture of what Balázs called a “beautiful apostolic life” in *Under the Clod* (1936, 286).

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The Representation of Ireland in Bertalan Szemere's *Utazás külföldön* or *A Journey Abroad* A Study of Szemere's Image-Forming Sources

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Abstract. The present study adds to my ongoing research into Irish-Hungarian relations in the nineteenth century. As such it is concerned with Bertalan Szemere's representation of Ireland in his travelogue *Utazás külföldön* [*A Journey Abroad*]. It approaches Szemere's work from the perspective of the following three questions. How does Szemere's trip to Ireland fit into the tradition of Irish-Hungarian contacts? What urged Szemere to sail over to Ireland and extend his already long and tiring tour of Europe? And finally, what factors shaped Szemere's image of Ireland in his travel account? A preliminary study of the conditions of Szemere's trip and his actual account of the country has led me to the hypothesis that in the process of creating his own representation of Ireland Szemere heavily relied on external sources. I seek to answer these questions by identifying the place of Szemere's travel account in the tradition of Hungarian-Irish contacts; by relating it to other texts on Ireland by Szemere's Hungarian contemporaries; and by comparing it to particular reports on Ireland by European travellers. My aim is to prove that Szemere's representation of Ireland was primarily informed and moulded by German and English sources as they were transferred to Szemere by some Hungarian periodicals. My study also emphasizes the importance of further research into the interaction of Hungarian and European discourse on Ireland in the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Hungarian-Irish contacts, the Age of Reforms, reformist travellers, German and English intermediaries.

Introduction

In Dublin (4 August, 1837) first I climbed Nelson's 186-foot commemorative column [...]; The city is big but it will not impress one as great, it is clean but

poverty makes it look disgusting, and it evokes the image of a canal in ancient Rome which is made of marble but overflows with sewage. Yet, I was still satisfied at the “top.” But I descended and I was incapable of enjoying the view any more. I felt overwhelmed by the sight of destitution and suffering all around me – awful misery nowhere ever seen before. (Szemere 1983, 353–354)¹

The passage above is the English translation of a Hungarian description of the city of Dublin included in Bertalan Szemere’s travelogue entitled *Utazás külföldön* or *A Journey Abroad*. A writer and a prestigious public figure, Szemere belonged to the so-called Young Hungary Movement, a group of reformist politicians in the Age of Reforms (1825–1848), which preceded Hungary’s abortive struggle for independence from the Habsburg Monarchy in 1848–49. As a leading politician of the party opposing Habsburg rule Szemere also served as Prime Minister in Hungary’s first, short-lived responsible government in 1849.

During the reform years, in 1836 and 1837 Szemere went on a Western European study trip, and visited “Germanland,” France, the Czech country, Great Britain and “Irishland,” the Netherlands, Belgium, the Rhineland, Switzerland and Bavaria. He stopped at several developed Western cities, such as Berlin, Amsterdam and Paris, where he stayed for nearly a half year. In Britain he spent a whole month in London, and extended his tour to as far in the north as Liverpool, Newcastle and even Glasgow. The entire tour lasted for almost a year and a half. Throughout the tour Szemere recorded his impressions and experiences, expanded them into a travelogue, which he published as *Utazás külföldön* or *A Journey Abroad*. Although censorship delayed the release of the printed book until 1840, in just nine months it was sold in a thousand and two hundred copies. Reflecting on its wide popularity, Antal Csengery, another leading reformist and Szemere’s friend at the time, called the work “the schoolbook of Young Hungary” (qtd. in Csorba 1944, 47).

Extending my earlier research into nineteenth-century Irish-Hungarian contacts (Pintér 2012, 2013, 2015), in this study I focus on Szemere’s account of his visit to Ireland from 4 to 8 August, 1837. I am fundamentally concerned with the following questions. How does Szemere’s trip to Ireland fit into the tradition of Irish-Hungarian relations? What inspired and urged Szemere to sail over the Irish Sea, and lengthen his already long and tiring journey with a visit to the Emerald Island? And finally, what factors moulded and sourced the image that Szemere creates of Ireland in his own account?

With regard to my third question it should be noted that although Szemere’s trip to Ireland took altogether five days in effect it only meant a three-day stay in Dublin: on the first day he took the boat from England to Ireland, on the morning of the fifth day he was already sailing back to England, and as we know, he did not

1 The translations from Hungarian texts are my own throughout the article.

travel extensively outside of the Irish capital. Therefore, it is worth recognizing that Szemere's account includes certain statements that presuppose a deeper and more thorough study of conditions in Ireland. For instance, in Dublin, he depicts a free kitchen which feeds some three thousand paupers daily (1983, 356–357). In connection with the countryside, which he did not actually tour, Szemere states that the poor Irish live on potatoes, and grow the worst kind, the so-called “pig potatoes,” because of its high yields (1983, 358). Viewing Szemere's well-informed observations against the backdrop of his fleeting visit in the Irish capital I propose that his presentation of Ireland did not exclusively rely on his direct experience of the country but on some outer sources.

In seeking answers to these questions and attempting to prove the veracity of my hypothesis first I will examine Szemere's description of Ireland in the frame of Irish-Hungarian relations. Then I will explore how it relates to contemporaneous Hungarian and European discourse concerned with Ireland in the early-nineteenth century.

Szemere and the Tradition of Irish-Hungarian Relations

There is a wide range of primary and secondary texts, historical documents and modern scholarly works that provide evidence of a long line of Irish-Hungarian relations and of shared interest by the two peoples in each other's histories. The centuries-old tradition of mutual curiosity had yielded inter-country visits and related documents, and a knowledge of these may have aroused Szemere's desire to see the Emerald Island with his own eyes.

The first group of these documents dates back to the Late Middle Ages. The earliest extant references to a Hungarian in Ireland are about Lőrinc Tar, a Hungarian cleric living in the time of Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387–1473), King of Hungary and Holy Roman Emperor. Tar paid a visit to St Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Derg and wrote a medieval account of his journey in Latin, mixing legend with travelogue, real with religious and imaginary experiences (Fügedi 1974, 156–157 and Kabdebo 2001, 19).

Religion was also the background of an Irishman fleeing the troops of Oliver Cromwell's Irish campaign. Walter Lynch, Bishop of Clonfert, stayed in the northwestern Hungarian city of Győr from 1655 to 1663, and donated an icon of the Virgin Mary to the Cathedral of Győr. The icon subsequently became revered as the “Virgin that shed tears” on St Patrick's Day in 1697. Because of its miraculous attributes the Weeping Mary of Győr has been used as a destination of Roman Catholic pilgrimage by adherents of the church to this day. Religious orientation permeates seventeenth-century Hungarian chronicles too which refer to ongoing Irish events and comment upon them in terms of the chroniclers' own

Protestant or Catholic affiliations. Therefore, these intercultural references also reflect religious divisions in Hungary at the time.

Considering the potential impact of the above mentioned contacts on Szemere I refer to István Pálffy's seminal study entitled "Hungarian Views of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century." Here Pálffy states that nineteenth-century Hungarian interest in the Irish and their country seems to have derived from the medieval or early-modern relations which, on the other hand, fit into the story of a never ceasing Hungarian interest in the Western World. But, as Pálffy continues, these early contacts were primarily determined by religious factors, therefore, they did not have a direct impact on the political, social and economic curiosity that Hungarian reformers of the nineteenth century developed in Ireland (1987, 33).

Nevertheless, an early-eighteenth century event already indicates the appearance of Hungarian interest in Ireland's political situation. It is connected to Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II, leader of a prolonged military campaign in 1703–11 to gain independence from the Habsburgs. Although the fight for freedom eventually failed in 1711, at the height of his success in 1707, Prince Rákóczi dethroned the House of Habsburgs in Hungary, and argued that Hungary's connection with Austria was constitutionally similar to that of Scotland and England, that Austria handled Hungary as England treated Ireland, that is, as a "conquered country" without "ever having conquered it" (qtd. in Kabdebo 2001, 21). In his extended study of Irish-Hungarian parallels Thomas Kabdebo (2001) claims that Rákóczi's argument indicated the understanding of a national parallel between the two countries, and that this understanding strengthened and deepened in the following centuries. Kabdebo supports his claim about the exact nature of what he calls "a valid national parallel" in the following words:

Historical veracity of parallels [...] does not depend on the minutiae of chronological, social or institutional or even economic details but on the similarity of situations. Parallels are drawn by active agents of the historical process who discover similar agents acting in a similar historical process. In that sense parallels are always discovered against not dissimilar backgrounds, in situations fairly akin, such as: "method of rule," dependency, "empire building," "colonizing" or "being colonized." But, perhaps, the most relevant is the correlation of contexts: emerging nationalism, nationalism in its assertive phase, [...] could bring two geographically distant countries into a valid parallel. (2001, 29)

In fact, the tenacity of Kabdebo's conception about Hungarian-Irish national parallels has been challenged by some scholarly works, particularly on grounds of historical fact and accuracy (see e.g. O'Reilly 2003 and Pintér 2015). But I anticipate here that a sense of shared fate between Hungary and Ireland was

relevant to a group of Szemere's potential sources that I will discuss in connection with the nineteenth century.

As an answer to my question about the place of Szemere's journey in the tradition of Irish-Hungarian relations I conclude that it obviously fits into a long line of Hungarian interest in the Emerald Island and that Szemere's account of Ireland belongs to a centuries-old discourse generated by moments of direct or indirect contact between the two peoples. At the same time, I share Pálffy's view and argue that whereas the above mentioned early sources might have contributed to the arousal of Szemere's curiosity about Ireland, they did not really inform his representation of the country in his *Utazás külföldön*.

Szemere and Other Hungarian Travellers in Ireland in the Age of Reforms

It is unlikely that mere tradition had been adequate motivation for Szemere to take a detour to Ireland and extend his already long and tiring journey. By August 1837, the last phase of his travels in Europe, he must have been very exhausted both physically and mentally. Throughout the one and a half year-long trip he had to rely on a very tight budget, and a persistent lack of money caused him to struggle continuously with privation and even with hunger. This raises the question: what urged Szemere to take further trouble and see Ireland with his own eyes?

Some insight into the underlying processes of Hungary's Reform Age reveals that a most effective instrument for Young Hungarians to widen and deepen their understanding of the world, and to find ways of improving conditions at home was to take "study trips" abroad. Szemere's journey belonged to this outmigration of Hungarian reformists to gain first-hand experience in the modernized countries of the Western World.

Furthermore, Szemere's trip to and his subsequently published account of Ireland were not exceptional in mid-nineteenth century Hungary either. In the nineteenth century we need to recognize a remarkable growth of mutual and genuine interest by certain Hungarian and Irish public figures in the events of their countries, which then gained expression in a series of published texts in both countries.

On the Irish side, Hungary's Age of Reforms, particularly the success of the language movement in securing for Hungarian the status of an official, modern printed language, then the rise and demise of the Hungarian War of Independence evoked high appreciation as well as deep compassion in certain leaders of nationalist Ireland. Irish texts making such references to contemporaneous Hungarian events include Young Irelander Thomas Davis's "Our National

Language” (1846), Thomas Darcy McGee’s narrative of the failed Young Ireland Uprising of 1848 (1914) and John Mitchell’s “Jail Journal” (1913) (see Pintér 2015).

On the Hungarian side, a group of these texts is pertinent to the above mentioned outflow of Hungarian reformists to the Western World. In what follows I am going to explore how documented Hungarian visits to Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century inspired and influenced Szemere to take the trip and publish his own description of Ireland.

In the early 1830s Sándor Bölöni Farkas accompanied Baron Ferenc Béldy on a journey to North America, which included a detour to Ireland. As a part of his subsequently published travelogue *Utazás Észak-Amerikában* or *A Tour in North America* (1834), Bölöni summed up his impressions of the Irish island. Ferenc Pulszky went to Ireland in 1833–34 and published his travelogue about the country under the title *Úti vázlatok* or *Sketches of a Journey from 1836*. As both of these works had left print before Szemere set out on his journey, he must have known them. In fact, Szemere’s distress and pain caused by the sight of misery in Dublin echoes Bölöni’s compassionate tone in the remark: “We found Dublin amid great vicissitudes and unevenness. There are a lof of things in Ireland that make the traveller feel dispirited” (qtd. in Csorba 1944, 43).

Regarding the emotional side of these travelogues István Pálffy says that although earlier Reform-Age Hungarian visitors had also been shocked by the poverty of the Irish, it was Szemere who found the most appropriate style to express his astonishment at what he saw in that country: “It was then that first in my life I realized that this earth is the vale of tears. What this nation [i.e. the Irish] wants is a new Saviour” (qtd. in Pálffy 1987, 35). Reflecting upon this quote Pálffy points out that the style of Szemere’s representation of Ireland was greatly determined by his individual sensitivity to human suffering and by the anxiety he felt over his own nation’s grievances (1987, 35).

A comparison of Szemere’s account of Ireland to Ferenc Pulszky’s travelogue shows that in his own description Szemere fundamentally addresses the same issues as Pulszky, and presents them from very similar angles. For instance, both Pulszky and Szemere write about the economic backwardness of the rural Irish, the growing strength of political agitation in Ireland and both are shocked by the sharp contrasts in the living circumstances of Dublin’s population. This suggests Pulszky’s influence on Szemere, but it also raises the possibility of both authors relying on the same outer sources – which is a topic I will return to later in this study.

From the above we can discern that there is a clear impact on Szemere of those Hungarian travellers who had just preceded him in visiting Ireland and in publishing accounts of the country. By all probability, these texts spurred Szemere to extend his journey to Ireland, preconditioned him for what to expect there, and subsequently helped him frame and thematize his own representation of the country. Szemere’s tone and style obviously harmonize with the romantic ethos

of the age and share in the deep sympathy that his fellow Hungarian travellers felt about the Irish poor. On the other hand, they express in words the emotional responses that the sight of human suffering engendered in Szemere as a sensitive individual and as a responsible reformist person.

Szemere's account can be considered as an integral part of Hungary's Reform-Age discourse on Ireland also because it functioned as a catalyst for further texts on the same topic. Novelist and highly reputed politician Baron József Eötvös's essay entitled "Szegénység Irlandban" or "Poverty in Ireland" (1840) greatly influenced Hungarian public thinking about Ireland. As we know, in this case it was Eötvös who relied upon the experiences of Szemere and Pulszky, both being friends to him (Kabdebo 2001). Like Szemere, Eötvös too, expresses deep sympathy towards the conditions of the Irish. But Eötvös's work is not a romantic travelogue. It is an insightful social study concerned with Ireland's colonial history and the ways prolonged dependence on Britain had caused economic hopelessness, basic poverty and human misery by the nineteenth century (Eötvös 1902, 38–108).

Szemere and Irish National Politics

In 1842 Lőrinc Tóth and István Gorove, two young ambitious politicians visited Ireland, and they published their accounts in 1844. Tóth and Gorove also belonged to the group of reformist travellers in Ireland, but unlike Szemere, they were primarily attracted to the country by their interest in politics. As their writings demonstrate they were truly impressed by the charismatic personality and national mass movements of Daniel O'Connell, "Liberator" of Catholic Ireland (Csorba 1944).

In fact, Tóth and Gorove's politically motivated visit to Ireland fits in with the rise of a heightened Hungarian interest in Irish politics in the Age of Reforms. Pálffy associates this phenomenon with the emergence of a sense of companionship in fates between the Irish and the Hungarians (1987, 33). Whereas Kabdebo (2001) originates the idea of an Irish-Hungarian parallel in Rákóczi's previously cited proclamation, Pálffy points out that common fate was first sensed by reformist Hungarians who understood how much nineteenth-century Ireland's relations with Great Britain resembled those of Hungary with the Habsburg Empire. On the Hungarian side this sense of shared fate was consciously cultivated by the first Hungarian periodicals, whose publication was facilitated by the development of Hungarian as a printed language in the first half of the nineteenth century. These papers, including *Hasznos Mulatságok* or *Useful Pastimes* (1831), *Rajzolatok* or *Sketches* (1835), *Társalkodó* or *Companion* (1836) and *Atheneum* (1837), carried articles on Ireland thus introducing Hungarian readers to Irish realities

and opening their eyes to political developments in this faraway island country (Kókay 1979, 458, 509 and Pálffy 1987, 33).

Probably the most effective instrument to generate political excitement in Hungary about Irish affairs was Lajos Kossuth's *Pesti Hírlap* or *Pest News*. Radical reformist and future leader of Hungary's Revolution of 1848 Lajos Kossuth showed keen interest in the achievements of Irish constitutional nationalist Daniel O'Connell, and the 1843 issues of his *Pesti Hírlap* include multiple references to the Liberator's Repeal Association (Kókay 1979, 675). As indicated by its name the Repeal Movement attempted at the withdrawal of the existing union between Great Britain and Ireland by replacing Westminster's direct control in Ireland with a system of Irish self-government. O'Connell's campaign attracted attention in Hungary in the early 1840s because some Hungarian reformists saw in it a model political programme for their country to loosen the Habsburg bondage.

We know that O'Connell's insistently peaceful movement failed when it was faced with uncompromising British unionism and imperialism. Besides the disastrous consequences of the Irish Famine of 1845–49, this also contributed to the radicalization of Irish nationalism in the decades to come. A relevant question, which exceeds the limits of this study, is whether the failure of O'Connell's peaceful policies enhanced Kossuth and his circle's urge to press for more radical ways and more ambitious visions concerning Hungary's constitutional status.

However, Szemere's visit to Ireland had preceded this climax; and it would be a misunderstanding to put Szemere under one roof with radical Hungarians showing enthusiasm for Irish national politics (see Kabdebo 2001). It is true that, particularly towards the later 1840s, Szemere got intensely engaged with Hungary's independence politics. Furthermore, at the "height" of his political career he replaced Kossuth as Prime Minister of Hungary's first, temporary responsible government. But at the time of his visit to Ireland Szemere occupied a relatively moderate platform of Reform-Age politics, which positioned him closer to the Centralist Party of József Eötvös, Zsigmond Kemény, László Szalay and Antal Csengery than to the more radical circle of Lajos Kossuth. Although later on there were shifts in Szemere's political loyalty to Kossuth – during the Independence War he sided with him, then, in emigration he turned against him – in the late 1830s Szemere's description did not anticipate the admiration that Kossuth and like-minded Hungarian radicals were to express for Irish constitutional nationalism.

The following quote from his account proves that in 1836-37 Szemere was well aware of the goings-on of Irish politics. However, it also reveals that Szemere refrained from expressing any excitement, let alone enthusiasm towards Irish national politics: "Parliamentary elections are going on and O'Connell is one of the candidates [...]. That party should be supported which finds remedy for this suffering people. [...] While parties are competing, people are bleeding, torn between two edges" (1983, 358).

What Szemere says here about O'Connell's political campaign resembles the attitude of a sceptical outsider; and he does not make any direct reference to Ireland sharing a political fate with Hungary. On the other hand, his sympathy with the Irish people as victims of rivalling political parties provides further evidence that his responses to Irish realities were conditioned by his own and his nation's hardships. Reckless party electioneering, irresponsive to the actual needs and sufferings of the population, was not alien to that time Hungary either. Experiencing the same phenomenon in Ireland probably filled Szemere with dismay and apathy.

A different reading of Szemere's remoteness to Irish politics leads to a thought-provoking finding: it echoes the observation of a German traveller. The translated and edited version of the German report came out in the Hungarian periodical *Társalkodó* in 1836 under the title "Irland júliusban. Töredékek egy német utazó jegyzeteiből" or "Ireland in July. Excerpts from the Notes of a German Traveller." One of Szemere's phrases is, in fact, a nearly verbatim quote from this text presenting Ireland as "a country torn apart by political parties" (*Társalkodó* 1836, 305–307).

This leads to my proposition that although Szemere went to Ireland as a Hungarian reformist and his perspective and mode of thinking were moulded by the ethos of the Hungarian Age of Reforms, his account of the country reflects the impact of foreign sources. The search for Szemere's foreign sources actually intersects the search for his real motive to visit Ireland.

Szemere and his German "Intermediary"

As is revealed by his account, in Ireland Szemere was mainly concerned with the condition of the poor. The following quote demonstrates that he primarily went to Ireland to directly observe a phenomenon that he had been aware of before his journey: "[I came to Ireland to see] whether the deep destitution, which had become known all over the world, is a reality. [...] I came as a patriot and an altruist, with curiosity and an anxiously beating heart to see a sick country" (1983, 353).

With respect to Szemere's anticipation of seeing distressing poverty in Ireland I quote István Széchenyi, to many the greatest Hungarian reformer. In his *Döblingi Iratok* or *Döbling Papers* of 1831 Széchenyi states that Irish poverty had become a European issue. Széchenyi's observation relates to German historian Friedrich Ludwig Georg von Raumer's study of conditions in Ireland in 1833, which made Europe conscious of the extent and severity of poverty on the Emerald Island (qtd. in Csorba 1944, 35–36).

In fact, interest in Irish poverty tapped into a solidifying understanding by European governments and public figures of various backgrounds that pauperism was the root cause of the most troubling social phenomena of the age, including

public insecurity, endemic crime, lack of public sanitation and health, the spread of fatal diseases, etc. Thus, poverty became a deeply studied and widely publicized issue all across Europe. As evidenced by the following quote from *Hasznos Mulatságok* it also reached the surfaces of Hungarian periodicals: “An Englishman has estimated the number of paupers in Europe at 18,900,000” (1831. I, 80). This suggests that Szemere’s – and previously Bölöni’s and Pulszky’s – curiosity in pauperism in general, and Irish pauperism in particular had been awakened by the wider context of European attention and discourse, to which they had access through the Hungarian printed media.

This is pertinent to Pálffy’s argument referring to the role of “intermediaries” (1987, 34–35). These intermediaries or “agents of Europeanization” provided virtual links for acquainting geographically distant cultures, like the Irish and the Hungarians, with one another. The Hungarian periodicals of the 1830s were important relays in the flow of information: they took over, translated, edited and published numerous Austro-German reports originally circulated in Austro-German printed newspapers. The reports – Pálffy adds – prompted Hungarians to set out to discover Ireland in person, writing afterwards travelogues which count as the first genuine Hungarian reports on the Irish and their land.

I propose that these intermediaries were not only prompts for Szemere to visit Ireland but also important sources for his subsequently published account of the trip. I found my proposition on the fact that Szemere was a regular reader of these reports before, during and after his journey, and on the findings of my research into Szemere’s foreign sources. As a proof of this first I am going to provide a brief topic by topic comparison of the account of Szemere and of the German traveller whose opinion on Irish politics I have already shown to impact Szemere.

For instance, Szemere’s presentation of a two-faced Dublin likened to Rome – as I quote at the beginning of this paper – reveals striking resemblance with the perspective of the German report. The German author draws a parallel between Dublin and another Italian metropolis, namely Naples, with regard to a sharp contrast between the highest luxury and the deepest human misery co-existing in either city. He writes that affluence and privation present themselves in the most distorted contrast “in this unhappy country.” The Rotunda of Dublin gives shelter to “wretched, maimed, and paralysed people” but it also provides space for green terraces decorated with “Irish women, the flowers of Ireland, who emulate the English gentle ladies in beauty and pleasant manners.” The German author underlines that a shocking gap in living standards can be observed not just in Dublin or Naples but in any other metropolis of the world, and that this phenomenon is known and discussed widely (*Társalkodó* 1836, 305–307). It is relevant to note that Ferenc Pulszky in his *Úti vázlatok* also depicts Dublin in terms of a parallel with Naples (Csorba 1944, 44). This strengthens my earlier supposition that Pulszky and Szemere shared some identical outer sources.

It appears that both of them relied on the German report under discussion, indicating that Szemere's use of intermediaries for his own travelogue was not exceptional in Hungary of the time.

Another topic presented in remarkably similar terms by both Szemere and the German traveller is the physical appearance of Dublin's paupers and the related trade in second-hand clothes – seen as a sign of Britain's shameful exploitation of the Irish. As his account reveals Szemere is truly appalled by the distressing look of half-naked children in dirty rags (1983, 354–355). He sadly comments that the worn-out, miserable clothes are sold in certain Dublin shops, where they are poured from all over Great Britain in compensation for the food that Britain snatches from under the starving mouths of the Irish poor. Here Szemere elaborates on the following remark of the German traveller: “The trade in worn-out, ragged clothes forms an unusual branch of commercial activity that is conducted to the Irish regions by the English and the Scots” (1983, 305–307).

With respect to the general disposition of the people, Szemere claims that the Irish are joyful, gentle and talkative, showing nearly nothing of the English or Scottish reserve and bias towards foreigners: “In London and Edinburgh the person whom the locals recognize as a stranger will experience a lot of inconveniences, and in order to avoid involvement in a street fight, he often needs to tolerate minor vexations. But in Dublin the visitor can roam the streets peacefully – not disturbed by a single look of reprehension” (1983, 357–358). Szemere furthers the comparison of the Irish and English national characters by recognizing the deep prejudices that the English hold towards the Irish. He laments that England is unaware of the true nature and the real needs of the Irish people, and that this derives from the traditional English fear and alienation regarding “Papists.” He adds, “the traveller is sincerely puzzled by the level of blinded hatred that the English, an otherwise civilized and free-thinking nation, are capable of nurturing towards their oppressed compatriots” (1983, 357–358).

Whereas Szemere's tone is saturated with compassion towards the Irish, his judgement of the English is fairly negative, expressing a mixture of disillusionment and dislike. In fact, Szemere's attitude significantly deviates from the respect and admiration that Hungarian reformists had felt towards England and the English in the 1820s. Hungary's Anglomania was acknowledged by foreign visitors, including English traveller and writer Catherine Gore, who writes the following in her *Hungarian Tales*: “The Hungarian nation, ancient and picturesque [...] appears to be at present little known, and perhaps still less cared for in England. Our indifference is significantly ungrateful; for there is scarcely a European country in which the Anglomania rages more fiercely than in that slighted land” (1829, 9).

In search of an explanation for Szemere's “untraditional” criticism of the English I identify two factors that could qualify his perspective. Firstly, the direct experiences that he gained during his journey must have had a transforming and,

undoubtedly, refreshing effect on his image and understanding of the British Isles. Secondly, a comparison of his view with his German intermediary's shows that Szemere saw the English and the Irish also through German and not just through traditional Hungarian lens. Although Szemere's voice signifies much deeper emotional involvement with the Irish, his judgement of the English is fundamentally the same as the German traveller's, who writes:

Certainly, one cannot travel anywhere in greater security than in this badly reputed country. The inhabitants of Ireland are honest, open-hearted, talkative and communicative. [... Nevertheless,] England maintains relentless enmity towards the Irish, which, in fact, is fed by continuous fear. Therefore, the Englishman who is travelling in Ireland is constantly haunted by the nightmare of being robbed or stabbed in the neck. (*Társalkodó* 1836, 305–307)

The study of these common topics and modes of discussion has proven to me that this German report was a primary source for Szemere to create his own representation of Ireland. It has also become evident that the *Társalkodó*, a periodical on science, art and craft, which edited and published the German account in Hungarian in 1836, was an important instrument in forwarding knowledge and information to Szemere about Ireland. Yet, this still leaves the ground open for Szemere's source of fact and detail and for his analysis of the causes of Irish poverty. The most likely candidate here is an English intermediary: William Cobbett.

Szemere and His English “Intermediary,” William Cobbett

William Cobbett (1763–1835) was an English patriot, landowner, radical journalist and reform campaigner. In 1834, he visited Ireland and wrote letters to Charles Marshall, his farmhand in Surrey. Cobbett's “Letters on Ireland” were promptly published by the English journal, *Political Register*. In just a few months they came out in the *Wiener Courier* in German, and then the Hungarian periodical *Társalkodó* published an edited version of Cobbett's letters in Hungarian, entitled “A’ szegények Irlandban” or “The Poor in Ireland” (*Társalkodó* 1834, 385–386, cf. Pálffy 1987, 35). As their subsequently published accounts demonstrate Cobbett's report had a deep influence on more Hungarian reformers who later visited Ireland, among them Pulszky, Baron József Eötvös, as well as the focus of this study, Szemere.

In the introduction of this paper I have noted that Szemere's description includes some fact-based observations which presuppose a deeper and more thorough

study of conditions in Ireland, and which his three-day visit in Dublin did not possibly allow him to accomplish. Relying on my preliminary investigation I argue that Cobbett's altogether ten letters on Ireland were the most important source of fact and detail for Szemere, and that Cobbett also informed Szemere's analysis of the causes of poverty and economic backwardness in Ireland. I will support my argument with presenting some of the topics where Szemere's reliance on Cobbett as his English intermediary appears to be the most evident.

Szemere's description of Dublin evokes parts of Cobbett's Letters Number I and II, dated on 27 September and 4 October respectively. For instance, his heart-stirring snapshot of a Dublin free kitchen which gives food to some three thousand paupers daily (1983, 356–357) echoes Cobbett's report of his visits to a Dublin "mendicity" or "beggary." Here Cobbett was shown around by "the gentlemen, who have the management of the place" and where food is prepared and distributed for "about three thousand wretched people" twice a day. Cobbett remarks that if these people were not thus fed with some potatoes "mashed as you mash for your hogs, [...] they must either die, or thief or rob" (1984, 43–44, 59).

Elsewhere, Szemere makes mention of a public school in Dublin where hundreds of miserable children, an equal number of boys and girls, are taught and fed (1983, 356–357). This relates to Cobbett's following description: "There were about a hundred little girls in a school, and about as many boys in another; neither had shoes or stockings, and the boys had no shirts. Their faces were pale, the whole hundred not having so much red as your little round-faced chap that was set to keep the birds away from the cabbage seed in Dodman's field" (1984, 59–60).

As the above and the next passages show the scarecrow simile is a recurring motif in Cobbett's letters: "In another place [of Dublin] I saw a great crowd of women sitting and doing nothing, each with a baby in her arms. [...] It was one mass of rags [...] far worse than any that you ever saw tied round a stake to frighten the birds from our wheat and our peas" (1984, 60). The fact that Szemere uses the scarecrow-simile indicates that, besides topic and detail, he was also impressed by some of Cobbett's visual images. About the second-hand clothes shops Szemere writes the following: "These low holes of shops are decked with ragged clothes all over. Some of the rags are hung on poles and stuck out of the buildings' first or second floors as shop signs. Should I see them on roofs or in meadows I would think that they were put up to frighten away birds" (1983, 354).

Although the conditions of his journey must have prevented Szemere from a close scrutiny of the Irish countryside, he provides an accurate description of a rural cabin and the distressing living conditions of its inhabitants. He writes that a dwelling cabin only covers twenty square feet, its walls are made of mud and its floor is of the earth where it stands. It does not have an attic, and its roof is just a smoky top, which is made of mud and weed, and which has no chimney at all. Its window is not more than a foot-long hole and a couple of planks are

nailed together for a door (1983, 360). In fact, Szemere could gain these pieces of information from various sources, but the resemblance of his description to Cobbett's Letter III, dated in Kilkenny on 1 October 1834 is worth considering:

The places which I call houses were in general from ten to twelve feet square; the walls made of rough stone and mud [...]; no ceiling; rough rafters covered over with rotten black thatch; in some a glass window [...] about a foot long, and four or five inches wide; the floor nothing but the bare earth; no chimney, but, a hole at one end of the roof to let out the smoke [...]. (1984, 82)

Even more revealing of Cobbett being a source for Szemere is the remarkable overlap between Szemere's discussion of the causes of economic backwardness and poverty in Ireland and the analysis that Cobbett provides about the same topic in his Letter IV, dated in County Waterford on 6 October. The causes that both authors identify include the subdivision of land into tiny plots, the worst kind of potato being the staple food for the rural poor, low day wages for agricultural labour, a lack of job security, Ireland's heavy dependence on Britain, reckless spending by absentee landlords, and the payment of heavy tithes to the official Anglican Church.

Nevertheless, Szemere's use of Cobbett's report is not uncritical but conditioned by his own views and background as a Hungarian reformist. This is evidenced by the two authors' diverging ideas concerning the path of proper economic development for Ireland. Like most of his reformist compatriots Szemere was greatly concerned with Hungary's obsolete economic structure, a solidified feudal system of land tenure and a serious lack of capitalist investment and initiative. All this Szemere saw at the root of rural poverty and underdevelopment. It follows that in his brief discussion of the causes of economic backwardness and pauperism in Ireland he primarily accuses the absence of English capital and industry. At the time of Cobbett's visit to Ireland, England was already on its way to liberal economy. But, as a Tory opponent of capitalist change Cobbett was concerned with the destruction of rural, self-sustaining communities by Britain's transition to industrial modernity. Therefore, he attributes the agricultural crisis in England and in Ireland, and in the latter the shocking contrast between agricultural abundance and desperate poverty to the change to industrial modernity, facilitated by the combined influences of Malthusianism, free trade and debt finance, and in Ireland to absenteeism and agrarian, export orientated capitalism.

In his study of Cobbett's Irish writings Alex Benchimol (2013) points out that according to some scholarly opinion Cobbett had foreseen the Great Famine, which was to devastate Ireland ten years later. Concluding my discussion of Cobbett's direct impact on Szemere I quote Szemere's farewell, which sadly echoes Cobbett's alleged prognosis of Ireland's impending humanistic crisis: "I envisioned Ireland

as a huge burial mound, enfolded by the darkness of a mourning night, and I looked upon my journey back as a return from a graveyard” (1983, 365).

Conclusions

In this study I have examined Szemere's account of Ireland in his travelogue *Utazás külföldön* from a special perspective. Noting a discrepancy between his fleeting stay in Dublin and the depth and detail of his description of Ireland I have hypothesized that – besides his first hand experiences and impressions – some outer sources have significantly impacted Szemere's image of Ireland.

My investigation of Szemere's potential sources has yielded the following results. Szemere's account of Ireland belongs to a centuries-old discourse generated by moments of direct and indirect contact between Hungary and Ireland. But, whereas the medieval and early-modern Hungarian sources probably increased Szemere's curiosity about Ireland, they did not directly inform his representation of the country.

Furthermore, Szemere's account forms an integral part of Hungary's Reform-Age discourse on Ireland. There is a clear impact on Szemere of those Hungarian travellers who had just preceded him in visiting Ireland and in publishing accounts. Szemere knew these texts, they motivated him to take the journey, and informed afterwards his own description. But, in terms of detail and insight, it is not the earlier Reform-Age writings that count as direct sources for Szemere but contemporaneous texts of foreign origin. As I have explored and demonstrated, the European sources that most heavily impacted Szemere's representation include the report of a German traveller and Cobbett's letters on Ireland, from 1834. Both these sources were made available to Szemere in edited Hungarian version by the Reform-Age periodicals *Társalkodó* and *Hasznos Mulatságok*.

My study has revealed that Szemere's journey and description were not inspired by enthusiasm for Ireland's national politics or a sense of shared political fate between Hungary and Ireland (cf. Kabdebo 2001 and Pálffy 1987). In Ireland Szemere was primarily concerned with the appalling poverty, the shocking social and economic contrasts and the causes of all this. Also, Szemere's awareness and understanding of these phenomena tapped into the wider context of European discussion going on about Ireland and pauperism in Ireland.

Consequently, the genuineness of Szemere's account lies in the mode of discussion that merges information from Western European sources with his locally conditioned personal reflections, thus creating a unique representation of Ireland. Another merit of Szemere's work is that it highlights a specific aspect of the flow of ideas from Western Europe to Hungary in Hungary's Age of Reforms. Therefore, I propose further research into the interaction of Hungarian and European discourse concerned with Ireland in the nineteenth century.

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Representations of Hungary and Transylvania in John Paget's *Travelogue*¹

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Abstract: Hungary was an important destination for British travelers in the nineteenth century, whose travel accounts provide intriguing insights into the cultural and political climate of the period. John Paget's journey was meticulously recorded in his extensive book entitled *Hungary and Transylvania (1839)* that served as a travel guide for other British visitors after him. Paget, who took part in the 1848/49 War of Independence, and became a "Hungarian," opened Europe's eyes to the Hungarian people and their country, destroying several false myths that existed about Hungarians in Western Europe, thus attempting to shape up a more favorable picture about them. The present paper examines a few questions regarding the representation of Hungary and of Transylvania in general in the travelogue: how did Paget describe particular cities and regions, the inhabitants, as well as their everyday life? I will attempt to look at the (changing) images of Hungary and Transylvania in Paget's writing, as well as to offer an insight into Hungarian society and culture in the nineteenth century as contrasted to English culture and politics.

Keywords: nineteenth century Hungary and Transylvania, travel literature, cultural representation.

Introduction

In the nineteenth century British travelers found new, exciting destinations: Hungary and Transylvania. The travelogues of English visitors provide intriguing insights into the cultural and political climate of the era. Among the many factors that made Hungary a desirable destination for foreigners one can enumerate the improvement of travelling conditions due to the appearance of steam-shipping, the Hungarian elite's receptive attitude towards British political and cultural models, as well as the newly occurred business opportunities (investing into railway, bridge building, and so on).

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Hungarian social transformation emerged as a result of increasingly influential West European liberal ideas spreading during the Age of Reform. According to László Kósa, as Count István Széchenyi took up a significant political role and became the central figure of the reform movement, the program of social transformation focused on the concept of the unification of interests (gentry and big landlords, Hungarians and non-Hungarians, as well as various religious denominations), unique in the process of European transformation. Moreover, the bourgeois liberal changes of the state were closely linked to the realization of national self-determination (1999, 164–165). Vienna considered such reform trends as being major threats to imperial centralization. Thus, political struggles became more and more ardent.²

Among such circumstances the ways in which Hungarians and their cause were seen by Western Europeans seemed to be of utmost importance. As the causes of nation and progress were closely linked, it became crucial for Hungarians to be seen positively by foreigners – a demand that was going against the Habsburgs’ interests. Among the many visitors that tried to depict a quite unbiased picture of Hungary one can find John Paget, whose journey was meticulously recorded in his extensive book entitled *Hungary and Transylvania (1839)*. This work served as a travel guide for other British travelers. Paget also became famous for becoming a “Hungarian.” His travelogue provided a positive image of Hungarians as well as of the Hungarian War of Independence,³ and served as a crucial source of information for the Western society regarding the situation in Hungary before the War of Independence in 1848. Thus, in my view, Paget’s travelogue can be seen as a proto-imagological charting of Hungarians, in which the outsider’s perception and representation of “national character” combine both a historical and an anthropological point of view on the issue of nationalism. As Joep Leerssen argues, the “informal, anecdotal belief in different national characters (...) became embedded in the comparative-historical paradigm that dominated the human sciences” in the nineteenth century (Beller–Leerssen, 2007, 17), and, thus, in the pre-history of imagology “the various stereotypes and assumptions concerning national peculiarities never form the topic of investigation, but always part of the interpretative tool-kit; they are explanations rather than explicanda” (Beller–Leerssen, 2007, 19). While talking about imagology’s working on literary texts, Leerssen asserts that the issue of subjectivity must be taken into account, and

2 Henry Marczali argues that “the history of Hungary is a record of an almost unbroken struggle between the older Magyardom and foreign – particularly German – influences” (1910, 230). He adds that “individual members of the aristocracy abandoned the ancestral customs and even the language, but the nobility, as a body, remained Hungarian in feeling and threw its whole political weight into the defense of Hungarian nationality” (1910, 231).

3 The War of Independence was one of the many European revolutions of 1848, the “spring of nations,” attempting to undermine the Habsburgs’ system of alliance of European powers, and subsequently overthrow Metternich’s conservative power in Austria (Kósa 1999, 169).

that the “nationality represented (the *spected*) is silhouetted in the perspectival context of the representing text or discourse (the *spectant*)” (Beller–Leerssen, 2007, 27). What emerges in the case of Paget’s book is a dynamic interplay between the images that characterize the Other and the self-image of the traveler,⁴ an interplay that leads to a unique, both subjective and objective reflection on Hungary and Transylvania.

The present paper examines a few questions regarding the representation of Hungary and of Transylvania in general in the travelogue: how did Paget describe particular cities and regions, the inhabitants, as well as their everyday life? I will attempt to look at the (changing) images of Hungary and Transylvania in Paget’s writing, as well as to offer an insight into nineteenth-century Hungarian society and culture as contrasted to English culture and politics. The essay interprets and analyzes Paget’s travelogue by looking at its special role and standing in Anglo-Hungarian studies, as well as in the field of travel literature about Hungary. Since there are very few studies available on the life and work of John Paget, this essay also attempts to fill this gap in the critical body of Paget’s oeuvre. On the one hand, such an analysis would contribute to our general understanding of an era and a country that were seen by a foreigner who ultimately became a “Hungarian.” On the other hand, the discussion of Paget’s work will hopefully provide an understanding of nineteenth century Hungary’s culture and society, as well as its place in Europe; that is, an interpretation of the past that is undoubtedly an integral part, and in the service of constructing a present history.

John Paget: a Short Biography

John Paget was born in Loughborough on the 18th of April 1808, as the son of Joseph Paget and Anne Paget. The wealthy family moved to Thrope Satchville in 1821; that is why later many considered John Paget as the native of this town.

Young John Paget together with his brother, Arthur, began his education at the Unitarian Manchester College in York, and, following the family traditions, studied medicine there. In 1827 he further pursued his studies of medicine at Trinity College in Dublin, and, in 1831, obtained his M.D. diploma in Edinburgh. Although his dissertation on heart diseases was highly appreciated among scholars in the field, and later he obtained prizes in medical science, he never used his M.D. title, and never practiced as a doctor.

After the death of his father in 1833 he left the country and dedicated himself to traveling and studying in the various cities of Europe. He spent a brief period of time in Paris, then he visited Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Salzburg, Munich, and so

4 Beller Manfred argues that the image “is the mental silhouette of the other” (Beller–Leerssen 2007, 4).

on. In 1835 he went to Rome, where he met Baroness Polyxenia Wesselényi, an elegant, enlightened Hungarian aristocratic woman, whom he married in 1837.⁵ After travelling in Hungary and in Transylvania he settled down in Transylvania, and became a highly appreciated member of the landed gentry. On his adopted land he became a devoted “Hungarian:” he learned the language, befriended István Széchenyi and Miklós Wesselényi, fought in the Hungarian War of Independence, and supported the Unitarian Church and Unitarian education in Transylvania. He also gained reputation as an agriculturist, since he introduced in Transylvania a special treatment of viniculture, as well as an improved breed of cattle. He (re)introduced horse-breeding, horseracing, and fox-hunting in Transylvania. His estate in Câmpia Turzii (Aranyosgyéres) became the model for, and played an important role in, the development of modern viniculture in nineteenth century Hungary. The Paget family’s estates both in Câmpia Turzii and in Cluj-Napoca became important cultural centres; English and American travelers, as well as members of the Hungarian and Transylvanian upper-class were always welcome.

To develop Transylvanian cultural life and to strengthen English and Hungarian relations, Paget attempted to popularize English language: in 1878 he founded the Conversation Club, an Anglo-Hungarian social circle, in which members could also use the great Paget library (more than two thousand English books and the two important English papers: *Athenaeum* and the *Pall-Mall Gazette* to which Paget was a regular subscriber).

John Paget and Polyxenia Wesselényi had twin sons: Arthur and Oliver (born on the 5th of September 1841). Unfortunately both boys died young: Arthur died when he was only twelve years old, and Oliver, himself a soldier serving under Garibaldi, passed away when he was twenty-two.

John Paget died on the 10th of April 1892, and was buried in Cluj-Napoca.

On John Paget’s Travelogue

Paget’s interest in Hungary and Transylvania was raised first when he met Polyxenia in 1835. In the spring of 1835 he travelled to Hungary together with his friends: William Stanford (1806–1882), an English journalist, and George Edward Hering (1805–1879), an English landscape painter. His experiences were

5 The friendship that developed into love is described from Polyxenia’s point of view as well: she kept a diary entitled *Olaszhoni és schweizi utazás* [*Travels in Italy and Switzerland*] that was published in 1842 in Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár) edited by János Győri. A recent edition of the diary was published in 2006, edited by Klára Lingvay (Kriterion Publishing House, Cluj). Her writing also offers a unique perspective on the condition of women in the nineteenth century and speaks ironically about the shortcoming of the upper-class as well as the institution of marriage, thus providing a compelling social criticism of the era.

recorded in his *Hungary and Transylvania; with Remarks on their Condition Social, Political, and Economical* that was published in London in 1839. The book became highly successful in London, and Hering's illustrations that accompanied it were also published in a companion volume in 1838 entitled: *Sketches on the Danube, in Hungary, and Transylvania*.

Paget's travelogue was very successful in London during the Hungarian War of Independence in 1849, and in the following years it was republished four times. It was first published in the United States of America in 1850, shortly before the arrival of Lajos Kossuth (Maller 1985, 339). Maller adds that Paget's work was the most truthful account of Hungary and its inhabitants in those years, and, because of it, Paget was elected member of the Hungarian Historical Society (Magyar Történelmi Társaság) in 1868 (1985, 339). The first Hungarian translation appeared in 1987, and, according to the editor of this translated volume, Sándor Maller (1985), Paget's work was the most beautiful and well documented work on Hungary and Transylvania written in English in the nineteenth century. The latest edition of the book appeared in 2011 in Cluj (Kolozsvár) and is, indeed, a very thorough work that completes the selective translation of Maller, while adding the translation of Paget's *Memoires VI*, a diary in six notebooks written in June, July, and August 1849 dealing with the Hungarian War of Independence. The diary, now preserved in the Széchenyi Library, is a precise description of daily events both in terms of military movements and local, family life. As Klára Cs. Lingvay, the editor and translator of the volume argues, Paget provides a shattering picture of the historical atmosphere that pervaded Cluj before the occurrence of the great national tragedy: the crush of the War of Independence (2011, 35).

John Paget's *Hungary and Transylvania* is quite an unusual travelogue: besides providing the traveler's personal experiences, it offers a thorough social, political, religious as well as economic description of the country. This more than nine-hundred-page account of Hungary in the Reform period, together with its positive and negative aspects, shaped the new ways in which Hungarians were perceived by Western Europeans. Paget even considered one of his great missions to provide a favorable picture of Hungary for Westerners, as he wrote in the introduction of his travelogue: "I would not willingly deceive him [the reader] in anything. I am deeply interested in the welfare of Hungary, and I have thought that one great means of promoting it would be to extend the knowledge of that country in the west of Europe, and more especially in England" (1839, vii).

In the second chapter of his work Paget even mentioned an anecdote about how Hungarians complained about Englishmen's lack of interest in Hungary.

In truth, our ignorance of Hungary is bitterly complained of by the Hungarians: "You are more interested in England about the cause of the South Sea Islands than about us Protestant constitutional Hungarians; you know more of the

negroes in the interior of Africa than you do of a nation in the east of Europe.” “This is undoubtedly true, but how can we help it?” was my answer. “Neither your newspapers nor those of Germany dare give us any information on your politics; for if they do, they know that their Austrian circulation is lost, as they are stopped at the frontiers, and besides the difficulties of travelling in the country, it is by no means easy to procure a passport at Vienna for that purpose.” We both regretted that between two nations who had each so much that the other required, such mutual ignorance should prevail, and we could only hope that steam-navigation would break down the barrier which had hitherto been found insurmountable. (1839, 235–236)

In his work Paget provided a detailed description of Hungarian realities, emphasizing the positive aspect of specific Hungarian virtues and values (such as, desire for freedom, the beauty of music and language and their shaping force of national identity), as well as the sympathy of Hungarians towards English culture and language.

Anglo-Hungarian Relations

The great merit of Paget’s travelogue is that it offers a realistic picture of nineteenth century Hungary and Transylvania. The English traveler described both the positive and the negative aspects of the country, while constantly comparing Hungarian institutions, cultural life, as well as the inhabitants to English standards. The chapter about Transylvania begins as follows:

A strange little country is this Transylvania! Very likely the reader never heard its name before, and yet some hundred years ago it was in close alliance with England; and, long before religious liberty, annual parliaments, payment of members, and the election of magistrates were dreamed of, amongst us, they were granted to Transylvania, by a solemn charter of their Prince, the Emperor of Austria. Here is this country on the very limits of European civilization, yet possessing institutions and rights, for which the most civilized have not been thought sufficiently advanced. (1839, 181)

Throughout his journeys, he compared various Hungarian national specificities to English ones: he discussed the British Constitution and the Golden Bull of 1222, the love of liberty of both Hungarians and Englishmen, the Casinos in Hungary and the English Clubs, the mutual influences on literature and culture. While he praised the precious cultural and social achievements of the country, the new buildings, scientific societies, luxurious balls of the elite, he never forgot

to mention the lack of progress and development in some areas, especially when it came to roads and ways of travelling. He often complained about the condition of the roads in Transylvania:

I believe my duty, as an honest chronicler of my travels, would be to give the reader at least two pages of tirade against the bad roads of Transylvania; for if I do not, how can I convey to him an impression of the misery we suffered while we were dragged over or rather through them? But lest he should grow as tired of hearing of them as we did of travelling on them, I will spare him the infliction, and content myself with saying that we now occupied three days in accomplishing what one day suffices for in summer. (1839, 212)

But he appreciated the beauty of Transylvanian cities and the refinement of their inhabitants. About Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár / Klausenburg) he wrote:

[I]t is a pretty little town of about twenty-five thousand inhabitants, situated in the valley of the Szamos, and overlooked by hills on every side. It is built round a large square, in the centre of which stands the fine old Gothic cathedral. From this square, almost all the streets run off at right angles. The streets themselves are wide, in the true Magyar taste, and the houses, though handsome, are often of only one story, and never more than two. [...] Though, generally speaking, Klausenburg can lay no claim to figure as a European capital, yet it possesses some few houses which would make a respectable appearance in London or Paris. (1839, 397–399)

Moreover, because of the famous Transylvanian hospitality he immediately felt himself at home in the city. About social life he claimed that “[t]he habits of society in Transylvania, in many respects, differ little from those of England about the end of the last century” (1839, 425), thus suggesting the superiority of the British civilization.

Later, while visiting Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely / Neumarkt), he expressed his disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the city, but he mentioned with admiration the “fine library of the Telekis” (1839, 316), the two Colleges, and the Casino that seemed a “flourishing and well-conducted establishment” (1839, 317). About Braşov (Brassó / Kronstadt) he said that it looked like a little Manchester (1839, 357), and he considered Oradea (Nagyvárad / Großwardein) “one of the prettiest little towns” that had its greatest glory “in its gilded steeples, its episcopal palace, its convents, and its churches” (1839, 440). While talking about Oradea’s architecture he mentioned the Magyar, that is, Hungarian taste regarding the outlook of the squares and the buildings, and claimed that the Hungarian “loves not the narrow lanes and high houses of his German neighbours” (1839, 440).

Paget made similar comparisons during his visits in Budapest, where he was impressed by the quick development of the city and Count István Széchenyi's ideas of reform. He noted that there was a certain – sometimes quite exaggerated – interest on the part of Hungarians in everything that was English. He called this “Anglomania,” and not only referred to the flourishing cultural relations between English and Hungarian circles, but also to the great enthusiasm with which the Hungarian elite tried to imitate the British taste in almost every field of life. Paget provided a detailed description of the men's clothing pieces (the traditional Hungarian uniform), claiming that these were cherished as signifiers of the Magyars' nationalism: “I know of no dress so handsome, so manly, and at the same time so convenient. It is only on gala days that gay and embroidered dresses are used; on ordinary occasions, as sittings of the Diet, county meetings, and others” (1839, 420). He claimed that many of the traditionalists preferred this uniform, while “others follow the rest of the world in imitating England; nay, so much is Anglomania now the mode, that a fashionable tailor of Pest never dreams of pleasing his customers without assuring them he makes their coats according to the last pattern received from London” (1839, 421).

Indeed, Anglomania appeared as a cultural phenomenon in the nineteenth century Hungary due to the noble Hungarians' experiences abroad. As László Országh (1979) pointed out, many Hungarian aristocrats who came in touch with British values attempted to introduce Western elements in local customs, language, literature, architecture, as well as in various art forms. In fact, it was a kind of obligation for every respectable Hungarian young nobleman to spend some time abroad and study, if possible, in London. No wonder that English gardens appeared everywhere on noblemen's estates, and new, “British ways” were introduced in agriculture as well as in economy. More and more aristocrats started to build their houses in an English – Gothic – style (1979, 22–31).

Count István Széchenyi played an important role in the spreading of British influence among the Hungarian elite. He was the most ardent ambassador of British culture and industry in Hungary: from sports (riding) to establishing Club life he was engaged in all kinds of social reforming processes. English culture and literature gained ground among the Hungarian artists and the reading public. A great number of poets and novelists fell under the influence of the greatest English literary figures: Shakespeare, Byron, Scott, Milton. All these elements of “Anglomania” undoubtedly served as means of going against the German influence. As a result of Western influence, big cities, such as Budapest were impressively developed, but – as Paget correctly observed – the provinces still remained in a state of backwardness.

On the Images of People and Places

In order to provide the best description of the Hungarians and the specific character of the “Magyar,” Paget claimed that one had to visit Debrecen and the region of the “puszta,” that is, the Great Hungarian Plain. This was the place where the language was spoken in its purest form and where people were strongly clinging to the preservation of their national identity. Language and religion were the two most important factors that determined the national identity of the Magyar (Paget 1839, 520). After observing the habits, the customs, and the manners of Hungarian people, he came to the following conclusions:

The Magyar character has a singular mixture of habitual passiveness and melancholy, mixed up with great susceptibility to excitement. The Magyar's step is slow and measured, his countenance pensive, and his address imposing and dignified. [...] It is wonderful how completely he has imparted his own character to his national music. Nothing can be more sad and plaintive than the commencement of many of the Hungarian airs. One of the most strongly characteristic of these is the Rákótzty, a march of the times of the revolutions of the Rákótzys, whose name it bears. As often happens with a revolutionary air, it has now become the national air of the country; and great is the honour of the gipsy fiddler who can play the Rákótzty with the true spirit. (1839, 504–505)

Paget was deeply touched by the hospitality of the Hungarians, and claimed that their habits were “but ill replaced by the cold egotistical formalities substituted for it in the intercourse of what is called, par excellence, the world” (1839, 521). As usual, he mentioned the greatest flaws in the Hungarian character: the personal pride that gave birth to jealousy against anyone who was able to succeed in the matters of the world. “[T]here are few countries in which a great man makes more personal enemies, and has to combat more petty annoyances, than in Hungary” (1839, 521). He characterized Hungarian language as follows:

“I cannot characterize the Hungarian as either soft or musical, but it is strong, energetic, manly; the intonation with which it is uttered, gives it in ordinary conversation a melancholy air, but when impassioned nothing can exceed it in boldness” (1839, 29).

While describing the portraits of everyday people he was stunned by the image of the “puszta” shepherds. With respect to their way of life, he emphasized their nomadic, “half-slothful, half-adventurous” lifestyle (1839, 496). He identified two specific elements that functioned as peculiarities of national identity in the case of the shepherds: the “Bunda,” or hairy cloak (1839, 497) and the short pipe stuck in a shepherd's boot, and “in his belt a tobacco-bag, with a collection of

instruments, – not less incomprehensible to the uninitiated than the attendants of a Scotch mull, – intended for striking fire, clearing the pipe, stopping the tobacco, pricking the ashes” (1839, 498). On another occasion, when visiting the land of the Szeklers in Transylvania, Paget also remarked the local people’s resemblance to Scottish people:

The Szeklers inhabit a mountainous country, and are consequently poor; but it was easy to see they are far more industrious than any of the Transylvanians we had before visited. From all I heard of their character, they scorn a good deal to resemble the Scotch. The same pride and poverty, the same industry and enterprise, and if they are not belied, the same sharp regard to their own interests. (1839, 319)

Among the national characteristics of Hungarians, Paget mentioned two outstanding features: the excessive use of tobacco and the moustache. He described smoking as a quintessential Hungarian habit which was practiced excessively in every part of the country. The Englishman’s shock in regard to this unusual quantity of smoking was mentioned many times in the travelogue:

If I complained that the Casino of Pest was invaded by the pipe, what shall I say of that of Klausenburg? Its air is one dense cloud of smoke, and it is easy to detect any one who has been there by the smell of his clothes for some time after. Such a smoking nation as this I never saw; the Germans are novices to them in the art. Reading, writing, walking, or riding, idle or at work, they are never without the pipe. Even in swimming, I have seen a man puffing away quite composedly. (1839, 431–432)

Such an exaggerated consumption of tobacco was identified as an exclusively masculine habit and it was much disliked by the genteel Hungarian ladies. Moreover, it was also seen as a cultural code, a symbol of patriotic feelings and national values. As Alexander Maxwell claims, “tobacco smoking marked the patriot with other social variables. Hungarian smoking transcended ethnic differences, spreading beyond ethnic Hungarians to non-Magyar citizens of the Hungarian kingdom” (2012, 10).

Paget also wrote quite extensively about the moustache, this typical feature of every “Magyar.” Once he visited a school for the deaf and the dumb, and to his great surprise the sign used by them for expressing the notion of “Hungarian” was “touching the upper lip indicating a moustache” (1839, 321). Later, when he met a Hungarian soldier, he was amazed by the length and the outlook of his moustache:

[H]e presented himself to us with his smart uniform, rattling spurs, strong stick, and military swagger, set off by the most exaggerated pair of mustaches I had ever seen. [...] I do not think I exaggerate when I say his mustaches were more than a foot long from tip to tip, as the ornithologists express it; standing out on each side of his face as stiff, straight, and black as wax could make them. (1839, 463)

Upon arriving to Hungary Paget observed that the country had a multi-ethnic composition, and wherever he travelled he offered a detailed description of the various ethnic groups as contrasted to the mainstream Hungarian population, as well as to English standards. According to Joan P. Rubies, ethnographic descriptions were considered to be central to travel narratives (2002, 244), since they were meant to inform those at home about the natives of a foreign land. During his tour in Transylvania Paget remarked about the Saxons, for example, that they are “slow people, suspicious of their neighbours, and caring more for material than political interests,” but later he added that the Saxons are “undoubtedly the most industrious, steady, and frugal of all the inhabitants of Transylvania, and they are consequently the best lodged, best clothed, and best instructed” (1839, 354–355). About the gypsies he learned that they are “such rogues that they are scarcely permitted to enter any house” (1839, 160).

On the route towards Cluj-Napoca the travelling company met a sixteen-year-old gypsy girl, Lila, who became their guide and servant. Paget mentioned that the girl was very pretty, “with features more regular than those of her tribe commonly are, but with all a gipsy’s cunning flattery on her tongue” (1839, 159). The sketch Herring made about the girl perfectly matches Paget’s detailed ethnographic description: Lila had a fanciful, embroidered dress, a colored fillet over her forehead ornamented with a gay bow, and flowers in her brown, curly hair. “She spoke alternately Wallack, Magyar, and German, as she in turns scolded, directed, and coaxed” (1839, 160).

As a true British traveler, Paget recorded every detail of the customs and the lifestyles of the natives, and attempted to offer an unprejudiced picture of people. Yet, his viewpoint was often determined by his English background and social patterns, thus, many times, he looked at the “otherness” of Hungarians with confusion, especially when some aspects did not meet his aforementioned English standards.

Conclusions

John Paget in his travelogue provided a new picture about Hungary and Transylvania for the English public. His book introduced the English people to life in a country that was previously considered to be an exotic, remote place, as well as a dangerous, hidden land. He described a nation that was both strongly preserving its national identity and embracing British ideas and the new waves of social as well as economic progress. By describing the cultured elite of the country, the real condition of peasants and nobles, the progressive spirit of Magyars, and by offering a compelling portrait of Count Széchenyi, Paget – going against the Habsburgs’ interests – undoubtedly contributed to the debunking of false myths that were constructed about Hungarians in Western Societies.

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Heterotopic Discourse in Ivo Andrić's *The Damned Yard*

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Abstract. The paper analyzes Ivo Andrić's novel *The Damned Yard*, a work that has received continuous critical attention since its publication. Its interpretation presents a challenge even to the latest schools of literary theory. With a focus on the poetics of space, the argument applies Michel Foucault's theory and discusses the roles heterotopias play in structuring the narrative. Heterotopias reveal the attributes of real and metaphoric spaces, while the dynamics of space influence the movements of narration in the novel. Reproducing diverse forms of deviance, heterotopia delineates the frame of the individual's identity. The conclusion suggests that the text's complex metaphysical web of meanings is produced by the deranged identity appearing in a closed space, and the correspondingly deranged narration.¹

Keywords: poetics of space, heterotopia, prison, identity, madness.

The volumes discussing the oeuvre of Nobel laureate Ivo Andrić could fill libraries. It is no exaggeration to claim that he is the author of Serbian literature who has been discussed most frequently and interpreted from the most diverse perspectives. His works were brought to literary limelight most recently in 2011, the fiftieth anniversary of his Nobel Prize, when his bibliography containing 15,647 items was published in the joint edition of the Belgrade Ivo Andrić Foundation, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Matica Srpska Library of Novi Sad (Klevernić and Mirić et al. 2011). His works continue to kindle interest among interpreters, and in Serbia only, about five to six volumes related to his oeuvre are published yearly, part of which are republications of his previous works, while the number of article collections discussing his works is also significant.

1 The study was conducted within project no. 178017 of the Ministry of Science and Education of Serbia.

Several of the works interpreting Andrić's texts are actualizing and referential, registering its parallels with the state of affairs within the region at the turn of the millennium, or more precisely, with what one could experience during the war in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Such interpretations read the depictions of the past against present events with a characteristic, exclusively negative ideological bias, and they disregard the fact that "heritage (Bosnian Croat) and the chosen language of literary utterance (Serbian, as well as the national and regional dialects spoken by his characters) in themselves offer a unique basis for conceptual openness and the recognition of cultural diversity" (Thomka 2009, 55).² Today, in the ideologically biased reading of Bosnian public discourse, the Nobel Prize winning novel, *The Bridge on the Drina* is the work that is targeted most by negative criticism, with the main accusation against it being that it puts Bosnians into a negative light, and thus serves as a foreshadowing of the war breaking out later. The author is declared a villain and a traitor, and it is suggested that if he were alive, he should face the international tribunal at The Hague for war crimes (Thomka 2009, 55). Milo Dor talks about a similar experience in his afterword to the German edition of *The Damned Yard*. He considers Ivo Andrić a socially dedicated writer who, instead of dealing with matters of daily politics, represented European values. Andrić was born into a Catholic family of Croatian descent in Bosnia, but lived in Belgrade, and wrote in Serbian, which in itself was enough to provoke the anger of Croatian politics and make his works disappear from school textbooks. Andrić's fate, however, was hardly more fortunate in Bosnia. He belonged to Yugoslav intellectuals who insisted on the country's European ties, despite its inner contradictions. In Dor's opinion this may have been the reason that his modest statue erected by the bridge in Višegrad was demolished by a "fanatic and mad Muslim," in retaliation for the horrific deeds the Serbian army had committed in the recent war (2002).

Much more important than the actualization of the texts in contemporary politics is another challenge faced by the interpreters. In line with the trends forming the literary, historical and critical discourse and its changes at the end of the twentieth century, the reception of Andrić acquired new dimensions, giving way to up-to-date interpretations and perspectives. His oeuvre, the multiethnic and multi-religious society, presented in a historical context, provides excellent material for the latest schools of literary theory, such as multiculturalism, postcolonialism, otherness studies or approaches informed by perspectives of gender or spatial studies.

Works dealing with Andrić frequently refer to the rich potential that his texts offer for analysis, as well as the large number of existing interpretations and their diversity. His reception suggests that one reading does not extinguish the other,

2 The translations from Hungarian and Serbian specialist literature are my own throughout the article.

and experts agree that the call for newer and newer interpretations is coded in his texts. The characteristics of narration and the refined solutions in the structure of the texts allow for diverse modes of understanding.

Interpretations regularly allude to the importance of the “spatial” dimension of Andrić’s texts, yet they are mostly concerned with their location. Thus the analyses often focus on Bosnia, the Balkans, the East–West dichotomy, their historical-referential as well as temporal aspects. Andrić’s texts are characterized by the multifarious layers of the texts; the analyses of the layers show how versatile and universal aspects are built on operations of ascribing local meaning (Vukićević-Janković 2015). When I analyse *The Damned Yard* from the aspects of spatial poetics, I regard space crucial not only as the location of the narrative, but also in terms of identity construction. The spatial poetic aspect is a structure “above” the actual locality, and the analysis of the spatial arrangement/pattern highlights the complexity of the narration.

The Text’s Intergeneric Space

The last extensive, finished work of the author, *The Damned Yard*, exemplifies the typical proliferation of the secondary literature dealing with Andrić: it is discussed in three bulky monographs (Džadžić 1975; Kostić 2006; Minić 1976), which cannot be regarded as customary even if we are aware that already at the point of its publication this work was considered the peak of the author’s art, the dense formulation of his poetics, and this opinion has persisted to the present day. The novel is additionally unique in the sense that it is the one that took the most time for its author to write. Scholars researching his biography claim that seventeen years were required until the novel took its final form. Details of the novel’s genealogy were revealed by the author himself. Bori tells us that “[h]e started writing between 1928–1929, on letterhead sheets of Madrid hotels, during the months of his diplomatic service, and returned working on the draft again in April 1952, finishing it in April 1954” (1992, 136). Philologists suggest that some versions of it were as long as two hundred and fifty manuscript pages, while the final version, which was published in 1954, was a result of some radical simplifications, left out several threads of the narrative, and resulted in a “highly condensed text” (Đukić Perišić 2012, 466).

Scholars are puzzled by the brevity and fragmentary character of the work. While they remind readers that the author did not refer to any of his works as novels, still, some regard the text as a short story, some say it is a novel or a novella, while others place it on the border between a short story and a novel. Some of the generic descriptions used refer to characteristics of the text, such as in saying that *The Damned Yard* is a “short-story-like novel,” “a parabolic

novel,” “a metaphysical novel,” “a novel of prison conversations,” “a portrait novel,” “a narrative about narration” (Bori 1992). Some of the interpreters find a sense of personal motivation, a biographical detail in the text, supposing that it contains an “authorial self-portrait,” saying that the shared experience of Andrić and his hero, Fra Petar, “is possible to detect, but is not directly identifiable,” namely that they both spent two months in Konstanz, imprisoned by the Gestapo. It is also taken as no accident that “Konstanz and the city of *The Damned Yard* were both named after the tyrannical emperor Constantine” (Márton 2007, 72). Most researchers, however, find the label “history” to be most proper, with the idea of the plot, the “story” emphasized in it.

The Damned Yard offers diverse criteria, and thus provides several options for arrangement. Additionally, its highly puzzling nature makes it impossible to opt for a single arrangement that would rule out the rest. In the following, I will put forth an argument that reads *The Damned Yard* as a spatial novel, anchoring its central motif in the notion of identity.

The Spatial Delineation of the Locale

The title of the novel offers itself for an interpretation focusing on space. *The Damned Yard* specifies the locale of the work, radicalizing space. Throughout the majority of the novel the narrator is a Bosnian Franciscan monk, Fra Petar, who remembers the two months he spent in a prison in Stamboul, called simply the Damned Yard by people.

Every culture, every civilization has its

real and effective places which are outlined in the very institution of society, but which constitute a sort of counter arrangement, of effectively realized utopia, in which all the real arrangements, all the other real arrangements that can be found within society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged, and overturned: a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable. (Foucault 1997, 332)

It is these spaces that Michel Foucault calls heterotopias.

The Damned Yard is a typical representation of a heterotopia. Within Foucault’s heterotopology it may be labelled as a heterotopia of deviation, a location for “individuals whose behavior deviates from the current average or standard” (1997, 333). Such locations are rest homes, psychiatry clinics, prisons or old-people’s homes.

The Damned Yard is a prison, but not of the usual sort. It is a transitory place where people are interrogated, where people serve their minor sentences; this is

the place where they are sentenced to banishment or from where they are released in case they are proven not guilty. The yard does not comply with any norm. Its shape differs from the customary and is not characterized by strict order. The place is prehistoric chaos itself. "About fifteen buildings, some with two floors, built and extended over many years and linked by a high wall, enclose a huge, elongated, steep courtyard of irregular shape" (Andrić 2014a, 245).

Natural vegetation is almost completely missing from it, and if two or three trees are still to be found, these live a "martyred life" (Andrić 2014a, 245). "There are some cobbles in front of the building for the guards and administrative offices; all the rest is grey, hard trodden earth where not even a blade of grass succeeds even in sprouting, so many people walk over it from dawn to dusk" (Andrić 2014a, 245).

Fra Petar describes the Damned Yard several times. Its location is peculiar, and the perspective it offers is quaint. It is impossible to look out of the Damned Yard; the fact that there is a city outside, a port and the whole deserted arsenal by the sea exists only in the consciousness of the inhabitants. "Only the sky, vast and merciless in its beauty, in the distance a little of the green Asian shore beyond the invisible sea, and just the occasional tip of an unknown minaret or gigantic cypress behind the wall" (Andrić 2014a, 250).

Günter Figal suggests that "[t]he experience of space is always the experience of the confinement and expanse. Where there is too little space one feels confined, restricted [...]. The open country stands in contrast to this; that one's view does not come upon limits can be enlivening – it goes on forever, and this is like a promise" (Figal 2010, 129).

The space of the Damned Yard is not small. It is mentioned several times that it looks like a giant fair, a market-place, a huge container; nevertheless, it becomes largely closed and confined by the description, which opens the horizon in only a single direction, but expands it to infinity with the same gesture: the horizon is opened upwards, and the sky has no limits. The result is a duality of actual and transcendental phenomena: there is one single comfort in the doleful prison, and that leads towards the sky. Claustrophobia settles in.

The Prison as Heterotopia and as Character

The Damned Yard is, at the same time, an intense and unique emotional domain. It is both a place and a character, just like the bridge overarching the river Drina in the Nobel-awarded novel *The Bridge on the Drina*. The yard has its life, a weird and gruesome life, defined by its gallery of people, described in a dense description almost as if it were the ekphrasis of a painting by Hieronymus Bosch:

There are both petty and hardened criminals here, from a boy who stole a bunch of grapes or a fig from a market stall to international swindlers and dangerous burglars. Some are innocent, some slandered, some *feeble-minded* and *confused* [...]. Burglars, pickpockets, professional gamblers; large-scale swindlers and blackmailers; destitute people who steal and cheat to survive; cheerful drunks who forget to pay for what they drink or tavern brawlers and trouble-makers; pale, shifty wretches who seek in addictive drugs what they have not been able to get from life, *indulging in hashish, smoking or eating opium*, and stopping at nothing to reach the poison they cannot live without; people with all kinds of *perverse* drives and habits which they do not hide or embellish, but expose for all the world to see, and even if they try to conceal them they fail, because they are apparent in everything they do. (Andrić 2014a, 244; emphasis mine)

The spatial situatedness of the yard is “vague, nameless, and foreign” (Andrić 2014a, 250), it is only the deviance of the people filling the space that is certain and manifold. The society of the yard is less hierarchical than coordinate, even in its spatiality: the detainees live a collective life and merge into a single amorphous community. Being sealed off and removed from space results in the disappearance of time; there is no other space and time, only the space and the present of the Damned Yard.

This removal turns space into a giant cell, called a devil’s island by the narrator, making it no accident that the first English translation of the title was *Devil’s Yard* (Andrić 1962). Points of spatial reference are lost, especially at night, when the place turns into something of an ancient natural formation: “One moment there will be a strange shriek, then a sigh, then, like a recitative, two or three long drawn-out words from a song, the sad and barren substitute for all kinds of sensual desires” (Andrić 2014a, 245–246).

The cell is not the ground for an individual’s personal development; people are gathered in a mass during the day as well, making circles in the yard, with only one individual in the centre at a time, the actual speaker. The identity of the people is restricted to their common detainment. The narrow space gives a fertile ground for developing or growing madness.

The space becomes a character due to its particular dynamism. It is static only ostensibly. Its expansion is marked by its being a small town within the large one, Stamboul. “The prisoners from Stamboul, on top of all their other troubles, had the additional punishment of not being able to see or hear anything of their town. They were in it, but they might have been hundreds of leagues away; and that apparent distance tormented them as much as if it were real” (Andrić 2014a, 250). The yard is a vibrant, bustling flow of people, constantly in motion, always coming and going. It has its own pulsating rhythm, as if it were a living organism,

“endlessly filling and emptying” (Andrić 2014a, 243). Some of its inhabitants stay permanently; others are only temporarily present.

Foucault describes two ways of exercising power over men in his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995). One is represented by controlling lepers, the other by plague victims. He claims that all types of power are rooted in one of these forms:

The leper is caught up in a practice of rejection, of exile-enclosure; he was left to his doom in a mass among which it was useless to differentiate; those sick of the plague were caught up in a meticulous tactical partitioning in which individual differentiations were the constricting effects of a power that multiplied, articulated and subdivided itself; the great confinement on the one hand; the correct training on the other. [...] The exile of the leper and the arrest of the plague do not bring with them the same political dream. The first is that of a pure community, the second that of a disciplined society. (1995, 198)

The community of the Damned Yard is made up of the combination of these two opposing procedures, contradictory in their nature and meaning; still it resembles more a quarantine than a prison.

Lepers and those sick of the plague – are forms of a dualistic social organization. Such a dualistic mechanism is the one that governs the flow of movements in *The Damned Yard*. There is a constant but unpredictable movement between the inner and the outer space, between freedom and confinement. Some are let go free, others are sent to a place to serve their sentences. But the difference between the spaces of day and night is also significant. At night the inhabitants of the yard are driven into the inner spaces and locked in cells. Closedness within confinement results in the formation of peculiar spaces, identifiable by noises: “The large cells live only through sound, like a jungle at night” (Andrić 2014a, 245). The space of the outside world, of freedom, is tangible in these moments as well. “And knocking is heard at the main entrance. For it is by night that the ancient double gate creaks and rumbles to receive or thrust out its inmates, either individually or in groups” (Andrić 2014a, 246). The system of locking and unlocking is thus doubled: it is realized both within and out of the yard.

Power is invisible, present only through the way space is segmented by surveillance, through opening and closing the doors of the cells. Although prisoners are in their cells at night, the yard hustles and bustles during the day, like a marketplace.

Closed space confines the community of the yard not merely in their acts, but also in their feelings. The mass of people lives its own life, swirls uncontrollably, and the Damned Yard is occasionally taken over by sheer madness. The wind

blows from the south during these times, bringing a rotting smell that stinks unbearably and makes people restless. “The wind howled, seeming to spread disease everywhere. Even the most even-tempered people flared up and began roaming angrily around, looking for trouble, in a state of inexplicable aggravation” (Andrić 2014a, 251). Outbursts of anger emerge like a contagious disease, taking over the life of the entire yard: “madness, like an epidemic or swift flame, spread from cell to cell, from man to man, and was carried over from people to animals and inanimate objects” (Andrić 2014a, 251), making objects constantly fall out of one’s hand. The space is filled with bodies, smell and noise. The yard becomes one giant clamour so loud that it seems almost impossible to increase the noise, with everyone hoping that at its peak it will simply explode and dissolve.

Spaces of Transition

The governor of the Damned Yard is Latif-Aga, also called Karagöz, who has gained fame by his notorious methods. Rumour depicts his character by contrasting him to the previous governor. The previous governor tried to separate sin from truth as clearly as possible, regarded the institution as quarantine, and considered the people its inhabitants. His ideas about leading the facility are in line with Foucault’s description:

Generally speaking, all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way, etc.). On the one hand, the lepers are treated as plague victims; the tactics of individualizing disciplines are imposed on the excluded; and, on the other hand, the universality of disciplinary controls makes it possible to brand the “leper” and to bring into play against him the dualistic mechanism of exclusion. (Foucault 1995, 199)

The governor considered the people of the yard dangerously ill, ones who were difficult to cure and should be kept as far as possible from the healthy and respectable world by regulations, punishment, terror, and both physical and moral confinement. “They must not be allowed to break out of their circle, but they should not be interfered with unduly, because nothing good or sensible could ever come of such contact” (Andrić 2014a, 254).

While the former governor followed the order of the “civilized world,” the new one, Karagöz, flaunts his different attitude with the spatial arrangement of his life.

He buys a property near the Damned Yard and builds his house there. It is not only the Damned Yard that belongs to heterotopic spaces, but Karagöz's property as well, as the metaphors of the text suggest, comparing the estate to an abandoned island or an ancient graveyard. It is separated from the Damned Yard by a system of fences and high walls. Its façade faces the opposite direction so that it is protected from the south wind that brings maddening restlessness and stench. Its silence and tranquillity make it the opposite of the institute. "The house had great advantage of being both very remote from the Damned Yard and very close to it. Its whole appearance, its calm and cleanliness, made it seem another world, thousands of miles away, and yet it was right next to the Courtyard, invisibly connected with it" (Andrić 2014a, 255). Karagöz's house stands next to wimpling springs, among ancient trees, in the heterotopic space of an idyllic garden, which has been the symbol of joy and the totality of the world since ancient times (Foucault 1997, 334).

Karagöz is the only one for whom the Damned Yard is a permeable space. At the same time, his own house also functions as a permeable space, thus mingling the idyllic space with that of the cell. Karagöz moves between these spaces, maintaining the double position of liminality. The connection between these two worlds is provided by another topical space: the road. There is a road leading from his house to the Damned Yard, where he goes frequently, often using shortcuts known only to him, almost living together with the detainees and the guards, supervising all of them. He works from the inside. Karagöz's whole identity is based on this ambiguity, this hybrid identity: just like in his youth, he continues to live with crime but is already beyond it. We see him in a schizophrenic state, made up of a web of infinite and undefinable contradictions, which is terrifying because of its unpredictability.

Karagöz is the personification of the prison and of power, the invisible authority that reproduces the paranoia of power through its whims and inconsistencies: "no one could ever know for certain whether he was there, or where he might suddenly appear" (Andrić 2014a, 255).

The Heterotopia of the Stage

Within the spaces of the novel we find a virtual heterotopia with multiple meanings: the Damned Yard is a stage as well, hosting a variety of psychological dramas or what may be termed a "heartless clowning" (Andrić 2014a, 258). Prisoners, once they are let out to the yard, start walking and gathering into groups. Like the others, Fra Petar is doing his rounds, but he talks to the others only individually.

The main master of ceremonies on the stage is still Latif-Aga, or Karagöz, who was named after the protagonist of the Turkish shadow theatre. He carries out his

deeds in the spirit of the shadow theatre: he has no definite and prepared script. Improvisation is lifeblood for him, and he considers his activities a game which never repeats itself and has no routine, to the extent that he can surprise even the most experienced and best established “guests” of the yard.

With a blind and perverted passion, Karagöz walks his beat with the guards, while spreading his opinion, his main thesis being that nobody arrives at the Damned Yard by accident; nobody is innocent. “I know people; they’re all guilty, only it’s not written that all of them should eat their bread here. Bit-by-bit this whole monologue, spoken as he walked, grew increasingly animated, until it became a mad shout” (Andrić 2014a, 259). It ultimately becomes the fulmination of all the people in the Damned Yard, but he curses those too who are guilty but are outside of his reign. The inhabitants of the yard are convinced that he is possessed by the devil himself, or rather more than one, which is why he talks and acts this way.

Since nobody is innocent, his main goal is to extract confessions, because that is the only thing for which the guilty can be duly punished. He improvises skilfully, and his methods are boundless. He is aware of his demonic skill and does not exclude even the multiplication of his identity: “You’re Armenian, in other words sly and astute, but I’m worth at least three Armenians. So why don’t *the four of us* look for a way out of this dangerous mess” (Andrić 2014a, 265).

Karagöz is inhuman and raving, just like his methods, which he uses to make the trader to confess: he threatens him that he will spread the rumour that someone in his family has caught the plague, and consequently all of them will be quarantined in a plague hospital, where they will surely get the disease, while his empty house will be robbed in the meantime by burglars. Prisoners submit themselves to the whims of Karagöz. He is part of their lives, their identities, and they accept the rules that he introduces on the stage of the Damned Yard.

Spatial Doubles and Identity Bifurcations

It becomes gradually clear in the text that the space specificities do not only concern actual spatial relations but the modes of the narrative as well: it is made up of a chain of interlinked heterotopias. The first pages reveal the heterotopic space of a cemetery. The text begins with the description of the graveyard enveloped by snow: the young narrator, who remains in the background, can see the grave of Fra Petar through the window.

A certain kind of dichotomy, created by elements that may be understood as alter ego, bifurcation of the self or schizophrenia, is a recurring element in the novel, appearing not only as the contradictions of outside/inside, down/above, real/imaginary, but also the fact that everything comes in sets of two.

This dichotomy and layeredness appear already in the opening image, the graveyard that disappeared under the snow. The landscape that we see in this sense hides another world, depriving everything of its “real form,” and the description lifts everything from real ground, making it hover in mystery. The whiteness of the external world blends with the shadowy cell of the deceased Franciscan monk, blurring outside and inside spaces. There are *two* people taking inventory in the cell, who also have double identities. They are not mere inventory makers; they are pillagers, burglars of a life's memories. The narrator is fixated on creating two of everything, which presupposes a pathological soul. This “manic” atmosphere determines the development of text itself, that is the narrator also doubles throughout the text. The reader has the feeling that the number of perspectives is also constantly growing. Madness as a central organizing principle is defined through a crucial Nietzschean paragraph that focuses on the self. It is bracketed, as if it did not fit in the plot, while as an element of spatial poetics it has a crucial position and role: it points out that the soul has a space of its own, with the self in the centre, defining itself as indecipherable and unintelligible. Behind every act there is another mind, which “controls” and supervises itself.

The “young man” in the background evokes the figure of Fra Petar, who remembers his *two* months spent in the Damned Yard, primarily its “interesting, comic, pathetic, deranged” (Andrić 2014a, 267) people. Fra Petar also arrives in Stamboul as one of *two* people, with Fra Tadija, who can only speak, but not write or read Turkish.

Next to the heterotopic prison of the Damned Yard there is the heterotopic garden of Karagöz, with a road joining and likening the two. Karagöz too is someone with a deranged mind. He is a criminal and an investigator at the same time but can make people believe that there are several others in the spectrum of his identities.

Roads are created among the walls by the routes trodden by the inhabitants, including Fra Petar during his conversations. He has two partners to talk to, first Zaim, then Haim. He speaks to them one by one, but it is impossible to miss the similarity between the two. Even their names differ only by a single letter. They seem to be each other's opposite twins. Zaim is an eccentric monomaniac whose only topic in conversation is himself, while Haim is quite the opposite: he tries to identify with others, preferably with people who are more refined and belong to a higher stratum of the social hierarchy.

Ancestry and belonging have a significant role in the novel. Fra Petar's third conversation partner is the learned Kamil. His story too abounds in heterotopic and dualistic elements. Foucault regards the ship as a heterotopic space *par excellence*, “a floating part of space, a placeless place, that lives by itself, closed in on itself” (1997, 336). The tragic fate of Kamil's mother is sealed by a sea journey. When her daughter dies, the ship becomes a graveyard. The captain, to

temper her grief, secretly has two coffins made. The one with the child's body is lowered into the water, while the mother takes and puts to eternal rest the other coffin at home. Later, however, it turns out that she buried an empty coffin, which drives her mad. Following a mirror-like structure in the narrative, the Greek woman then marries a Turk, and Kamil is their child, who dedicates his life to studying history, because he is not allowed to marry the Greek woman whom he fell in love with. Kamil's identity is defined throughout by the fact that he is a great admirer of Sultan Beyazit's brother Cem-Sultan, with whom he happily identifies. "Kamil confessed openly and proudly that he was the same as Cem-Sultan" (Andrić 2014a, 325). Kamil finds himself in between two worlds in double sense: between his own and Cem-Sultan's self, and also between Greek and Turkish identity. "He seemed both like a Turk and not, but it was certain that he was an unhappy man," says the narrator about him (Andrić 2014a, 275).

The links between heterotopic spaces and narrators bring us towards a virtual centre in the narrative, which can be represented in the following way: Young man – Fra Petar – Zaim – Haim – (Kamil – Cem) – Haim – Zaim – Young man. The young man who appears at the beginning of the novel, the unidentified narrator, remembers Fra Petar's story, who meets Zaim first, then Haim. Haim tells him the story of Kamil, with whom he will speak almost entirely about prince Cem. In the middle of the plot Kamil surrenders his identity completely, recites the poems of prince Cem, and it is Cem-Sultan who speaks through him. Later, when Kamil disappears, as a result of Karagöz's interrogation, Haim tells the story about what he supposes may have happened to him:

If he was alive, they had probably taken him to the Timarkhane, near the Suleymaniye, where mental patients were locked up. There, among lunatics, his stories about himself as heir to the throne would be the same as all the words of madmen, the innocuous ravings of the ill to which no one paid any attention. And such a deranged, sick person did not in any case live long but slipped quickly and easily out of the world, together with his morbid imaginings, without anyone having to account to anyone for it. (Andrić 2014a, 327)

Next, Zaim's stories lead Fra Petar out of the plot. The layeredness of the narrative contributes to the experience of space. All levels have to be visited twice, first inward, towards the centre of the plot, then again, this time outward. The narrative goes increasingly deeper towards madness which is the result of a lost identity, only to waken us and lead us back to higher levels of identification.

All characters in the novel bring their own madness from the outside world into the Damned Yard, which then adds its own influence. Fra Petar is the only one who goes through a significant change. Initially his calm stands out from the bustling, tumultuous mass. The fact that the Christian monk from Bosnia

becomes so intrigued by the fate of the Turkish young man from Smyrna is explicable only by some extraordinary circumstance. However, with Kamil's disappearance Fra Petar's stable identity is shaken. When he realizes that after talking to Kamil he cannot stop continuing the dialogue and keeps speaking to himself, he understands that something broke inside him.

Why, I'd been talking to myself! I was afraid of madness as of an infectious disease and of the thought that in this place with time even the sanest man starts seeing things. And I began to resist. I defended myself, forced myself to remember who and what I was, where I had come from and how I came here. I reminded myself that apart from this Courtyard there was another, different world, that this was not all there was and it was not forever. And I endeavored not to forget this, to hold on to this idea. But the Courtyard was like a whirlpool dragging a man into its dark depths. (Andrić 2014a, 338)

It is not the uncontrollable Karagöz, but rather the Damned Yard that breaks people, making even the healthy fall ill. It is a closed space, set off from the rest of the world, a place where everyone thinks all corners are under surveillance. There is a supposed, invisible authority, an eye that sees all. This is what drives people mad. The yard's power gets everyone, even the innocent, even those who resist, because they are aware of its power which drags one down. "He forgot what had happened before and thought less and less of what was going to be, so that past and future merged in one single present, the strange, terrible life of the Damned Yard" (Andrić 2014a, 250). Even Fra Petar turns out not the person he seems to be at the first glance. He becomes the prisoner of the yard. And the yard stays with him even when he leaves, in his exile. "It was going with him on his journey and it would accompany him, awake and asleep, throughout his stay in Acre, and afterwards" (Andrić 2014a, 341), until the end of his life.

The "Deranged" Narrative

The novel displays significant metatextual references. From time to time the voice of an omniscient narrator is heard, that of someone who is beyond the events, who is not identical to any of the narrators mentioned so far, and who makes remarks about the nature of narration. Most often, scholars identify this position with the writer's. But similar comments are made by the young man who frames the plot, and occasionally by Fra Petar as well, who halts the story with his self-reflexive musings.

This is how narrators are formed in front of our eyes. The narration follows the world of the novel, since the text created by a deranged mind will be similarly

“deranged,” but each narrator is deranged in his own way. Zaim, who speaks exclusively about himself, lies continuously, but his eyes go frantically to and fro, and incessant talk is a mere compensation for him, with which he manages to keep his mind temporarily away from what genuinely interests him: the punishment that awaits him. His stories, which stretch infinitely, are exaggerated, hyperbolic, and disregard norms.

Haim feels the need to talk all the time. He is verbose, talks nonsense, can never focus, but is brilliant in impersonating others. The omniscient narrator regards his text as far from flawless, and makes corrections to it. “That was Kamil Effendi’s story, the way Haim was able to know and envisage it. It has been related here briefly, without Haim’s repetitions and comments and his numerous cries of ‘Eh? Ah!’” (Andrić 2014a, 291). But he speaks on his behalf as well:

For, what would we know about other people’s souls and thoughts, about other people and consequently about ourselves, about other places and regions we have never seen nor will have the opportunity of seeing, if there were not people like this who have the need to describe in speech or writing what they have seen and heard, and what they have experienced or thought in that connection? Little, very little. (Andrić 2014a, 279–280)

The complete dissolution of the self is exemplified in Kamil, who identifies himself entirely with the story of another person.

Fra Petar creates a “deranged” narrative in the sense that he uses the logic of empty spaces, blanks that need to be filled by the reader: “These fragments did not always follow one from another in proper order. [...] His tale could stop, go on, repeat itself, anticipate, go back, and, once it was ended, be added to, explained and expanded, regardless of place, time and the real, forever established course of events” (Andrić 2014a, 242).

The only narrator in the story who can retain his calm and wisdom is the young narrator in the frame. The metatextual level of the novel, thus, suggests the central idea that in spite of the world’s madness there is a central narrative consciousness which remains unscathed, and which is capable of letting the story out from the whirling fantasy world of madness to the sober ground of reality.

Conclusion

In the novel Haim voices his verdict on the crowd of the yard: “there’s not a single man in his right mind here. Believe me! They’re all crazy, the guards and the prisoners and the spies (and almost all of them are spies!) not to mention the

greatest madman, Karagöz. In every other country in the world he'd have been locked up in a madhouse long ago" (Andrić 2014a, 339).

The idea of overall madness is not alien to Andrić's other works either, but his attitude towards his characters who have deranged minds is always characterized by compassion, a combination of humour and pity. His Bosnian stories, for example, "The Story of the Vizier's Elephant" (Andrić 2014b), certainly belongs to this group. His novels with different themes also evoke the same attitude. In his brilliant "Bar Titanic" (Andrić 1969), depicting a story from the Second World War, the loony Jewish tavern-keeper has his own personal Ustasha. Both of them are genuine Andrić-characters, who feel that they are not in their rightful place, and who deserved better. The Ustasha is not a real slaughterer but would like to become one in order to retain his status, while the Jewish man is not a real Jew because he lacks money. At the end of the story, the Ustasha is shooting randomly while the tavern-keeper is skipping to and fro to avoid the bullets – as if they lived in perfect harmony with one another and were in peace with their fate and the world.

The Damned Yard is not like that. Humorous moments are absent from it. Andrić's characters live in this world as if they were outside of everything, and the inevitability of their fall looms over them with certainty, but they simply do not know when, where and why disaster will befall them. Local stories tend towards the absurd.

Contemporary interpreters saw a new Franz Kafka phenomenon from the Balkans in him (Bori 1992). The lack of freedom, the idea of committing crime, sacrifice, guilt and the fact that truth is out of reach – all these, projected into the past, make up the philosophical basis of the novel. However, the opposite interpretation is relevant as well, the one that reads "forward," and considers the *Damned Yard* the prefiguration of the Gulag, identifying it with totalitarian regimes in general.

Andrić scholars see the influence of the Renaissance historian and writer, Guicciardini, in the way Andrić depicts rotation in history (Bori 1992). And he so consistently does it that it surfaces in all his aspects, spaces and narrative techniques. The *Damned Yard* does not have small, rectangular, closed cells and spaces; movements in it are circular, and at a metaphorical level this circularity permeates the text: "At such times this whole Courtyard moaned and clattered like an enormous rattle in a giant's hand while the people in it danced, jerked, knocked into one another and beat against the walls like grains in the rattle" (Andrić 2014a, 251–252). The *Damned Yard* is given metaphysical dimensions and becomes a universal metaphor for existence: it becomes the space of existential defencelessness.

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Liminality and Border Crossing in Ádám Bodor's Novels

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Abstract. The plots of the novels *The Sinistra Zone* (1992), *The Archbishop's Visit* (1999) and *The Birds of Verhovina* (2011) by Ádám Bodor unfold in border zones, in spaces of liminal existence. By investigating the intricate relationship between the Self and the Other, using particular space forming techniques with shifts and displacements, these novels extend the scope of postmodern fragmentariness to identity construction as well. In these literary works enforced journeys or travels with well-defined purposes should not be merely understood in their physical sense: identity also undergoes a change, becomes hybrid. In a space characterized by a labyrinth of ethnic diversity, identities distorted by a dictatorial regime often go beyond the border of the human, the characters being endowed with animal features. Starting from Merleau-Ponty's idea according to which action is not set in space, but rather comes into being through space (Faragó 2001, 7), the consequences of spatial changes must also be taken into account.¹

Keywords: Ádám Bodor's novels, borders, liminality, identity.

The Universe of Ádám Bodor's Novels – on the Boundary of Referentiality and Fictionality

Ádám Bodor's² literary activity has brought a turn in the Hungarian literature from Transylvania; he has created a school from the 1990s on. His works

- 1 This work was created within the framework of a group research project entitled *Travel and Cognition*, supported by the Sapientia University – Institute of Research Programmes.
- 2 Ádám Bodor (1936, Cluj-Napoca, Romania) is an outstanding representative of contemporary Hungarian prose. His short stories and novels have been translated into Romanian, English, German, French, Norwegian, Danish, Italian, Polish, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovak and Estonian; six works of his have been adapted to screen. A determining experience of his life was at age of sixteen, when he was imprisoned for two years for distributing anti-communist leaflets. After his release he worked as a factory worker, an archivist and later in a copying-translation service office. He pursued protestant theological studies between 1955 and 1960. In 1965 he published his first short story. In 1982 he moved to Hungary, but his works continued to be inspired by contemporary Romania, mostly by the Eastern European reality.

generate a new readerly attitude, as established interpretations are continuously questioned and displaced in the course of reception. The difficulty of finding his place in literature is justified by the delayed start of his career as well as by his works situated at the boundary of the absurd, magic realism and postmodernism. “Just as there is no definite direction of the inner logic ruling the novel’s main and secondary characters, in the same way we cannot talk about a great turn or fulfilment in the author’s literary career. Basically, he has continuously been writing the same work (life work)”³ states Sándor Bazsányi in his review of *The Birds of Verhovina* (2012). Bodor’s three novels, *The Sinistra Zone* (1992), *The Archbishop’s Visit* (1999) and *The Birds of Verhovina* (2011), can be characterized by the notion of border. Their plots take place in border zones; the identity of the characters becomes blurred in spaces of mixed ethnicity, under distorted social conditions. Due to the repetitive structures, their actions are continuously displaced, slipping out of the systematizing web of interpretation; these writings are border cases also in terms of the poetics of the novel.

In *The Sinistra Zone* (1992), which brought Bodor the first real success, the author indicates space by the title of the book, while he continuously makes it uncertain in the text: the reader may wonder whether the plot takes place in a real, geographically located place or in the nowhere land of the Orwellian dystopia, in the hell of the dictatorships imaginable anywhere. The most important metaphor of the text is the border; it appears already in the introductory sentence: “Two weeks before he died, Colonel Borcan took me with him on reconnaissance to one of the barren heights in the Dobrin forest district” (Bodor 2013, 3). The forest of Dobrin lies on the frontier and Colonel Borcan is approaching the border of life and death. The heroes of the events abounding in irrational turns are in an existential border situation, vegetating on a subhuman, half-animal level of defencelessness.

The main character of the novel, Andrei Bodor, bearing the author’s family name, a roadman, a deputy coroner (who is the first-person narrator at the same time), comes to this sinister place in order to help and save his foster son, Béla Bundasian. By subordinating everything to this goal, he slowly adapts to the particular order of the prison-like setting of the novel. Finally, without carrying out his task – because the son does not want to leave the place where his lover is kept prisoner, and finally commits suicide – he escapes from the district in the lorry of the six-hundred-kilo-heavy Mustafa Mukkermann.

The motif of failed mission, the fragmented structure, the grotesque worldview and the multitude of the – mainly unpleasant – smells and tastes return in Bodor’s next novel, *The Archbishop’s Visit* (1999), in which the town on the other side of the frontier river (which suddenly changes its flowing direction)

3 Translator’s note: translations of quotations from Bodor’s novels (except *The Sinistra Zone*) and from Hungarian specialist literature are my own throughout the article – E. B.

is gradually covered by garbage. Besides the notion of border, garbage becomes the key metaphor of the second novel. We find out from the first paragraph that Gabriel Ventuza, the chaplain, successfully caught the Senkowitz sisters, who escaped from the isolator, and “led them back to the site on a leather leash, where they were on public display while locked in a henhouse” (Bodor 1999, 5). Later we learn that “[h]e arrived to Bogdanski Dolina years before in order to take away his father’s mortal remains, but finally he stayed as well” (Bodor 1999, 11).

According to Éva Bányai, Bodor’s greatest innovation is “the conscious subversion of the new Transylvanist prescriptive canon” (2011a, 251). The setting of the novels, the peak, a value symbol in Hungarian literature from Transylvania representing humanism and tolerance, turns in Bodor’s novels into the scene of suffering and exclusion. The landscape, made vivid by waters and underground streams, does not enchant its inhabitants with its beauty; living in a reserve-like space, with all its absurdities, makes one forget the comforting power of nature.

The title of the novel *The Birds of Verhovina. Variations on the Last Days* (2011) specifies a location that can be found on the map. However, the settlement situated in the Northern Carpathian region, in Ukraine today, which once represented the border of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, becomes a floating, unrealistic space similar to the spaces constructed in the former novels. It is a place permeated by stench; the unpleasant smell of the thermal spas welcomes Daniel Vangyeluk. The novel starts with his arrival and consists of recurrent leavings and disappearances. The first page already reveals that Vangyeluk’s early train coming from the reformatory arrives at a station where the timetable “has just been erased” (Bodor 2012, 5) and soon even the rails will be removed. The apocalyptic scenery is created not only in time but also in space. Jablonska Poljana and Bogdanski Dolina – the former constituting the setting of *The Birds of Verhovina*, the latter that of *The Archbishop’s Visit* – are districts similar to the Sinistra Zone. In the town and around it, in Verhovina, the ever-dwindling brigade led by Anatol Korkodus carries out some kind of “water monitoring” work, with the participation of the local workforce and with teenagers coming from Monor Gledin, the reformatory. The plot advances along events such as deportations, escapes, visits of the representatives and spies of power (e.g. Karabiberi, the female police officer, and Kotzofan, the priest sent by her). The short mistress of the head of water management, the deaf-and-dumb Roswitha, and the vice prefect Vaneliza, representing the power, are a grotesque couple of lovers who escape to Norway from Verhovina with water bottles in their arms. The Augusztins, accused of murder, commit suicide before being taken away for their case to be investigated. Januszký or Anatol Korkodus are taken away by force by unknown individuals.

Dystopias and Heterotopias: Reserve, Penal Camp, Reformatory, Cage

In his seminal essay *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias* Michel Foucault regards the contemporary age as the era of space in which “the world is putting itself to a test, not so much as a great way of life destined to grow in time but as a net that links points together and creates its own muddle” (1997, 330). This network character defines the mosaic-like structure of Bodor’s novels; the reader is supposed to put together the plot subsequently. The French philosopher points out that space is a relative concept, and while the Middle Ages were characterized by the hierarchical totality of the spaces, based on the distinction between sacred and profane, protected and open/undefended, urban and rural spaces, the modern space concept distinguishes organizational spaces, based on the “contrast between public and private space, family and social space, cultural and utilitarian space, the space of pleasure and the space of work” (Foucault 1997, 331). In Foucault’s conceptualization of the terms,

[u]topias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. (1997, 333)

In the modern era heterotopias, among them the heterotopias of crisis and the heterotopias of deviation (psychiatric clinics, prisons, rest homes, cemeteries) constitute a well-established system (Foucault 1997, 333). The scenes of Bodor’s novels can be considered as heterotopias because they “presuppose a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at one and the same time” (Foucault 1997, 335). The heterotopic character is most perceivable in *The Sinistra Zone*. In the region of Dobrin the water of the Sinistra branches off into streams; along the gullies barbed wire, concrete posts, watchtowers and trenches full of traps indicate the border. Only military vehicles can use this

area; the civilians are admitted through the border only if given permission. Arriving in Dobrin City the entrants are given new identities; the commander of the mountain brigade decides upon who may stay and who may leave the zone. Colonel Coca Mavrodin wants to remove Béla Bundasian; Andrej Bodor has to flee. In the second novel the members of the mountain brigade turned into seminarists impede free motion. In *The Birds of Verhovina* the railroad does not lead anywhere; Daniel Vangyeluk arriving in Verhovan asks about the Augusztins, held captive, whether they have committed anything or they are kept in detention just like that from time to time.

Foucault considers isolation as the main technique of discipline (cf. 1995). Within the confined zones situated on the border which constitute the scenes of Bodor's novels there are further isolated areas, such as the mountain rifleman's barracks and the bear reserve in *The Sinistra Zone*, Bogdanski Dolina's barracks turned into a seminary in *The Archbishop's Visit*, in which the renitents are taken to the lime kiln – or in a better case – to the isolation ward of consumptive patients. In *The Birds of Verhovina* the young orphans arrive from Monor Gledin, the youth reformatory, to the region of Jablonka, where, on the mountain, a secret female re-education institute is operated by the priest. As punishment, space is made ever more confined: in *The Sinistra Zone* Aron Wargotzki is walled in alive, and colonel Coca Mavrodin waits for him with a huge rat-trap at the exit of the underground stream, in case he might escape. *The Archbishop's Visit* begins with locking up the fugitive Senkowicz sisters into a cage; Januszky is taken away in a cage by the dogcatchers in *The Birds of Verhovina*.

Bodor presents a particular panopticon in his novels. The concept of the Panopticon used by Foucault (1995) to illustrate supervision shows that a person is under permanent surveillance, whether he is aware of being observed or not. Authority is not necessarily always present but can turn up any time. This feature of the Panopticon suggests that the individual may exercise some kind of self-control, may internalize the rules – this happens to Bodor's vulnerable heroes and narrators.

Despite all the similarities that make Bodor's oeuvre circular and timeless, there seems to be a kind of temporal advancement in his novels. The first novel clearly outlines the controlling atmosphere of the totalitarian communist regime; the second one depicts the grotesque picture of the ambivalent, appropriated regime change. The third novel is technically set in the twenty-first century, but the characters seem to have been mentally stuck in the mid-twentieth century. The reader cannot help associating Khrushchev with Nikita, the name of death; this generates further associations. Although we suspect that the STLN-labelled little crosses preserve the memory of Danczura's lover, the chopped Stelian, the spirit of Stalin seems to keep haunting in the region. The postmodern fragmentation manifests in the motif of dismemberment. At the same time, László Bengi's

statement applies to the last novel as well: “in relationship with the motivic structure, repetition (as a poetic feature), which creates the space and reality of *The Sinistra Zone* and projects the levels of the plot onto each other, can be related to the narrative technique of mythical texts” (2005, 122).

Identities – Grotesque Transitions

When arriving at the Sinistra zone, everybody gets a “dog tag,” with a new name on it. Béla Bundasian is the only one who can keep his real name, whose integrity is not compromised; however, he is not able to adapt to the world, he protests against it and steps out of it with his death: “‘And who am I speaking to now?’ ‘Come on, Aron Wargotzki, you know full well I could say any old name to you – that’s really not important’” (Bodor 2013, 127) – the intradiegetic narrator bearing the pseudonym Andrej Bodor says. As regards the narratability/unnarratability of the stories, the choice of the names of the narrators with limited competence is Bodor’s playful, ironic gesture: in *The Sinistra Zone* the narrator bears the author’s surname; the narrator of *The Birds of Verhovina* is given the author’s first name.

The particular mountainous region created by Bodor is populated by human wrecks; his works revolve around the lack of identity, oblivion and the problematic, aleatory status of names.

The analysis of the varied names of the characters populating Ádám Bodor’s prose and of the place names marking the space of the texts activate different interpretation strategies [...]. In *The Sinistra Zone* and *The Archbishop’s Visit* the denomination, the appearance of names broaden and at the same time localize the textual space; the Romanian, Ukranian, German, Armenian, Turkish, Hebrew and Polish names frequently occurring besides the Hungarian ones allow a geopoetic interpretation of Bodor’s prose as well. This multilingualism gives the impression that distant places are connected; it is the defining characteristic of this prose that all of them are located in one and the same cultural space. (Bányai 2011b, 20)

At the same time, this diversity redirects the attention to the displacement of stabilized identity in all of Bodor’s novels: “At the boundary and contact points of different cultures, mentalities and languages identity gets shattered. It becomes uncertain and relative amidst differences and similarities, particularities and deviations. [...] This becomes evident in the analysis of identities, which become border identities in the space of in-betweenness” (Bányai 2011b, 38).

In the *The Birds of Verhovina* one can find exotic, telling names that are intelligible for the Hungarian readers living in Transylvania, such as Delfina

(dolphin), Kotzofan ('magpie' in Romanian), Duhovnik ('monk' in Romanian), Korkodus ('wax cherry' in Romanian), Karabiberi ('black pepper' in Turkish). Grotesque irony manifests not only at the level of the characters' dialogues, but the plot is also fully permeated by it. Adam, the intradiegetic narrator is seeing Miss Klara Burszen to read from Hungarian books found in the library. Neither of them understands the text, but she is clinging to the Hungarian words, because once she was oracled that a Hungarian officer would come for her on horseback, from beyond the hills. An outstanding example of irony and deconstruction of national myth is Klara Burszen's expectation of the Hungarian officer coming on a white horse; it was somewhere in this region that Árpád, head of the confederation of Hungarian tribes, came on his white horse to establish a new home for the Hungarians. In the novel the Hungarian army officer arrives from the opposite direction, on foot, carrying only the saddle and looking for Klara Burszen. He is taken to her grave and is killed there without any apparent reason. As an ironic twist, the man incapable of accomplishing his mission is sacrificed, instead of the horse as in the time of the glorious ancestors.

The novel's locations are permeated by the lack of an ethical perspective. In *Sinistra Severin* Spiridon does not even think of protesting when his wife is allocated to Andrej Bodor. The latter performs the command without a word to wall in Aron Wargotzky alive. We do not know the cause of the deeds and there is no community that would stand up for a peer or would point at the villain. The narrator's impassive voice, as he would not comment on the terrifying or incomprehensible events, is reminiscent of Franz Kafka's technique. It is a sign of alienation that both in *The Sinistra Zone* and in *The Archbishop's Visit* the inorganic communities and faux kinships get an emphasized role: the first novel is narrated by the stepfather, and the stepmother occurs in the second one. Similarly, in *The Birds of Verhovina* there also appears a stepfather figure; a girl mentioned by the narrator as "my niece, Danczura," to whom the speaker has actually no ties whatsoever, nor is he helping the orphan girl in any way.

"The grotesque body becomes ridiculous as long as it does not coincide with its own boundaries" (S. Horváth 2013, 84). The heroes doomed to subhuman existence seem to have changed into animals in *The Sinistra Zone* as well. The love of Béla Bundasian, the polyglot, beautiful and hot-blooded Cornelia Ilarion, alias Connie Illafeld, is confined to an asylum, and by the time she comes out to be transported to a bear reserve, „[f]rom between the strands of silky black hair that covered her face her green eyes glowed. She did not know her own name" (Bodor 2013,99). Verhovina's inhabitants also appear as animals: the dike-reeve Duhovnik's wife, the "bear Delfina" (Bodor 2011, 46) arrives at the colony led by Hanku on a chain. (It turns out that she hanged her husband during the winter.) The informer Balwinder strikes us as a scaly crocodile: "The grey lower body of the dead hindrance is naked, full of parched dots, scales" (Bodor 2011, 182).

Danczura is a yellow-bellied lizard hunting butterflies: “She hangs out clothes to dry but sometimes she lies down surrendering herself to the sunlight. She has her yellow blouse on her, sometimes she picks, snatches and sucks a butterfly from it” (Bodor 2011, 227). The vice prefect lady’s daughter is “wizen, precocious, badger-like” (Bodor 2011, 143). The deaf-and-dumb Roswitha’s permanent attribute is “Anatol Korkodus’s little pet” (Bodor 2011, 73). Nika Karinika looks like a bird, while Januszky, when captured, resembles a dog.

It would seem that he felt their approach even in his sleep, but also that it was too late, and that there would not be enough time even to open the window. He jumped out through the closed window. [...] he was tucked into the van that consisted of a filthy cage, sticky with dog saliva and tufts, mounted on the platform behind the cab; he was screaming in that non-existent language, which once had already amazed us [...]. (Bodor 2011, 134)

In Bodor’s novels the magical elements blend the high and the low. The grotesque image of Hamza Petrika’s suicide impaling himself is unforgettable. “The border crossing present in the grotesque is *category transgression*, that of the internal and external borders of the body and the word, the subject and the object” (S. Horváth 2013, 110).

When at last Andrej Bodor first hears about his step-son, he cannot control himself. “Andrei bits of wild mushrooms quivered under knots of coagulated blood in the thick, sparkling smile. ‘You’ve got an upset stomach.’ ‘No, no – it’s just that I leaned over and it tumbled out of me.’ ‘Good god, looks like your gray matter’” (Bodor 2013, 79).

When the uprising broke out in Dorin City, stench filled everything:

On other spring days, the valley air was filled with the intoxicating scent of daphnes, those evergreen shrubs that bloomed during the night, but what now seeped through the vents into the morgue was the smell of human shit – the shit of the locals, and of the mountain infantrymen, still permeated by the musty bouquet of denatured alcohol.

No sooner had the sun risen and the fog lifted from the yard around the barracks than the explanation itself stank in full view on all sides. Daubed in a viscous brown glaze on the fences and walls – even on the wall of the morgue – was “YOUR MOTHER’S CUNT.” (Bodor 2013, 137)

According to Bakhtin (1976), the distortion of language plays an emphasized role in the grotesque linguistic humour present in carnivalesque, ritual swearings; the word exceeds its linguistic boundaries. The content of ritual swearing is to enhance the dismemberment and regeneration of the human body.

In *The Archbishop's Visit*, the fugitive Senkowitz sisters dig themselves partly in a trash heap. In Verhovina, when the inspector appears, everyone gets diarrhea and they write the reverse N letter on the wall with faeces, representing Nikita, i.e. the name of death in Jablana Poljana.

Intertextuality

The Birds of Verhovina displays a multiple intertextual relationship with the author's previous works. However, despite the subtitle referring to the Apocalypse, the social picture outlined here seems to be a shade lighter. This might be so for the same reason that László Boka notes as well: "Here the power (even understood in political-military terms) known from Bodor's previous works hides in the background, in remote, faraway, intangible distances, still, it exercises a profound impact, with its frightening presence and determining strength, which is impossible to ignore" (2014, 112). The ending of the novel may be perceived as having positive overtones as the ousted birds return. But their appearance can also be understood as the recapture of the area by nature following the destruction of human beings. Not only the colonels managing the Sinistra zone or the archbishops expected to Bogdanski Dolina are foreigners. The actions of the authorities coming from the outside with incomprehensible motivations are frightening also in this novel. "The person whom he expected would usually arrive at night. When he suddenly steps forward from the opaque darkness, from the greatest depths of silence, almost out of nowhere, and knocks on the door. Or does not even knock, but simply enters. He is suddenly there. In order to take him away" (Bodor 2011, 143).

Similarly to the previous works, *The Birds of Verhovina* also resorts to unreliable narration, it employs an intradiegetic narrator (this time bearing the author's first name), beginning *in medias res*. "Two weeks before my foster father, brigadier Anatol Korkodus, was arrested, he had given me a brand new Stihl powered chainsaw as a gift" (Bodor 2011, 5). The motif of the secret, the mysterious atmosphere as well as the hidden, violent presence of the power operating as a Foucauldian web, all characteristic of the former novels, play a determining role in this work as well. Not only the chapter titles, first names in brackets, but also the fragmented character imply the structure of *The Sinistra Zone*: the chapters are constructed by individually readable short stories containing recurrent motifs. The obnoxious, ethically objectionable, unreliable first-person narrator often appears in postmodern novels, such as the paedophile hero in Nabokov's *Lolita*. The first-person narrator allows deeper insight into the psychological motives of the action; the inner viewpoint urges the reader to be more tolerant, to be capable of responding to the continuous attraction and repulsion triggered by

the narrative angle. The narrator of each novel by Bodor uses a dispassionate tone to tell about his murder, but he does not shed light on his motives.

Not only individual characters (Danczura, Nikita, the infant prodigy or Nika Karinika, performing a miraculous healing) are reminiscent of the figures of magic realist novels; the metalepsis also alludes to Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The cookbook of Eronim Mox, studied by the narrator, contains prophecies and it seems that parts taken from it constitute the chapters of the novel. The cookbook is a kind of scenario: it does not contain explanations but includes recipes which will come to life when someone prepares the respective meals. It can be considered predictive because what is read from it will soon come true. Bodor's stories fold back onto themselves. "If the world of the novel is the world of writing penetrating into the presence, into the inaccessible full presence, into the world of the now, then is the writing which holds the key to this world not the very key as writing revealing itself?" – asks Tamás Bényei, prominent Hungarian analyst of magic realism (1997, 208).

Places of Memory

The geographical space displayed in Bodor's novels is located on the border, but it is also a cultural space in which the accumulated cultural influences (as it can be seen in the mixture of names) shape and nuance each other. The historical and geocultural text traces relate to the border experiences.

According to Foucault, to use the past in order to understand the present (and critically evaluate it), first of all we need to be aware of the fact that the past affecting the present is not given directly for those living in the present, it is not directly accessible but deeply buried. History is discontinuous. In Foucault's view power is ubiquitous. It can turn up anywhere, it cannot be evaded within the confines of society. Power exerts its effect in the social sphere, within the ties of communication. It cannot be acquired or lost just like that; several situations should be changed at once in that case. It cannot be said that power is concentrated in a particular segment of the social network and resistance in another. "Where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault 1978, 95). The hybridity of the characters' names confuses the reader in establishing the ethnic belonging of the characters. However, in *The Sinistra Zone* the change of names points at the ambition of totalitarian power to deprive the vulnerable individuals even of one of the most solid pillars of identity.

Despite the general amnesia and lack of interest, traces of memory turn up in the novels. The "*lieux de mémoires* are mainly remnants, the ultimate forms of memory storage in a history which recalls them because it does not know them anymore" (Nora 1984). At the end of *The Sinistra Zone*, Andrej Bodor's ski tracks

remain for years in the snow; in *The Birds of Verhovina* such objectified places of memory are the frozen water mill, the synagogue, the public laundry and the iconostasis. The Hungarian books of the library, books which nobody understands anymore, play a similar role. And even Anatol Korkodus becomes a statue at the bottom of the lake because of the deposited minerals. His stepson sends after him, as a kind of sacrifice, the foreign photojournalist preparing the colony's modernization. Man thus becomes part of the landscape in the literal sense.

Genre Shifts

Gergely Angyalosi formulates what the first critics of *The Sinistra Zone* have already pointed out, namely that "Bodor does not provide us the opportunity to find the only valid point of view from which this world can be viewed, the perspective from which his novels totally surrender themselves to the spectator" (2005, 51). The constant displacement of the reader's preconceptions can be regarded as an ingenuous literary manifestation of the Foucauldian detour.

Chapters of a Novel as the subtitle of *The Sinistra Zone* suggests a radical shift from the traditional boundaries of the novel genre; the chapters that can be read as independent short stories do not form a linear order but create a mosaic-like structure suggesting postmodern fragmentation. The treatment of time also reflects fragmentariness. The same structural principle turns up again in Bodor's third novel, *The Birds of Verhovina*.

The titles can be linked to border phenomena of narration, because they separate the world of the text from the real world of the reader. *The Sinistra Zone* as a title refers to one of the most important narratological elements, namely space, which determines the characters' possibilities of motion within the narrative. The ominous atmosphere pervades the whole novel.

Bányai points out that "[t]he title of *The Archbishop's Visit* does not contain specific names; however, the promise of newer and newer archbishops' names turns up in the text. Consequently, the title itself becomes devoid, anonymous, because no promised archbishop arrives, only the constant movement, deferral is perceived" (2012, 95). The title of *The Birds of Verhovina* underlines the very absence, as the strangers arriving at the neighborhood destroyed the nests, chasing the birds away. As Judit Pieldner states,

Verhovina is like a phantom place. In its silence the audible absence amplifies, such as the lack of the bird chirping: the birds have left, because some unknown people, strangers, who knows why, stroke down the nests with pales and water syringes, thus the place has ceased to be homey for them. Not only the birds are missing from Verhovina [...], but all those who

have passed away (“the Lutherans became extinct in Jablonska Poljana” [138]), those who have left, the newcomers from the reformatory; Anatol Korkodus’ Roswitha; the Czervenskys, whose abandoned house was used by the water management brigade; Olga Kapusztin, the escaped former social worker from Jablonska Poljana; captain Dominik “Fowler” Mordwin longing for Klara Burszen vanished together with the birds; even Tatjana, Adam’s cat has gone. (2013, 145)

Due to the title, the reader’s expectations are shifted again. The omissions and concealments that the novels abound in stimulate a constant displacement of the reader’s position and continuously keep the interpreter on the border of understanding and lack of comprehension. Bodor’s novels stimulate all-time readers to cross their own borders of interpretation.

Translated by Enikő Biró

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Cultural Identity Crisis inside Self-Same Culture as Reflected in György Lőrincz's Novel *Sounds of the Heart*

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Abstract. After the decisive historical moment of December 1989, the “border” is open for Transylvanian Hungarians and, in the subsequent euphoria, an exodus to the mother country commences. But with the political freedom of crossing national borders, due to globalization (too), new kinds of border problems present themselves for the youth leaving their native land: border issues of small versus large community, of interpersonal relations; the gap between generations; borders between majority versus minority identity and national versus cultural identity as well. This paper is a literary analysis with special focus on contemporary social phenomena, which will examine – through discussing a relevant contemporary Székely-Hungarian novel – how cultural identity can be deformed, damaged, or at least temporarily distorted when a Hungarian from beyond the border, who arrives in mother-country Hungary, will have to redefine herself/himself within a culture which, in this case, is basically one and the same.¹ Can the identity-code, which was formed by, and grew strong in, the minority existence of the native land, function when s/he enters a cultural vacuum which turns out or can turn out to be another cultural maze for her or him? Can we talk about assimilation in such cases? What happens when a “rebellious” young individual’s “I” identity, unsteady in the first place, is left without the conserving and protective “We” identity in the confrontation of mother-nation versus beyond-the-border cultures so that, eventually, the young woman’s “I” identity will be damaged by big-city underworld (sub)culture. Or, will cultural mimicry emerge in this situation too as a strategy to help the individual retain his/her identity? We will seek answers to these questions through discussing a novel – *A szív hangjai* [*Sounds of the Heart*] – by a fine representative of contemporary Székely-Hungarian literature, György Lőrincz.

1 “Basically” stresses the common, bonding elements of mother-country Hungarian and beyond-the-border Hungarian cultures; i.e., the *Hungarianness* of these cultures. It does not mean that there are no diverging features when it comes to the *Székelyness* of székelymagyar culture – an aspect, however, which is less significant in the context of the present study.

Keywords: cultural identity, national identity, Transylvanian literature, migration, cultural memory.

Historical Background

After December 1989, the historical turn of events opened up new vistas for Hungarians who had been forced to live beyond Hungarian borders by the tide of history. The Ceaușescu regime's communist dictatorship of more than thirty years triggered a migration of Hungarians out of Romania. The first wave of refugees, the population motion that took place in 1988–89, was a mass migration and politically motivated: it happened for the first time in communist history that the Hungarian state openly supported and received the Transylvanian refugees. Earlier practice was to deport Hungarian political refugees back to Romania. The Hungarians of Transylvania were shocked by the 1988 Romanian political decision of so-called “settlement-systematization,” which would have meant a new pretext for the destruction of (primarily Hungarian) villages and, thereby, for forced assimilation. Then the large number of those who set out in the wake of the December revolution, in the spring of 1990, indicated that the fragile political situation in Romania spurred a new wave of migration (Sík 1996, 516–517).

András Sütő said about emigration that it is like internal hemorrhage, a process which is not spectacular but painful. It was especially painful as it decimated the ethnic Hungarian intelligentsia in Romania in those days. At least one-tenth of the socially sensitive ethnic Hungarian intelligentsia left the country – the social layer that was the best custodian and maintainer of Hungarian collective national identity. Thus, on the one hand, the chances of the community that remained in the homeland were lessened in several senses by migration from the country. On the other hand, across-the-border transmigration was also an escape resulting from repressive Romanian measures against the Hungarian minority. It forced those who were leaving home and homeland then – but lived the life of minority existence up to that point – into a situation in which their homegrown understanding of national identity did not always work, and the mother-country Hungarian versus beyond-the-border Hungarian relation was put in a different perspective. Several contemporary Transylvanian writers engaged this subject, and its scholarly discourse was also born in the social sciences. This time I wish to examine Székelyudvarhely author György Lőrincz's novel *A szív hangjai* [*Sounds of the Heart*], deploying the theoretical notions outlined below.

Theoretical Background

Migration, assimilation and identity theories are indispensable for the discussion of post-1989 Transylvanian migration. Migration is a complex and multiple process. The word itself refers to people in movement inside or outside their home country, giving up their dwelling-place forever, or leaving their homeland only temporarily, with the intention to return some time. But it also refers to people who become refugees under political or economic pressure, or are forced out of their country by a civil war, or by fear of persecution. Those who are driven by a desire for adventure to seek their luck abroad also belong here (Opitz 2001, qtd. in Cseresnyés 2005, 9).

Successful integration of migrants, Milton Myron Gordon maintains, rests on the two pillars of belonging to a certain social layer and to a different ethnic group. In the absence of the latter (as is the case in the present literary example since we are talking about ethnic *Hungarians* from Romania flocking to *Hungary*), the social-structure factor will attain greater significance (Gordon 1964, qtd. in Cseresnyés 2005, 12). Political adaptation and labour-force market integration mean structural assimilation. Qualification or skill plays a prominent role in this context. However, social integration, i.e. structural assimilation, can keep “stalling” even in cases when the social structure of immigrants and receivers is similar, they speak the same language and belong to the same cultural domain. Hungarian sociology calls this phenomenon undermigration. This phenomenon is particularly important in the case of the novel to be discussed here. Successful personal, individual assimilation means: one, achieving the status position (in accord with qualification) which the immigrant finds satisfactory; two, it comprises cultural assimilation too. The former is a precondition to the success of the latter. But one characteristic feature of structural assimilation is a certain measure of willing subordination. It manifests itself in immigrants who take jobs (below the level of their qualifications) that are not attractive to citizens of the receiving country, thereby further differentiating a given layer of the receiver society. Individuals who settle down/immigrate tend to form groups, turn inward; rivalry raises its head in their ranks from time to time; not infrequently, even ethnically related immigrants show deep respect for the receiving culture and await what future brings by keeping a low profile and in passivity. But it can lead to social segregation in the long run (Cseresnyés 2005, 12–13).

Gordon's and Robert Ezra Park's (Gyurgyik 2011) influential theories are developed basically from the multicultural nature of American society; they describe ethnic relational systems that are very different from what we have in *Sounds of the Heart* (ethnic Hungarians from Romania immigrate to Hungary but they have been socialized in a minority existence of totalitarian Romanian subjugation), so their otherwise important typology is not relevant for us. However,

the way John Milton Yinger expanded Gordon's theory is very useful for analyzing Lőrinczean intercultural (or, rather, Hungarian-Hungarian *intracultural*) patterns. Yinger regarded assimilation as a "process of boundary reduction that can occur when members of two or more societies or smaller cultural groups meet" (1981, 249). Developing Gordon's variables further, he introduced "dissimilation" as a reciprocal notion to assimilation. He breaks down the process of assimilation into subprocesses. They are cultural, structural, biological, and psychological subprocesses, called (in the same order): acculturation, integration, amalgamation and identification. They are not "stages" in that these (sub-)processes are "interdependent," they can "occur in various combinations and sequences, and each of them is reversible" (Yinger 1981, 249, 256).² Beth Bowman Hess's model is also highly valuable for us. Hers *are* stages. She distinguishes five of them in the process of integration: segregation, accommodation, acculturation, assimilation and amalgamation.³

The phases of cultural integration were also theorized by Ulrich Tolksdorf. He establishes six phases. The first is the state of cultural shock (*Kulturschock*), characterized by a confused sense of identity and mentality. Let us immediately take note of how prominently this basic experience unfolds in the life of those Hungarians who immigrate from Transylvania to Hungary (Kapitány–Kapitány 1996, 83). In Tolksdorf's second phase of cultural contact (*Kulturkontakt*) cultural linkages develop, facilitated by (common) language, immigrants familiarizing themselves with the customs and values of the receiving culture. Contact leads⁴ to the vigorous assertion of ethnic/cultural identity, which is Tolksdorf's third

2 *Acculturation* is a sub-process that takes place between groups and members of groups. It can be substitutive or additive: the former replacing elements of one culture with those of the other culture, while the latter adds elements of one culture to the other without taking away; the former is weakening, the latter is enriching a given culture. *Integration* or *structural assimilation* refers "to the process of structural assimilation of persons from two or more formerly separate sub-societies into a set of shared interactions" – the latter can be personal or institutional, involving "neighbourhoods, friendship circles, and marriage" as well as economy and politics. *Amalgamation* is individual and/or group-level "biological assimilation" leading to mixed population. *Identification* or *psychological assimilation* with its shifts and reversals means that "[i]ndividuals from separate groups may come to think of themselves as belonging to the same society" (Yinger 1981, 249–253).

3 *Segregation* is the stage of *de facto* or *de jure* isolation. *Accommodation* is the stage when immigrants become aware of the norms and value system of the receiving culture, but they simply accommodate themselves to those norms and values without letting them interfere with the immigrants' own norms and value system; i.e. "[t]hey adapt to the dominant culture without fully participating in it." *Acculturation*: immigrants accept and identify themselves with the norms and value system of the receiving culture, "but are still not admitted to more intimate social groups." *Assimilation* or "*structural assimilation*" means "entry into the dominant society through friendship and other close associations," but "strong ethnic identity" is still retained. *Amalgamation* occurs when "cultures or races mix to form new cultural and racial types"; e.g. through intermarriages (Hess 1988, 247–248).

4 Better to say, it "*led*" to cultural conflict, in fact, as Tolksdorf's theory is also a chronological survey of the European migration/integration processes during the decades following WWII.

stage called cultural conflict (*Kulturkonflikt*). The fourth step means asserting ethnic/migrant cultural identity by reaching back to cultural heritage and creating organizations and associations at regional and national levels – a development theorized by Tolksdorf as secondary minority formation (*Sekundäre Minderheitenbildung*). The fifth phase is acculturation (*Akkulturation*), i.e., settling snugly into the receiving culture. The sixth phase is indicative of postmodern societies: the deliberate preservation and maintenance of original cultural values (*Punktueller Bewahrung – Volkskultur in der postmodernen Gesellschaft*), but no longer with the intention of opposing them to those of the receiving culture (Tolksdorf 1990, 110–122).

Not less important to our inquiry are identity theories. The condition of being oneself, the need to know who I am, what I am is a basic demand with the thinking human individual. The answer to these questions begins with the mother tongue (Péntek 2010, 161–162). Mother tongue as well as collective/national identity are central concerns in Lőrincz's book. Identity is another notion that cannot be captured in one single model, as different kinds of identities can be of different nature. The majority of European identities are typically citizenship-dependent. Székely-Hungarian identity alone is an extremely complex issue with tangled historical roots.⁵

It may not be an overstatement to say that the sense of individual and social identity has been foregrounded as a social sciences research topic in our days; the unprecedented wave of twenty-first century migration has certainly given it that prominence. Several disciplines – history, politics, social psychology and media studies among them – are making attempts at the interpretation of identity, also with the multiple forms it takes and the multiple roles it plays in multiple senses. Not to mention that identity formation in digital space is playing an ever increasing role in our age, with possible momentous and incalculable impact on both the human individual and social functions. In the literary text under discussion faceless communication taking place in digital space lends a special slant to the introduced state of affairs, contributing to the development of new forms of identity distortion or to the deepening of already existing identity crisis.

Ferenc Pataki defines identity as “the individual's position in the community. One can conceive of many kinds of identity: occupational, gender, family, nation-state etc. identity, depending on what kind of collective the individual belongs to” (1986, 9).⁶ It must be remarked here that cultural identity, Lőrincz's main concern, is most closely related to national identity. A simplified definition of cultural identity could be: common past history, native language, customs and traditions in which

5 The author devoted a book to this topic, especially to a typology that she set up to describe strategies of identity management in minority existence, see Dani (2016).

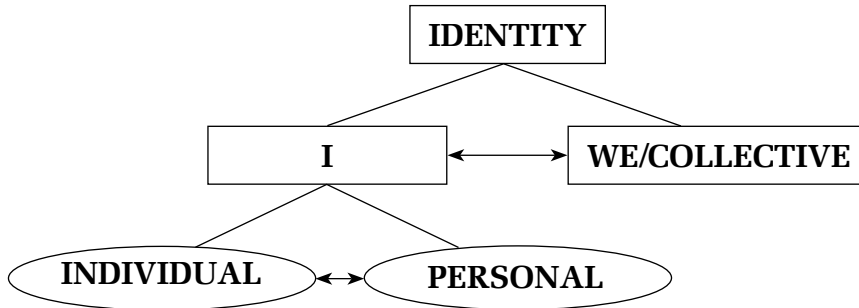
6 The translations from Hungarian literature and specialist literature are my own throughout the article.

the individual is socialized. Pataki marks off five types of identity components: anthropological (gender, age, family and kinship relations, ethnic belonging); positional or role and group components (class and layer affinities, professional qualifications); identity components acquired through social-qualification activities and speech acts (legal procedures, categories of medical, cultural and statistical operations); ideologically-marked identity components (political, moral, religious factors); and ones that are emblematic in nature (name, physical features, symbols and fashions). Pataki argues that individual and collective elements of identity can be distinguished. Hierarchical arrangement of the just enumerated identity components can also be presumed, which is a manifestation of the individual's order of preference (Pataki 1986, 46–47).

Valér Veres regards minority identity as something special in a majority versus minority relationship. Giving voice to the idea of home country and homeland, national auto- and hetero-stereotypes, disposition towards the other nation, the great significance of history, national symbols, the role holidays play – all these are specific factors that strengthen the sense of identity. The road to understanding collective identity leads through individual identity, Veres suggests. As for individual socialization, we can make the distinction between two phases: primary and secondary socialization. As a result of the former, the individual becomes a member of society through the process of growing up and being educated; the latter positions the socialized individual in a new segment of society (Veres 2005, 15). Individual identity keeps changing in the course of life, it incorporates newer and newer elements, while discarding others. As far as the notion of collective identity is concerned, William Bloom's definition seems to be most adequate. Bloom's definition (based on Freud) marks off two kinds of identity: analytical and oedipal. The former stresses the role of financial allowances, while the latter is organized around the norms of "proper" behaviour – that is paternal standards that one is expected to measure up to (Bloom 1990, 51).

Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory and identity is central to our thematic concern. He maintains that "[i]dentity is a matter of consciousness, that is of becoming aware of an otherwise unconscious image of the self. This applies both to individual and to collective life" (2011, 111). Identity has two forms: "I" identity and "we" identity. In the case of "I" identity "[a] self grows from the outside in. It builds itself up individually by participating in the interactive and communicative patterns of the group." "The collective 'we' identity does not exist outside of the individuals who constitute [...] it" (Assmann 2011, 111). "I" identity stresses the priority of the whole as opposed to the part, Assmann goes on to say, while "we" identity prefers the part to the whole. The part is subordinated to the whole "and only assumes its identity through the role that it plays within the whole, but the whole only emerges from the interplay between the parts" (Assmann 2011, 112). This is the double meaning of "sociogenic" and the basis

of “sociogenesis.” For the sake of a more subtle understanding of “collective or sociocultural identity,” Assmann divides the “I”-frame into individual and personal identity (2011, 113):



Individual identity “builds itself up in the consciousness of the individual” and relates to the bodily existence and the basic needs of the human being, whereas personal identity comprises the roles and talents that society demands from the individual. Both individual identity and personal identity “are determined sociogenically and culturally” (Assmann 2011, 113). “We” identity is “the image that a group has of itself and with which its members associate themselves” (Assmann 2011, 113–114). Thus collective identity is a matter of identification, it does not exist by itself. Its strength depends on how vivid it is in the consciousness of those who represent it, and to what extent that image can motivate the participants in their thinking and actions (Assmann 2011, 114). Identity can also be grasped in terms of crisis. As Imre Bori argues, “identity crisis is therefore the crisis of SELF-consciousness, loss of identity is indicative of the dissolution of SELF-consciousness” (2000, 310). This is why the individual needs to develop strategies of identity crisis management.

The nature of our topic also requires that we take note of the category of identity which Sándor Balázs called “minority identity.” He posits it as a “spiritual structure” which exists in the subject’s mind and takes shape in contents of consciousness. So its form of existence is human consciousness, but it can also prevail in a state of suspended animation, which is not fixed: it can be activated by external persons at any time. Its basic feature is “collective spiritual existence – in the consciousness of individuals or in a fixed form” (Balázs 1995, 18). Minority existence is an objective given: the Hungarians in Transylvania (but it is true of all Hungarians beyond the Trianon borders) never crossed the borders of their own country; rather, the borders crossed them. This objective factor also means, however, that it is “external to will and consciousness but interlaced with threads of the subjective” (Balázs 1995, 30). What arises from this is that no minority exists without the individual’s positional awareness, nor does awareness of minority position exist without a minority situation. This “minority

consciousness” is transposed into another frame when state borders are crossed in the case of the characters of the novel in question: the young individual in question, formerly coded as minority, crosses “the border” of her own free will, and becomes incapable of determining who she is within the same national culture since the minority situation in which she was socialized no longer applies.

Sounds of the Heart and the Disintegration of Identity

In *Sounds of the Heart* Lőrincz⁷ decided on a new subject, one which is rather unusual for him. Admittedly, the book is a “novel of love,” in which “he meant to record the mother’s grief” (Lázár 2012). After novels like *Pusztulás* [*Decay*, 2005], *Besúgó voltam, szívem* [*I Was an Informer, Dear*, 2008] and *Isten köve* [*God’s Bolt*, 2011], the title of the new novel seems light and – considering what the book is about – misleading. If defined in terms of our topic’s terminology, *Sounds of the Heart* is a novel of identity crisis/distortion, of “borders” or boundaries in various senses as well as of the discourse between the culture of the mother nation and that of the population forced to live outside (“beyond”) the mother nation’s borders. It can also be interpreted as a diagnostic novel if we put migration, free movement as concomitant phenomena of globalization and permissive education with its consequences in the focus.

The story of Mária Réka Gordon and her daughter, Hanga, seems to be simply a contemporary sequence of events that could occur to anyone, the novel dissecting parent-child – more closely, mother-daughter – relationship. But it only seems to be. There is a third link, namely the figure of the father, Tamás Gordon, character whose apparently being pushed in the background plays a determining role in the web of interpersonal relationships, or rather, in the development of his daughter Hanga’s somewhat Electra-like identity. Character relations are embedded in broader social contexts, and that aspect also involves, in the final analysis, the “image of decay,” which we are accustomed to in Lőrincz’s earlier works, and expect to be there, so to speak.

The life of the family of three living in a small town in Székelyland undergoes fundamental change the moment national borders become permeable following

7 György Lőrincz, the “Gyurka” of his Székelyudvarhely folk, was born at Kápolnásfalu (Harghita county, Székelyland, Transylvania, Romania) in 1946. This contemporary Székely-Hungarian writer works in his homeland, where he also organizes the literary, musical and artistic life of the region. He is a novelist, short story writer and essayist, who also does sociography, all devoted to issues related to Székelyland. Some significant works: *Amíg csak él az ember* [*As Long as You Live*, 1980], *A hallgatás csöndje* [*The Silence of Being Silent*, 1983], *Bukás* [*Fall*, 1995], *Pusztulás* [*Decay*, 2005], *Besúgó voltam, szívem* [*I Was an Informer, Dear*, 2008], *A szív hangjai* [*Sounds of the Heart*, 2012]. Awards: Székelyland Nívó Prize (2001), Székelyudvarhely Mayor’s Honorary Diploma (2001), Szabó Zoltán Prize – a Hungarian Writers’ Association award (2002), Hungarian Golden Cross of Merit (2016).

“the revolution” (of 1989 – i.e. the collapse of the communist Ceaușescu regime) and the opportunity presents itself for everyone to make it to the “promised land” (of Hungary) beyond their reach before. But their ordinary life also changes in the sense that the opportunities afforded by a “boundless” (i.e. “borderless”) world become available for their only daughter, Hanga. It happens when, owing to age-group characteristics, she starts, naturally, to extricate herself from her limitations (widening her boundaries or “borders” as it were), asserting her independence from her parents, trying to understand a world that has broadened to an almost unnatural extent around her, as opposed to what was “natural” before.

The core story is woven around one single circumstance: the mother, who continues to live in the small Transylvanian town, launches a desperate search in Hungary, to find her vanished daughter in Budapest – a daughter who is deliberately fleeing from her mother and the home world she turned her back on. The writer works with alternating time levels, but the reader slowly assembles the picture. The girl, freshly graduated from the university in her homeland, decides to try her luck in the Hungarian capital. Her decision is motivated by rebellion: “Hanga’s adaptable dutifulness to them too was nothing else than continuous, checked rebellion. Fear of authority” (Lőrincz 2012, 10). She protests against the parents’ means of education (as it is natural with an adolescent), is intent on breaking away from the family and starting a life of her own. But she is not ready for that, neither in spirit nor regarding her sense of identity. At a dismal distance from home and homeland too, under the pressure of doubly different worlds – Hungary for one, with the Budapest underworld on top of it – she takes the wrong turning and loses her footing.

The sequence and logic of events highlight the phenomenon of many Transylvanian youth becoming rootless between two post-’89 homelands (Transylvania in Romania, and Hungary). The young Transylvanian sets out in the conviction that the Hungarian capital is his or her spiritual-cultural-national centre too; the House of Parliament is his or her house of parliament too. Hanga rebels against her Székely “hick town,” but is not “inoculated” against the reactions of disinheritance and denial with which the linguistically and culturally same (Hungarian) community of the motherland will relate to her. The moment of history offers Hanga the opportunity to cross borders, she tears up her roots, but then finds herself in the vacuum of boundlessness. And human voice knows no gravity: the loud-mouthed rebel girl becomes weightless, will be picked up by the wind and blown away.

Hanga Gordon’s identity crisis, with its components, the cause-and-effect relations of its development, conveys to us an image of identity distortion, or, shall we say, deconstruction (deterioration) of identity, which is one of the points that the author – better to say, the narrator – very much wants us to pay heed to. The daughter wraps herself in “facelessness” and remains hiding in the background

all through, availing herself of the advantages of the tools of digital technology when doing so. It is in this latter circumstance that the root of another evil lurks, one that is gaining greater and greater ground: the breakdown of communication in the world of communication as István Péter Szakács suggests in his review of the book. Hanga, who retreats into the virtual world, is a voice (“*hang*”)⁸ which is falling silent; she beats off every attempt at approach, hurls accusations, calls to account, holds her parents responsible for her messed-up life: “I hate you because you wanted to love me and did not let me be who I am! You suffocated my nascent self with your love!” (Lőrincz 2012, 35). The field of the battle is internal here, in the souls, and in the proliferation of accusations and repartees that are wielded like weapons; there is an answer to every argument and to its counterargument too; as if the novel were also the psychology of harmony made impossible, rough interpersonal play and arguments pulled to pieces – all carried to an absurdity.

The Székely-Hungarian girl has no idea how dangerous the road she takes is when she “escapes” to the mother country. As already mentioned, she is not (and cannot be) ready for the world in which she arrives. She finds herself to be under double pressure. On the one hand, her national and cultural identity reach new dimensions, she has to redefine herself: this time not as minority in relation to a majority nation (as was the case in Romania) but in relation to the majority of her own nation (in Hungary). On the other hand, she is confronted with the circumstance that many motherland-Hungarians receive her with suspicion, or her otherness of the beyond-the-border Hungarian is even rejected. That is, she experiences what a good number of people had to endure in those years. *Sounds of the Heart* also offers a socio-psychological representation of this issue. Successful accommodation (in the case of Hanga), Milton Gordon would argue, would be possible “only” through social integration since we cannot talk about ethnic difference here. The young woman has already been awarded a degree, but does not yet represent the intelligentsia. What hinders successful structural assimilation is that she cannot (or does not want to) find a job suitable for her qualifications. When establishing ties with the Budapest underworld, she turns herself into a case of “undermigration” as it were, with social segregation at the end of the road. Nor can we talk about successful cultural assimilation in her case as the precondition to that would be attained structural assimilation. The values that underworld culture represents and the principles that regulate it are simply incompatible with the ones that would lend stability to Hanga’s “we” identity. Most importantly, big-city underworld culture’s opposition to the world offers her a “we” identity that can be no replacement for the value system of her Székely-Hungarian collective identity.

Hanga was socialized in minority existence. For her, national consciousness was what one opposed to the assimilating pressure of the Romanian majority nation.

8 “*Hang*,” the Hungarian word for “voice,” is incorporated in Hanga’s name.

This definition of the self forms part of minority identity, an attitude towards life stemming from beyond-the-border objective reality. It is the phenomenon of “collective spiritual existence” described by Balázs, quoted above. The condition fixed in Hanga before is activated in a special way. Her minority identity remains the same nationwide, but is lodged in a *new* frame. As she crosses the now *only symbolic* state borders, her position as minority – which shaped and fixed her identity – ends. Moreover, she comes into contact with an *otherness* that practically forces the young girl to position herself with the subculture.

Besides the pressure of minority existence, being a Szekler is also coupled with the sustaining power of the community, a collective or “we” identity, as Assmann would have it, which secures a symbiotic existence for “I” identity and to the individual and personal segments that the latter comprises. The sociogenic and cultural determination of the components of “I” identity are of crucial importance in Hanga’s case. The individual component of the young woman’s “I” identity is thrown off balance in the course of her struggle with herself and with her parents when – as one result of her “rebellions” – she encounters the underworld, which sucks her in as it were. Her identity crisis really dates from the point when “the male companion” appears in her life, and this companion is an embodiment of the globalized world’s subculture. The narrator does not provide details other than flashes of some images sometimes, such as images of alcohol, drug, ecstasy, prostitution, the underworld. This is the point where Hanga’s individual identity reels as subcultural solutions take over in the realm of her basic needs, the pitfall is that of cultural determination:

I was testing my limits. The limits of my personality [...] There was some fatal desire, how far I can push my own boundaries! The borders of my self! [...] Those were fateful days! It was then that it started to spread in high schools, that, for want of something better, it became fashionable to drink spirits after various kinds of pills at school parties. We were seeking ecstasy against the greyness of our life, wanted to dream, since we did not even have dreams when sober, and started to pursue pleasures. (Lőrincz 2012, 36)

The individual segment losing balance does not yet involve confusion in the individual’s “I” identity since its other “pillar” can continuously compensate, not mentioning the sustaining power of collective “we” identity that surrounds the individual in his or her environment. There is nothing particular in Hanga attempting to find herself, testing her own limits: it is characteristic of the youth of welfare societies. The crisis of confused identity turns really serious when the otherness of the Hungarians “out there”⁹ confuses Hanga to an even greater extent.

9 For beyond-the-border, minority Hungarians the mother country (Hungary) is “out there.”

Add to that the result of “the December referendum,”¹⁰ which comes as a blow on her national identity. She perceives the devaluation of her “Transylvanianness” anyway: “it is not easy to be a Hungarian here either, only you would not understand this! You have been feeding me with hopes your whole life, talking to me about being a Hungarian, and behold! I wish you could see how they look at me!” (Lőrincz 2012, 24) – she writes to her parents at home. This further foments rebellion in her, so much so that she tramples on her parents’ Hungarianness in a sickening manner: “But I may go back home and marry a Romanian! Then my father will have a reason to cry and can dance the *hóra!*” (Lőrincz 2012, 24).¹¹ What *that* means if a remark like *that* is made by a child in a *Székely* family cannot be gauged by a Hungarian who lives in Hungary; you can feel that such a remark is like a dagger in your heart only if you were socialized in Székelyland. This is the circumstance that shakes the other pillar (the personal segment) of her “I” identity undermining the solidity of her identity for good. Hanga’s sense of national identity comes under an “attack” against which the identity code¹² that worked well in minority existence up to the point when she crossed borders out of Romania and into Hungary, loses validity, the balance of her “I” identity is tipped. She then subjects herself to a process of subordination almost involuntarily.

The situation becomes irreversible and final, when, again, the Székelyland Hungarian girl’s “I” identity loses support of its “helper,” “we” identity. The supportive role of collective, “we” identity that fulfilled its function within the Székelyland framework back home, is now eliminated in what can be regarded as the same culture. Her new situation can be conceived of as just another minority position. Hungarian collective minority identity is replaced with Hungarian big-city underworld subculture. What this process yields can only be what the novel projects: Hanga becomes a rootless drifter. Immediately relevant here, as explanatory of the process, is the presence or absence of identity components outlined by Pataki in what is happening to Hanga’s individual identity. The young woman’s anthropological and positional identity components become practically dysfunctional, and only the political factors of the ideological group remain: moral and religion no longer count. On the other hand, identity components of emblematic nature will be foregrounded – e.g. symbols, fashions, physical distinctive marks which help her integration into underworld identity.

Hanga Gordon’s identity tribulations are innate in origin, but her rebellious efforts to transcend her boundaries, stirred by external circumstances, catalyze the

10 December 5, 2004 was the day of Hungary’s abortive referendum on whether Hungarians beyond the border may or may not be granted Hungarian citizenship. The referendum was abortive because it resulted in a denial of Hungarian citizenship to Hungarians beyond the border, so it goes down in Hungarian history as a historical trauma.

11 “*Hóra*” is a Romanian national round dance.

12 By “identity code” I mean being coded through primary socialization; in the present case, minority socialization.

process and bring it to completion. All this leads to her finding herself inside the broad interpretive/misinterpretive framework of motherland-Hungarian/Székely Hungarian/"mock Hungarian" (*próbamagyar*), thereby losing the ground from under her feet, and her fate is left open in the book. Her case illustrates the first, segregation phase of Hess's integration model. Hanga ends up on the periphery of motherland society, thus in a state of segregation. But it is only the first step, after which her accommodation is continued in a subsocial layer; her personal identity reels to yield to the norms and values of subculture to which she consciously succumbs. The writer does not travel this road any farther, apparently abstains from the detailed description of the further phases of accommodation. But the closing scene of the novel, in which the mother also seems to be claimed by Budapest subcultural mess, is a tough and merciless memento. Chaos takes over; there is no answer in the end, no hope. If this turn of events is not developed any further in the present paper, it is because the novel itself intends it to be a provocative, not a little baffling closure, an open ending that leaves the rest to the reader. One thing is certain: lioness-mother Mária Réka *is* sucked in and swept away by cultural chaos.

In the strict sense of the word, the Székely-Hungarian girl becomes an "immigrant." She is an immigrant in a country of which her forefathers used to be citizens with full powers, and the contemporary citizens of which, the majority in a referendum at the dawn of the twenty-first century, denied beyond-the-border Hungarians Hungarian citizenship. Hanga is torn by moral, existential, and identity conflicts. Her identity problem is grounded in the sense of "becoming nobody" (Kapitány-Kapitány 1996, 82). Hanga arrives in a native-language environment, but her integration is impeded by delicate signals of the surrounding culture that she is unable to decode. It feels as if she were "banished" since her accommodation is hampered by the disadvantages she has brought along from her homeland culture: a lower degree of self-assurance, lack of information. What intensifies it all is the pressure of "double alienness" (Kapitány-Kapitány 1996, 83), because her journey is from a Székelyland minority position – defined as "alien," "other" by the dominant (Romanian) culture – to one that also gives her the sense of being an alien. Her feelings could be diagnosed as Tolksdorf's cultural shock for that matter. She does not move through all the Tolksdorfian stages, getting stuck at the level of cultural shock, never reaching the stage of rebuilding herself and her national as well as cultural identity that could enable her to reach further stages and even to find again her healthy self perhaps. Not to mention the point that to proclaim and preserve origin and value consciously (Tolksdorf's sixth stage) is a prevalent practice in postmodern societies of our age.

Conclusion

Lőrincz's novel is a social diagnosis. It addresses issues that are highly relevant for, and can be helpful to, the responsible reader in relating to the vicissitudes of identity management in the turbulent world of the early twenty-first century. It is especially important in a life that moves in an accelerated, digital space, in which our youth are becoming rootless and aimless more and more and their problems of self-definition cry for solutions. One decisive phenomenon of our days is internal migration inside Europe, which contributes to the undisrupted functional order of European societies only if, for one, the identity of those who set out will *not* disintegrate in the process.

Hanga Gordon is a typical example of identity disintegration or deconstruction. The process is gradual, layered, and its direction is from the internal towards the external. Her basic problems stem from the minority form of existence: her "I" identity wavers when her testing of her "boundaries," while growing up, opens a window for her onto the world, onto a subculture which offers attractive solutions for a personality that has not quite taken shape yet. The way the parents – in a small-town Székely family of closed communication and ridden with interpersonal conflicts in the first place – react when they sense deviant behaviour does not help the situation. Unintentionally, they will contribute to the deepening of their child's identity troubles. As, naturally, the two parents' own identity was shaped by, and fixed in, minority existence, the deficiencies of that identity also do contribute to what happens. The "limits" of liberal education, the absence of Christian traditions, the socialist-state establishment of decades with its repressive and atheistic ideology all played their important roles in this development.

So the trouble starts with the breakdown of Hanga's individual identity and continues in her personal segment. As her identity deconstructs itself, she is pushed right into the phase of segregation, onto the periphery of a same culture, losing the support of "we" identity (of the Székelyland community). At the same time, she comes under the influence of another "we" identity (that of the Hungarian underworld), only to have both segments of her "I" identity transformed as a result of a process that grows from inside out. The cultural determination of the new "we" identity is different, it re-codes individual and personal identity, thus driving the "rootless" young, who lost parents, home and homeland, through the phase of acculturation, towards integration. She has no need for mimicry as she does not want to hide and has nothing left to fear of: her cultural identity is no longer a question in the world that sucks her in.

Lőrincz presents the problem but offers no answer. What is more, he outright provokes us with the closing scene of the novel, in which moral nihilism drags down the "lion mothers" of the Mária-Réka kind with the floating Hansas. We may

justly suppose that Lőrincz means to communicate something else to the reader: there is more to it than the “mock Hungarian” getting into hot water; rather, a new world that knows no bounds (in any sense) has arrived to re/transcode whole generations?

The social phenomenon we are facing here is that thousands of Transylvanian youth are seeking to make their way, to be successful far from their homeland, either in the mother country of Hungary or in other countries in Western Europe. Assimilation in the same culture seems to be more evident for a superficial examiner of the question. But is it really the case? We may have a clearer vision of the issue, a better understanding of what is taking place through studying the Hanga-phenomenon of Lőrincz’s novel.

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Old Genres in New Attire: Zsolna Ugron's Novels

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Abstract. In the present study we propose a look at Zsolna Ugron's works from a generic perspective in order to analyze what conventions of genres such as the romance, the epistolary novel and the historical romance the author has revived and what are the elements that she has added or changed in order to make them appealing to the public and yield to critical analysis. We also attempt an investigation of the formation of female subjectivity as illustrated by these fundamentally feminine novels, given that all four of them operate with female protagonists, women in the process of shaping their destinies, often at crossroads where – despite all the external factors that seem to determine their fate from history to social conventions and men around them – ultimately they make their own personal choices and position themselves as responsible, active and creative subjects.

Keywords: Zsolna Ugron, genre, subject, canon, popular literature.

Introduction

Zsolna Ugron's novels have generated a lasting buzz among the reading public both in Hungary and Transylvania.¹ Literary criticism, however, seems to ignore

1 Zsolna Ugron (Cluj-Napoca, 1978–), like her heroines, seems to be constantly reinventing herself. Born in Transylvania from an old aristocratic family, she then moved with her family to Hungary. After her studies in law school she worked as a journalist, TV editor and reporter, communication advisor, but she has also edited and hosted cooking shows and documentaries, and she has actively participated in the renovation and interior design of Transylvanian castles regained by their owners after the fall of communism and long restitution suits. In 2013 she also published a recipe book spiced with short stories, *Hét évszak. Receptek és történetek* [*Seven Seasons. Recipes and Stories*], a volume already expected by her readers given that her first

her work – as the author herself stated in an interview: “I think contemporary literature does not really notice me” (Benedek 2014).² This may be due to the fact that all four of her novels discussed here fall into the category of what is called popular fiction – something that literary criticism and theory does not concern itself much with. Especially given the generic attributes of the novels: her first, *Úrilányok Erdélyben* [*By the Black River – A Transylvanian (Love) Story*] published in 2010 was publicized as a “postmodern girls’ novel,” the second, *Szerelemfélétk [The A – B Dialogue]*, written together with Zsolt Meskó (2011) regenerates the epistolary tradition of Hungarian literature, while *Erdélyi Menyegző [Splendour]* (2013) and *A nádor asszonyai [The Palatine’s Women]* (2014) are part of a planned historical trilogy, subgenres not much discussed by criticism and neither very fashionable from the perspective of the literary canon of today.³ Still, the public seems to receive them with enthusiasm: her first novel went out of print and now its second edition is available to the public, while the other three works also topped the charts for weeks.

In the present study we propose a look at these works from a generic perspective in order to analyze what elements of the above mentioned old genres the author has revived and what are the elements that she has added or changed in order to make them appealing to the public and yield to critical analysis.⁴ We also attempt an investigation of the formation of female subjectivity as illustrated by these fundamentally feminine novels, given that all four of them operate with female protagonists, women in the process of shaping their destinies, often at crossroads where – despite all the external factors that seem to determine their fate from history to social conventions and men around them – ultimately they make their own personal choices and position themselves as responsible, active and creative subjects.

novel also originated from the idea of publishing a hand-written recipe book inherited from her grandmother which also contained a collection of her great-grandmother’s recipes (Varga 2011); and in 2016 a fifth novel under the title *Hollóasszony* [*Ravenwoman*]. Similarly to her novels, she defies categorization, subverting even the idea of clear-cut limits of any subject position or genre.

- 2 A study addressing, among other contemporary literary and cinematographic works, also Ugron’s first novel was published by Andrea Virginás in 2014.
- 3 The literal translation of *Úrilányok Erdélyben* would be *Young Ladies in Transylvania*. The English title used in the present study was suggested by the author’s publisher, which they use as a working title while preparing the novel for its English publication. The historical trilogy bears the Hungarian title *Úrasszonyok* (the literal translation of which is *Ladies*), while the first volume’s title *Erdélyi Menyegző* means *Transylvanian Wedding*. At present the publisher is using as working title of the translation of both the trilogy and of the first volume *Splendour*.
- 4 The success of Ugron’s novels may also be attributed to the fact that since the 1990s the Hungarian reading public has been accustomed to a revival of old genres such as the historical novel, romance and even the epistolary genre through the works of authors such as Péter Esterházy, György Spiró, Zsuzsa Rakovszky, Andrea Tompa and others, while “chick lit” or “girls’ prose” works have also been present in bookshops and enjoyed much of the public’s attention – novels by Éva Fejős, Virág Vass, Fábíán Janka, and more recently Hargita Szász.

Blurred Genres, Popular Literature and the Canon

Úrilányok Erdélyben [*By the Black River*] opens with a short text entitled “In lieu of a preface” (2010, 5–7). As János Orbán states,

[t]raditionally the preface [...] summarizes, presents and locates the text – possibly the author – in a context. Thus, with the security of a ‘hidden’ and ‘omnipotent’ author it draws textual limits around the text within the text, and tries to link to the external reality a text not yet read by the reader but already contoured by the preface. Thus it sets up a preliminary horizon of expectations. (qtd. in Palkó 2003, 502)⁵

Despite the title suggesting a text avoiding the functions ascribed to prefaces, Ugron uses this short introduction to position herself as the author of the following novel as the descendant of an old aristocratic family from Transylvania, living and working in Budapest, whose busy city life changes drastically when she marries and moves to a small Transylvanian village. She also locates her text, stating: “life has inscribed me into a (girls’) novel very similar to this one” (2010, 7), establishing thus the genre and accordingly setting up readers’ expectations from the very outset. However, already this short preface masquerading as the author’s autobiographical note foreshadows the subversion of the very genre it argues the text would be. Beyond the autobiographical elements (the identification and validation of which does not constitute the aim of the present study), the novel will lead its reader into history:

When we moved back [to Transylvania], together with the uncertainties of the future the past also overwhelmed me and I started to search for some support. Piecing together stories from my childhood, anecdotes, reading memoirs and badgering people with questions and through research, I began to see the shape of a lifestyle mementos of which were the ruinous castles and manors [...]

I do not think that we should live in the past, neither that we should revive that world and bring it into our own lives. Not even if history’s whim has allowed some of us to return to the castles. But I do believe that we have to preserve the pieces that we still can and we have to know their place. I think one cannot escape history – you have to deal with it. (Ugron 2010, 6–7)

The field of readers’ expectations widens to incorporate elements of the historical novel, while the stated genre (girls’ novel) evokes conventions of the

5 Quotations from texts not available in English are all translations of the authors of the present study.

sentimental novel. The main text, divided into chapters, is further segmented by the embedded anecdotes of the above mentioned past lifestyle (printed in italics), and ends with a collection of ten recipes from the family recipe book, including the “fabulous” rabbit-pate for snack (Ugron 2010, 287) and the “Tomato-assiette as starter for summer dances” (Ugron 2010, 299).

Such blurring of genres (to use Geertz’s term) and subversion of generic limits and conventions are often regarded by literary criticism and theory characteristic traits of postmodern works. At the same time, discussions about the postmodern also frequently focus on the relations between popular literature, within it the so-called feminine genres, and high literature and the canon. It has been argued that types of novels that traditionally have been viewed as popular fiction and have been therefore neglected by critics and theoreticians (such as detective stories, historical romances, crime fiction, science fiction, fantasy and many other subgenres of fiction) have been, on the one hand, “invisible for professional readers” (Bárány 2011), while on the other, due to this subversion and blurring of genres they enter the mainstream in order to be ironically rewritten and deconstructed.⁶ At the same time, literary criticism has shown that often works appealing to a large reading public – for various reasons among which generic, thematic, or the fact that such works generally require conservative interpretation attitudes – may yield to professional analysis and from such a perspective they may offer fertile ground for new interpretations and open up paths of discussions on issues of genre, cultural policy, etc.⁷ Despite, then, that popular fiction has been lingering at the rim of the literary canon, mostly outside of theoreticians’ and critics’ horizons, as Zsuzsa Tapodi states, the present cultural world seems to suggest that we are witnessing if not the disappearance of canons, then surely their reorganization, similar to the phenomena initiated by Romanticism or the Avant Garde which led to a radical reshaping of literary maps (2008, 35). Geertz’s argument states the same:

[...] the present jumbling of varieties of discourse has grown to the point where it is becoming difficult either to label authors [...] or to classify works [...] It is a phenomenon general enough and distinctive enough to suggest that what we are seeing is not just another redrawing of the cultural map – the moving of a few disputed borders [...] – but an alteration of the principles of mapping. Something is happening to the way we think about the way we think. (1980, 165)

6 As Bárány states, despite the negative value judgment with reference to popular genres, Hungarian literary criticism’s interest in these types of works has livened in recent years (Bárány mentions the studies of Tamás Bényei, Éva Bánki, Anna Menyhért and others).

7 See, for example, Klaudia Papp’s (2007) study on Anita Brookner’s *Hotel du Lac*; Gabriella Moise’s (2007) reading of Sarah Dunant’s *The Birth of Venus*.

With reference to the relation between the literary canon and popular literature Tapodi discusses the issue in terms of the centre and periphery, referring to Itamar Even Zohar's argument according to whom the dynamics of literary systems displays itself as a continuous centre-periphery movement, where one of the main levers consists in the tension between canonical and non-canonized literature. Therefore, without a strong subculture canonized culture stiffens and will not be able to keep up with society's demand for change. Accordingly, "[d]evelopment moves elements of the periphery to the centre, thus a genre that earlier was regarded as barely presentable becomes fashionable and a model to follow, while another that used to be in the centre of the canon becomes obsolete and is delegated to the periphery" (Tapodi 2008, 35). Such permanent shifting within "a situation at once fluid, plural, uncentered and ineradicably untidy" (Geertz 1980, 165) calls for attention to genres at present on the periphery and authors such as Ugron, whose first success novel did not remain a "one-hit-wonder" but was followed by the large public's enthusiastic interest in her farther works. Even more so if we consider Péter Szirák's claim in his discussion of Hungarian literary postmodernism that "in the shaping of cultural relations in Hungary postmodern components are noticeably involved" such as "the blurring of borders between elite- and consumer-cultures" (2001, 37). A similar argument comes from John Storey:

Perhaps the most significant thing about postmodernism for the student of popular culture is the recognition that there is no absolute categorical difference between high and popular culture. This is not to say that one text or practice might not be "better" (for what/for whom, etc., must always be decided and made clear) than another text or practice. But it is to say that there are no longer any easy reference points that will automatically preselect for us the good from the bad. Some might regard such a situation [...] with horror – the end of standards. On the contrary, without easy recourse to fixed categories of value, it calls for rigorous, if always contingent, standards, if our task is to separate the good from the bad. [...]

Postmodernism has certainly changed the theoretical and the cultural basis on which to think about popular culture. In fact, the collapse of the distinction (if this is the case) between high and popular culture may signify that at last it may be possible to use the term popular culture and mean nothing more than culture liked by many people. (2003, 156–157)

Regarding value he also states: "the cultural text under the sign of the postmodern is not the source of value, but a site where the construction of value – variable values – can take place" (2003, 156), referring to Fredric Jameson's concepts of postmodern culture as one of pastiche, "a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the

masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum” (qtd. in Storey 2003, 150). Discussing postmodernism and literature Barry Lewis also relies on Jameson when stating that “[p]astiche is [...] a kind of permutation, a shuffling of generic and grammatical tics” (2003, 125), arguing that many contemporary novels “borrow the clothes of different forms,” listing among the characteristics of postmodern texts – beyond the above quoted “cross-dressing” (2003, 126) – also fragmentation, where generic conventions may be followed without leading to a regular representative text of the given genre (Lewis exemplifies this with John Fowles’s *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, which “follows several love story conventions [but] it is far from being a regular historical romance” (2003, 127)), fragmentation also manifesting itself in “breaking up the text into short fragments or sections,” the disjointed character of the “very fabric of the text” with the inclusion of illustrations, typography (like the use of multiple typefaces), or mixed media (2003, 127).

Cross-dressing, fragmentation, the merger of discourses, of spatial and temporal planes, the destabilization of chronology with the technique of framing as well as embedded narratives also characterize Ugron’s novels, among them *By the Black River*, which bears the subtitle “*Postmodern girls’ novel about dreams, love, castles...*” on a title page intercalated between the above discussed preface and the main body of the novel. Similarly to the preface, this generic positioning of the work immediately directs us to the question of its conventions: the Hungarian term “lányregény” – direct translation “girls’ novel” – implies a story written for girls about girls, but as Annamária Sinka states, “the definition is problematic from several perspectives” (2011, 89). On the one hand, this difficulty arises from the fact that the subgenre enjoys very little recognition, a novel “built on easy-to-follow templates” (2011, 89); on the other, the term is often used to refer to works that have gained international recognition and have been part of the literary canon for a long time, such as the novels of the Brontë sisters or Jane Austen, their novels “mostly telling the story of young girls who do not always follow devotedly the recognized and accepted social norms of the Victorian age, and even though they may transgress the strict social norms and rules of feminine behavior, men play a major role in their destinies as marriage is the only road to the fulfillment of their love” (Sinka 2011, 90). Among the conventions of such “feminine” novels we may list the often stereotypical heroine within a girl-meets-boy scenario that – after the overcoming of diverse obstacles – leads to the “happily-ever-after” marriage; the exotic either in time or space or both as “integral to the genre” (Kaler and Rosemary 1999, 7), detailed presentation of the social milieu, the morals and communication patterns of such an environment, sentimentalism, as well as titles that often contain or consist of the heroine’s name (remark made by Sinka [2011, 94] in her comparative study of Ildikó Lovas’s *The Spanish Bride* and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*).

Romance, Food and Female Subjectivity

By the Black River starts and ends with scenes of a ball, an event framing the protagonist Anna Kevéer's story. In the opening chapter entitled "Arrival (from the end)" the omniscient narrative voice reveals to the reader that the scene is a remote Transylvanian village of troubled multinational history, a country manor the description of which occasions our introduction to the centuries-long history of the Hungarian aristocracy of this region. The time is the morning after the ball, when – after tangos, Sinatra's swings, waltzes and czardases – even Britney Spears has given way to silence. Thus we are transported into a world where the remote close-to-nature rural idyllic meets the upbeat cosmopolitan global culture, and where remnants of the memory of thirteenth century Hungarian kings, Transylvanian princes and the horrid legacy of communist totalitarianism merge into the present of our heroine. This duality and juxtaposition of history and the present, of the rural and the urban, of the local and the global characterizes the entire text, a fast-rhythm prose in which we follow Anna from her very fashionable career-woman and bride of a wealthy French artist life in Budapest, with frequent trips to Vienna, France or Switzerland, to her return to Transylvania, a space inseparably merged into her own and her family's history and that keeps invading her cosmopolitan existence.

Anna's story has all the ingredients of the typical romance: the stereotypical young woman, the mysterious new man suddenly stepping into her life in the figure of Gábor Kászoni (himself a descendant of Transylvanian and Indian aristocrats, brought up in the West just to return to the restituted but ruinous castle of his ancestors and continue the family's fight for the restitution of their estates nationalized by the communists) with whom Anna's fate changes drastically. The exoticism of the remote, rural space of Transylvania, the ruinous castles and burdened family histories also predestine the story for the genre. With Anna we also get a glimpse of Budapest life, the dressing- and behavioral codes of the Vienna ball season, as well as of the polar opposite of all these, the small Transylvanian village with its typical everyday life and larger than life characters whose verbal tics and archaic dialect, common sense and down-to-earth mentality are source of lively scenes and much humour.

Where the romance would, however, conventionally end – the fabulous wedding with a charter train bringing the international guests to the event held in the barely renovated castle by candlelight – Ugron's novel continues and turns into much more than a template-generated love story with the obligatory happy end. As one of the reviewers of the novel has also remarked, it is after the wedding that the novel – and its heroine – undergo a metamorphosis: "From bored superwoman the protagonist turns into a flash-and-blood woman developing a very human interest in the culinary arts and it is just as human that

from time to time she becomes the laughing stock of the Szekler village” (Fülöp 2011). The novel also subverts readers’ expectations through its “minimalism,” as another reviewer, Szalai puts it, stating that while the subtitle “Postmodern girls’ novel about dreams, love, castles” sets up expectations, “a reader looking for feverish prose and emotional attunement will probably be disappointed” (2011). We do associate the tradition of the sentimental novel, sensibility and especially sentimentality with romance. The *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* states about the sentimental novel that it “attempts to show that effusive emotion was evidence of kindness and goodness” and that “it concentrated on the distresses of the virtuous and attempted to show that a sense of honour and moral behavior were justly rewarded” (Cuddon 1999, 809), while sensibility is defined as a term that became popular in the 18th century “when it acquired the meaning of ‘susceptibility to tender feelings’; thus a capacity [...] to identify with and respond to the sorrows of others – and to respond to the beautiful” (Cuddon 1999, 807). Sentimentality, on the other hand, appears as a pejorative term, with reference to literary works denoting “overmuch use of pathetic effects and attempt to arouse feeling by ‘pathetic’ indulgence” (Cuddon 1999, 809). Ugron’s novel does not allow much association with the sentimental and neither with sentimentality, even the romantic love-story plotline lacks heightened emotional scenes and “pathos.” Neither is moving back to Transylvania nor its motivation idealized as an emotional return to the roots. While there is some pastoral melancholy in the young aristocrats’ leaving the cosmopolitan milieu of Budapest, Vienna, London or New York for the old-fashioned isolation of Transylvanian villages cut off from “civilization,” the stated motives of their return are much more rational.⁸ Endre, Anna’s cousin argues:

You should really be the one to understand that this is not some kind of fad; we were brought up in the belief that this [Transylvania] was Atlantis, the lost world; instead of fairy tales we listened open-mouthed to my grandfather’s and Aunt Pólíka’s stories. Their Transylvania was the fairyland, and now here it is: Saint George, here you have your dragon, go fight it, win it back, build it up! Wouldn’t it be crazy to stay instead in Budapest and try earn as much as possible for some multinational company? (Ugron 2010, 106),

while Gábor’s goal to get the family’s forests back can also be traced back to financial considerations: he says he would not have been able to earn as much in London as the forests will be worth, not even by the time he was forty.

The element that replaces and goes against such sentimentalism is humour. The novel abounds in scenes mixing humour and self-irony that turn the everyday situations of the cosmopolitan youth in the remote Szekler village into high

8 See Eszter Laik’s review of the novel published in *Irodalmi Jelen* in 2011.

comedy – from the first horse-ride on the back of the neighbour's horse used to pulling carts rather than carry countesses on its back to Anna not knowing where to look for the green beans in the garden or trying to chop wood. Hilariously funny are also their attempts to save the rose garden from the sheep herd roaming around the park of the castle or chasing out horses from the newly renovated hall and the garden at night-time under the surprised eyes of their bed-and-breakfast's first guests, English diplomats whom they have to convince the next morning that the barely dressed young count's midnight running around is not regular part of the tourist program they offer their guests. The realistic but still humorous social portrait of the village with its typical characters, customs, language and mentality – with Aunt Zsófiika emerging as the uncrowned queen of social relations and of the news possessing the almost mystical capacity of knowing everything before anybody else without leaving her house – is constantly juxtaposed with the young couple's and their circle's urban and international attitude and mentality. A farther source of verbal humour is the contrast between the often archaic dialect of the locals contrasted with Gábor's Hungarian that he speaks with an accent mixed with German and English expressions. The contrast of the two worlds becomes even more emphatic through the wedding party ambushing the village and the guests of the bed-and-breakfast ranging from diplomats and politicians to Spaniards with their special ham (that they also offer to the housekeeper who thinks they want to poison her) and the international participants of an old-timer rally from London to Transylvania for whom they throw a Ball of Vampires to the shock of the entire village.

History also appears masked in humour: the terrors of the communist regime as well as the horrific legacy of totalitarianism are depicted with the wit and elegance of the embedded anecdotes and the black humour of Gábor's first period spent in the village, like his memories of his first New Year's Eve in the castle that at that time was still functioning as a mental institution. The nested anecdotes ingeniously create a whole new layer of the literary universe with eccentric and legendary figures of the family history. Through these embedded texts a lost, destroyed culture and lifestyle comes to the surface with an elegance, manners and morals that belong to a past era and that evoke both the gentry-novels of the early twentieth century Hungarian literature and the tradition of the comedy of manners.

Among the generic conventions of romances critics often mention their euphemistic language and phrasing – especially regarding sexuality. Ugron's novel abides by this convention; however, the body and its presence and importance appear emphatically through the motif of food and cooking. Novels celebrating food, the sensuousness of eating, featuring dinner parties or recipes, with characters finding an outlet for their creativity in the culinary arts or in setting the scene for fabulous feasts have been numerous: from Kate Chopin's Edna in *The*

Awakening throwing her luxurious birthday dinner almost as a manifesto of her individuality and liberation to Mrs. Dalloway's busy kitchen with "plates, saucepans, cullenders, frying-pans, chicken in aspic, ice-cream freezers, pared crusts of bread, lemons, soup tureens, and pudding basins" (Woolf 1996, 181–182), from Liz in Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love* absorbed in the beauty and sensuality of Italian food and Italian language to Marsha Mehran's *Pomegranate Soup* with each chapter opening with a recipe of exotic Iranian dishes such as "Fesenjoon" or "Elephant ears." Still, up to the contemporary interest in all things culinary when TV programs are saturated with cooking shows, cooking contests and reality shows, and when bookstores offer every imaginable kind of recipe collection and books related to every aspect of preparing and consuming food, food and the art of cooking was for a long time perceived as a trivial subject. As Aoyama Tomoko states in her study "Literary Daughters' Recipes. Food and Female Subjectivity in the Writings of Mori Mari and Koda Aya," referring to the theoretical work of Deborah Lupton, there can be perceived "a historical neglect, disgust for and fear of food and eating, based on the view that they are banal, feminine, embodied, impure, unclean, and uncivilized" (2000, 95). However, she also states that food and activities related to its preparation, perception and consumption "cover a variety of areas and dimensions concrete or abstract – not merely inter-personal relations (between family members, for example), but also relations between nature and culture, the physical and spiritual or metaphysical, as well as the individual and society, fact and fiction, and production and reception" (2000, 91).

In *By the Black River* Anna's whole journey from her life in Budapest to finding her place (even if this finding of a place of one's own is a continuous process of constant destabilization and return to balance) in the remote Kézdiszentimre is linked to food: from dinners with friends and family to her wedding menu and starting her "awakening" in the kitchen of the renovated castle. Her passion for food develops slowly and out of sheer necessity: as the "young countess" of the dominion she is expected to reign over domestic aspects of their lives including what dishes to serve to their guests and how she wants the pork to be processed. And gradually this becomes the "support" that the author confesses to have been looking for when she herself moved to Transylvania, a search mirrored in her character's fate. Cooking, different cuisines from the old aristocratic to typical Szekler dishes and the demands of their guests, link her to the women of the village, and gradually – thanks to the old recipes of her grandmother – she becomes an authority in matters of innovative dishes. Cooking also becomes a means of self-expression and creativity and a source of aesthetic pleasure in her life. In this sense gastronomy and food turn into the domain of the formation and evocation of her subjectivity – understood as an entity in constant shifting and transformation rather than a stiffened and stable "identity." She becomes an active subject creating her own "culinary narrative" in a rather postmodern pastiche

manner: her passion for food and for the beauty, challenge and creativity involved in cooking is a legacy of her “foremothers” that she discovers and revives in her own story. It is the old recipe collection of her grandmother that initiates her immersion into the art, and which offers her a link to her and her family’s past as well as to her present (the village) and her future (a new livelihood, for example, through the bed-and-breakfast). This is also the starting point towards expressing her own subjectivity understood not in the binary opposition that the very topic of food and cooking as “feminine” domains might suggest: of male—female, active—passive, subject—object(ified). Much rather, as Nóra Séllei suggests, a process through which the female becomes an active/speaking subject (2007, 9). Anna’s subjectivity is constructed through the evocation of the past that at the beginning seems to overwhelm her and that crashes into her life unexpectedly and uninvited, a past that in Anna’s mind is always closely connected to food: “For a long time Anna has felt the same way about Transylvania as she felt about stuffed cabbage. [...] She would eat it for days, but only once a year, at Christmas. [...] Without cabbage there would be no Christmas and life would not be worth living. Once a year, but that’s a must” (Ugron 2010, 15).

“Food is also a subject that is strongly associated with memories and nostalgia,” Tomoko states (2000, 93). It is not accidental then that Anna’s personal memories, her family’s recollections and the embedded anecdotes are so often stories related to food and culinary experiences, even when they tell about the times of the Ceausescu regime when there was nothing to eat. However, this does not lead to Anna simply copying the past. Much rather, to use Tomoko’s phrasing, she develops “her own ‘recipe’ for evoking female subjectivity” (2000, 96) by merging her family’s collective memory with local customs and Aunt Zsófi’s mastery in everything human, that is also cooking, and her own international experiences. If we consider Séllei’s argument that “the subject is created through semiotic sign-systems, often through and in language” (2007, 13), we may come to conclude that in Anna’s case cooking and food constitute this system of signs in and through which her subjectivity manifests herself and where she finds her place, as one of the closing paragraphs of the novel suggests:

We managed to throw the ball after all.

Ducks, donkeys, children chasing each other and the chickens in the dusty streets, a stream sluggishly flowing among the multicolored Saxon peasant houses, and arriving in the dust of the late summer the party in evening gowns and tuxedos. Marvelous pink lamb chops, tarragon chicken, aubergine cream – a must in Transylvania, buffalo mozzarella from the nearby Kóhalom, truffle ravioli, and by the time all the guests found their places at the tables, on the axis of the French garden’s geometrical center the sun went down [...]. (Ugron 2010, 293)

The Epistolary Novel and Authorial Female Subjectivity

When talking about blurred genres, a particular representative is Ugron's second novel, entitled *Szerelemföltők* [*The A-B Dialogue*], which combines the genres of the epistolary and the sentimental novel, literary sketch, short story, folk songs, plays, even legends infusing and alloying them in a postmodern jar by fragmentation, intertextuality, temporal disjunction and mostly by presenting the subject in its processual nature, continuously built and deconstructed by different instances of the narrative voices.

At first glance *The A-B Dialogue* is an epistolary novel, revived or even improved by certain techniques. It is an interesting and at the same time odd choice of the authors, as the epistolary genre is not a fashionable one nowadays. In fact, after the eighteenth century there were no memorable epistolary novels written in Hungarian and Transylvanian literature and after the nineteenth century it does not play a significant role in universal literature either. Its flourishing in a certain period – eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – is due to the fact that the omniscient narrator, capable of diving into his characters' minds and feelings had not been born yet. Since first-person narrative apparently certifies the verisimilitude of the created personality, the sentimental or epistolary novels present themselves as inner monologues. From this perspective, by the exclusiveness of the inner point of view the epistolary and sentimental novels of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries represented an opening towards Romanticism, which praised lyricism and subjectivity (Tapodi 2008, 239).

Hungarian literature links the genre of epistolary novel to the name of the nobleman Kelemen Mikes, exiled to Turkey in the eighteenth century, who – living in Constantinople for over forty years – wrote two hundred and seven letters to an imaginary aunt. *Törökországi Levelek* [*Letters from Turkey*] (1794) includes facts and feelings related to the life of the exiled and it offers valuable historical background information on current events taking place in the Turkey of those times. Another classic example for sentimental and epistolary novel in Hungarian literature is signed by József Kármán entitled *Fanni hagyományai* [*Fanni's Testament*] (1794), which according to the author himself, presents “the story of a beautiful soul and sensitive heart” (“Fanni”) that unfolds from the letters and the diary of the heroine, Fanni, who eventually dies of broken heart. The author follows Goethe's lead in *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) when declaring himself a simple collector, editor, who gathers and publishes texts authored by Fanni.

The A-B Dialogue fits in the genre of the epistolary novel, but in a reinvented, enriched form: unlike in a traditional epistolary novel, the letters are not the projections of the same mind of the one and only author who creates his/her narrators as the idea of a modern epistolary novel came up during the authors' actual correspondence: “We slipped into the two characters and continued to

write to each other until the letters and stories fit together” – says Ugron (Moly 2016). According to Meskó,

the novel deals with the unspoken past of Hungarian society. This past consists of unspoken familial and individual stories. People used to cope with everyday issues by writing letters and diaries. The correspondence of our heroes is an attempt to confront the past and themselves. This way they help each other express their untold thoughts. (Moly 2016)

Structurally, the novel contains thirty-six letters, seventeen written by Anna, nineteen by B. and twenty-seven embedded texts among which there are short stories, sketches and plays. Every chapter is marked by the name of the month, for over a year, from January to January and begins with a love song/ballad of Szekler folklore published in the collection of János Kriza's *Wild Roses. Collection of Szekler Popular Poetry* (1863). The nested narratives follow the letters and are authored by the correspondents themselves. However, not every letter is accompanied by such an addition. The closing part of the book is the legend of Saint Elisabeth, a saint that apparently occurs and plays a role in both narrators' lives.

The initiative belongs to Anna, who suffering from broken heart, similarly to a crime of opportunity, chooses a man from her past, B., to reconnect with after ten years. By taking the initiative, Anna emerges as the feminine subject, active both factually and linguistically, who chooses to start the discourse, not just respond. She does not motivate her decision to write and neither does she explain why her choice has fallen on B. as her intended correspondent with anything else but an old photograph: “I don't know why I am sending this [a photograph taken ten years earlier] to You now, do not look for explanations, really, there is no explicit intention in it. I was just wrapping up some stuff, it came up, I pass it through” (Ugron and Meskó 2011, 5).

The female subject does no longer occupy a secondary, passive and submissive position, which does not speak unless spoken to. Unlike Virginia Woolf's female subject in *Three Guineas*, who starts to write and through writing construct her own subjectivity as a response to certain letters (Séleli 2007, 316), Ugron's Anna does not display the classic patriarchal subordination scheme. Nevertheless, her initiative comes after suffering a trauma, as we are to find out later, and she seems to have reached a point from where she is simply forced to reinvent herself, to make order in her life lest to die like her mother or worse, lest to live a disturbed life with too many problems left open. B. seems to represent one of these open issues, an acquaintance from ten years ago. It seems that the two characters share a past and during their correspondence they are trying to get some sort of closure but they also wish to find out if they have a future together. Every text that follows the letters is about Anna and B., who appear as different occurrences of the

same subjects, Anna and B., and almost every story ends with the uncontested knowledge of the impossibility of their relationship. Every instance created by the writing parties shuts down a certain situation, either one of them dies or marries another, leaves or cheats on the other. This parallelism or multiplication of the presented subjectivities is hinted at by Ugron herself when she states about the novel: “It is not a romance in the classical sense. It is the story of lots of loves and lots of almost loves” (Moly 2016).

Anna’s subjectivity is constructed from the instances of Anna that appear within the short stories, sketches and plays, projected either by the letter-writer Anna or by her correspondent friend, B. These stories are displayed without any chronological order, we see the child Anna, lingering on her mother after we have seen her mother dying on an icy road in Transylvania. We see the brown-haired young woman who chooses to terminate her pregnancy and afterwards comes the girl who decides to keep her baby, to finally see a self-convicted man who has never forgiven himself for suggesting his girlfriend to terminate her pregnancy which, however, she holds on to in spite of being alone, but unfortunately both mother and baby die in the eighth month.

The female characters of the embedded stories show Anna as a child, a mistress, a wanted but untouchable, almost idealistic woman, a cousin who must not love her male cousin, a young girl in the Angels’ land who has killed herself because her mother had forbidden her to love her brother, a deported Jewish girl, a boring, old partner of a man, a young, restless girl always on the run with her mother’s suitcases, a wife cheated on by her husband with her friend, a wife, cheating on her husband, a femme fatale, a spy, the self-destructive or the pregnant Anna. These instances contribute to the configuration of the female subject, the subject that is not a fixed entity but under continuous construction and in constant shifting from one position to the other. Both narrators’ subjectivities are flexible and malleable, they shift from one position to the other according to the given situations they inscribe themselves into. These constantly changing masks that the narrators slip into that may represent polar opposites of each other or seemingly head towards different directions lead to the construction of their incoherent subjectivities (Hall 1992, 598).

This incoherence is shown best by the narrators’ bouncing from objectivity to subjectivity, from passive to active displayed through the Annas and B.-s they create, which at the same time constitute the foundation of the discourse of their own subjectivities. Anna’s B. is either extremely weak, incapable of getting in touch with the girl he likes, or highly impulsive: in the shape of B. she kills her Anna for ending their relationship. B. senses that Anna needs to see herself as in a kaleidoscope, so he creates a wider spectrum of Annas: first of all, he rewrites the first letter the way he thinks Anna should have written it, then in the short story entitled *The Ad*, written by B., Anna turns to a professional service to help her

accept and love herself, in *The Coffee House* also authored by B., there are present two instances of Anna at the same time, a young woman, girlfriend of B., and an older wife, cheating on her husband with B., both called Anna, Anna the Jew and B. the one who participates at the Jews' extermination in Porcinello, and so forth.

In this sense the novel displays the postmodern concept of the subject where coherence and stability has become impossible. The postmodern subject does not even attempt to reach coherence, unity and stability; on the contrary, it finds its balance in malleability. The backbone of the subject is not ensured by the attempt of guiding all the instances of the subject in the same direction, but by identifying these appearances, letting them follow their own course through and in writing. Anna is in a constant quest of a self, her life is deconstructed piece by piece and by inscribing herself in the discourse she is reinventing her past and present. Unlike J.M. Coetzee's Susan Barton in *Foe* (1986), Anna finds her own voice, she does not need an outer force, a man, an author to write her story, to locate her in a discourse.

The weak and suffering Anna builds herself up through the letters, she creates an Anna capable of developing to be able to deal with the psychological issues caused by her mother's early death, reaching the stage of recognizing the resemblance with her mother but refusing to be her mother and she grows to make decisions of her own. On the other hand, there are Annas who do not manage to cope with life and they commit suicide. Anna needs to observe both her suicidal and her self-assured instances at the same time and this kind of rupture is possible only in the realm of the imaginary, in literature. From the perspective of the female subject, under construction, it becomes clear early in the novel that while putting the pieces of herself together the medium of letters is the only way of interaction with B., regardless of how much he wishes to meet her and connect in the real world. She sets the rules and the means of communication, she is in control, she allows herself a break when not being in the mood for writing and she does not accept anything from B. except his writing.

The act of writing as the single way of communication between the characters, since they disregard all other means of contact of the modern world, such as phone or e-mails, is put upon a pedestal, almost sanctified: B. confesses that he writes his letters on a certain kind of paper, with a certain pen and ink, a pen that he does not use for anything else, but to write to Anna. The quintessence of writing is to explore the abysses of the past and those of the mind of the two characters, and to observe, to reinvent themselves in every possible way. Their dialogue sets the frame for this quest, a dialogue that is realized on the level of the letters and on the level of the stories, where Anna and B. confront their common past and themselves. Anna's inscription in the discourse has to happen because she feels the urge of constituting herself as a subject and she invites B. to be a part of this process. By creating several Annas, both Anna and B. continuously

generate and regenerate her as a subject, until she feels secure enough to accept that her feminine subjectivity is not a stable, fixed or predetermined one, but in continuous formation.

In writing, the instances of the narrators get to be happy together, even marry and “plant trees,” that is have children. In writing and only in writing gets the sentimental reader to see a happy ending, the two characters together after figuring out their past issues, their questions to each other and their fears. The letter-writer Anna and B. meet eventually, when Anna wants to meet, they share a nice dinner and Anna informs B. about her engagement with Moritz, her colleague from the restaurant in Vienna, shaking this way the ground under B.’s feet. It seems that she has used B. to help her through her darkest hours and then, after finding her joy in work and a fiancée, and after coming to terms with her multiple subject positions, the constant shifting and the responsibility which goes together with an identity conceptualized in terms of such a destabilized subjectivity, she simply casts him away. However, in the process of Anna’s formation B. has constituted himself also by looking back, finishing up and, of course, by writing.

What should I write to you? This is the last letter of the year. It is like everything has happened to me this year that could happen to a man. A man without a family yet.

I celebrated our meeting. I didn’t know how to prepare my heart for it. I didn’t expect anything, but it was there inside of me: this is going to be the last moment together or it is the beginning of a new life. [...]

And see how tricky life is? After all these, you spill the beans about Moritz... I felt like I was hit by lightning. For a moment I thought I would fall off the chair. For minutes afterwards I only focused on you not to notice what was going on inside of me. [...] What is this? If the incident by the bench calmed me down and I saw us clearly, then what was this lightning... Pictures came and flew away. The film of this year flashed before my eyes and suddenly all the tension was gone. I said to myself the very sentence you had also written. This year has been one of the best gifts I have ever received. I got it from you. Together we grew capable of new beginnings. Thank you for that. (Ugron and Meskó 2011, 317)

These final words show that the main reason of writing is not to present the everyday life of a certain group of people or a place and culture, as it is in the case of *Letters from Turkey*, nor is it to display the inner life of a character who suffers from love, like Fanni, or the society and the way it deals with young, inexperienced servant girls approached by their devious masters, as in the case of Richardson’s *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). *The A-B Dialogue*, although it bears sentimental and romantic features, emphasizes writing as the act of

communication and – more importantly – that of creating, building the acting subject within the dialogue. If Anna had been Fanni, she would have said yes to meeting B. at his first invitation, she would have found love in him and would have felt safe and stable, or in case of her love not returned, she would have written about it with the necessary pathos of sentimentalism. Anna does not need another person to reach a sense of security. Neither does she need someone to cry to. Nor would a monologue, a diary or an imaginary addressee serve her purposes. She needs a counterpart to talk to, a dialogue, a reflected Anna in order to undergo the process of inventing and reinventing, generating and regenerating, constructing and reconstructing her own feminine subjectivity.

Historical Romance, the Picara and Female Subjectivity

“One of the most conspicuous developments of the Hungarian fiction of recent years has been the evocation of the ‘historical novel’” – Szirák writes (2001, 47). Historical romances such as Jókai’s or Gárdonyi’s works have always been highly popular, providing a generic and textual heritage that contemporary authors may build on. Of course, novelists attempting a revival of the genre have devised alternative techniques and perspectives in their narratives of historical events. Discussing János Háy’s *Dzsigerdilen*, Szirák talks about the new historical novel as “the ‘adventure’ of merging fiction with supposed reality” (2001, 47). Ugron has also stated in an interview:

Philippa Gregory argues that historians also write fiction but without the liberties of a novelist. And if you think about it, it’s true. We don’t know anything about the way people used to live, think or what motivated their choices. The historian says: this is what we know, but we do not know the rest. I have the freedom to imagine the rest. (Bookline 2016)

The *Úrasszonyok* [*Splendour*] trilogy continues the legacy of nineteenth century Hungarian historiographic fiction, what is even more, the author has chosen to represent an era that constituted the subject of one of the great forefathers, Zsigmond Móricz, in his *Transylvania* trilogy, one of the most turbulent and unstable periods of Central-Eastern Europe – the first half of the seventeenth century. Where it subverts the heritage and alters the perspective – beyond the fact that Ugron enters a literary domain traditionally dominated by male novelists – is that this bloody and war-stricken historical era is depicted from the point of view and through the eyes and destinies of the women of those times.

Discussing the possibilities and also the issues the new (postmodern) historical novel faces, Sándor Hites argues that these contemporary works distinguish

themselves from the old historical novel by characteristics such as the multiplicity of perspectives, the emphatic control and intrusive presence of the narrator in the narration, fragmentation and mosaic-like construction, the polyphony of discourses, the deconstruction of chronology, non-authentic depiction, the heightened role of the imaginary, and the perception of history as a construct (2003, 38–45). In this sense, historical novels become – or have always been to a certain extent – something other than the “depiction” or “representation” of historical events – despite the strongest demand for credibility and authenticity. They are much rather texts experimenting with their own genre, the combinatory possibilities of their generic constituents and of language in order to create meaning (see Hites 2003), as well as to represent the potential of the genre and thus of language to express the processual nature of subjectivity. Ugron’s statement that “in my reading this book [*The Palatine’s Women*; but we may enlarge the field to all four of her novels] depicts a woman’s destiny, it presents the timeless issues and dynamics of female relations and female-male relationships” (Bookline 2016) links her work to the above arguments.

Erdélyi menyegző [*Splendour*] follows – in a more or less chronological order – the destiny of the infamous Anna Báthory, whose fate is inseparably interwoven with that of her dynasty (she being one of the last descendants of the Báthory house that yielded kings and princes and international scandals and is now on the verge of disappearing from history) and of her country at that time divided into three and devastated by constant regional wars and the twofold pressure of being trapped between the Habsburg and Ottoman geopolitical ambitions. Her journey leads her from being the celebrated beauty of her brother’s court and a wife to being twice widowed, on trial for witchcraft, immoral behaviour and other atrocious charges, tortured and dispossessed of all the fabulous estates that she had owned. She manages to escape with the help of Miklós Eszterházy – to whom she is linked for life by a mutual love that is never to be fulfilled – and this is when her travels start. Accompanied by her Chinese slave/servant Lin – who throughout the novels functions as a surrogate mother, girlfriend, tutor and protector/provider – she travels to Warsaw, and then in the entourage of the Polish crown prince to Brussels and Venice, where the first volume leaves her. The last chapter of *Splendour* consists of a first-person narrative, a diary entry signed by Krisztina Eszterházy in 1636, eleven years after we leave Anna in Venice, from which we learn that our now refuge-seeking wonderer has just arrived to the estates of her childhood protégée Krisztina, now wife of Miklós Eszterházy:

She [Anna] arrived to Fraknó two days ago. She came by a simple coach, barely bringing anything with her but a chest. She came alone, no escort. Her gown worn, her steps painful. And yet, she seemed to be glowing.

She did not ask for anything. She did not beg. And neither was she haughty in her wretchedness. When asked how she had been, where she had come from, which way she was going, she smiled.

– Well, could I ever know where I was to go? But now finally I can go wherever I want, wherever I desire. I have laid my burdens. I have paid the price. (Ugron 2013a, 350)

A nádor asszonyai [*The Palatine's Women*] is structured differently, if possible, even more focused on the female characters. Chronology is broken and several voices tell the stories of women through whom an alternative history of the seventeenth century is constructed. The different chapters – in relativized order – cover the period from 1624 to 1645, and operate with different narrative perspectives. While the first chapter picks up the storyline in the same voice – Krisztina Eszterházy's – as the first volume ended, it jumps back in time to 1624, the year Miklós Eszterházy was elected Palatine of Hungary. Certain chapters are told from an omniscient narrator's point of view, others from a limited third-person perspective, focusing on one or the other female character such as Erzsébet Czobor, Kata Várday, Katherine of Brandenburg or Anna Báthory, and in yet again others we hear the voice of the women themselves, Krisztina, Lin or Anna. The link among them is the figure of Anna Báthory who by this time has become a true representative of the pícara: travelling from one royal court to the other across Europe she is somewhat similar to the famous female spies and double agents of history (like Mata Hari or Violette Szabó). As József Sántha remarks in his review of the volume, "Anna has become a classic adventuress and the novel a historical adventure story" (2015).

"The pícara occupies a unique position in the history of literature. She is not glorified as an angel or a mother figure, nor can a neat label such as sinner, murderess or evil married woman circumscribe her personality" (Daghistany 1977, 51). A similar definition comes from Anne Kaler:

In literature the figure of the pícara is an elusive and neglected one [...] often mistaken for the feminine counterpart of the picaro [...] the pícara has her own identity. Yet critics to date have ignored or misread her presence in the tapestry. They condemn her as a wanton; they revile her as a sinner; they dislike her as a woman. Why are their criticisms so harsh? Perhaps it is that the distinguishing feature of her tapestried figure is [...] her autonomy. (1991, 1)

Kaler's above quoted introduction to her volume *The Pícara. From Hera to Fantasy Heroine* serves well a discussion of Anna Báthory's character. Within the tapestry of the multiple narrative perspectives and voices of the *Splendour* trilogy's two published volumes, in the disorderly chronology of narration (often

one event being presented from multiple points of view – for example, we learn about Eszterházy's election to Palatine from his wife's words, from the perspective of his powerful and always plotting mother-in-law Kata Várdy, as well as from Eszterházy's letter; or Anna's time spent in Belgrade from both her own and from Lin's description) Anna emerges as "an archetypal pattern of autonomy" (Kaler 1991, 2). She weaves her complex and always shifting subjectivity by masquerading from her early childhood to the very end: as Krisztina's surrogate mother, as obedient servant of her prince brother and of their family legacy, as an eastern diplomat's mysterious and enchanting wife in order to be able to attend a ball without being recognized as Anna Báthory, as seductively undressing temptress of her second husband, Zsigmond Jósika. She actually assumes a pseudonym while in the court of the Polish crown prince and from then on the Transylvanian princess keeps resurfacing in the different royal houses of Europe in the disguise of the "Polish woman," Countess Smokowska.

"The *picara's* mentor is her confidante, her magical weapons are her wit and sexuality, [...] her adventures are her wonderings" – Kaler argues, she is someone "trapped in a survival mode, struggling for [...] autonomy" (1991, 2). Anna is a woman of times of war, high treason, conspiracies and murders, of dynasties disappearing and new ones being born, an era when it was obvious and manifest that the personal was always also political and public. Her sole companion and mentor is Lin, her means of survival are her wit and her beauty, and her ability to tell stories. She possesses a large stock of stories to tell from her own family history and experiences to all the exciting stories Lin told her about faraway places, people and customs. She gets by, basically she survives – just like Scheherazade in *One Thousand and One Nights* – due to her marvelous skills as a storyteller, entertaining the Polish, Belgian, Habsburg and Transylvanian courts as well as the Turkish harem and the Sultana.

Her love affair with Miklós Eszterházy adds a further layer to her portrait and also to the novel. As Sántha remarks, "in Miklós Eszterházy and Anna Báthory's sensual but emotionally always restrained relationship we may recognize the heroes of *Sentimental Education* with their unfailingly passionate affections which, however, never transgress social norms" (2015). Thus, just like the *picara*, she does not become a typical romance heroine who would need to capture a man to marry in order to fulfil her role as a woman.

Where, then, lies the source of her autonomy? In times and places like the early seventeenth century Transylvania, within an emphatically patriarchal order and a male dominated world, how can women obtain autonomy? This question becomes even more important in view of the fact that beyond the *picara* Anna Báthory, the novels present a large scale of powerful women, of both high and the lowest social standing. Though they are "rarely allowed to decide in matters of their own fate, they manage huge estates and defend fortresses" (Ugron in

Bookline 2016), they rule countries and ultimately they are the ones who decide who of the men around them would serve their and their families' interests best, thus whom to promote and aid into political positions. We meet Kata Várday endowed with marvelous social and political networking skills who seems to be pulling all the strings from the background and who also emerges as a patron of talented young men financing their education in order for them later to serve her own interests and purposes. Or there is Erzsébet Czobor, who manages one of the largest estates of the country and fulfils the position of Lord Lieutenant of two counties. In Brussels and Istanbul we meet women ruling their empires and centralizing all the power associated – especially in those times – with men into their own hands. Lin stands for another type of female empowerment: the former slave, herself with an adventurous life that led her from China all through Europe to finally settle with Anna, gains control through knowledge and skill and the magic people associate with her.⁹ And they do all this being widows.

Asked what interested her in these women's fates, Ugron stated:

Mostly this duality [of being empowered in an age that deprived women of any power]. And the fact that within such a rigid system which from a superficial perspective and from the point of view of its rules and norms was so emphatically a men's world, there were women who were able to enforce their own will for their own or their loved ones' sake, or in the service of their community or country. (Bookline 2016)

In attempting an answer to the above question we turn to Séllei's definition of subjectivity and its relation to power. Relying on Michel Foucault's arguments in "The Subject and Power," Séllei states that subjectivity is a cultural construct, a constantly shifting position inscribed by the discourses of power (2007, 10).¹⁰ Power in this sense is a system of discourses which are not necessarily in harmony with each other. Therefore, power comes from multiple sources and its practices are not uniform and homogenous (Séllei 2007, 11). In Anna Báthory's time the patriarchal system is opened up exactly by this constant disharmony and diffusion of power, Transylvania being torn between the Habsburg and Ottoman demands, devastated by wars and constant imbalance on grounds of religious disputes and men's political ambitions. Séllei further argues: "the disharmonizing elements of dominant discursive practices create rifts, fissures and ruptures that open up the system and create the opportunity for the formation and acceptance of new, alternative and subversive subject positions" (2007, 11). The ruptures and rifts

9 The magical and mysterious are also present in Anna's fate – in the form of the Báthory rings and Báthory curse, not to mention her kinship with the internationally infamous Erzsébet Báthory.

10 Foucault differentiates between power-relations and totalitarian dictatorships – where what are formed are not subjects but slaves.

created by the above mentioned instability of power relations and dominant discourses in Transylvania – and Central-Eastern Europe – of the first half of the seventeenth century constitute the spaces where women like Kata Várday, Katherine of Brandenburg, Sultana Kösem and Anna Báthory manifest their subjectivity in a subversive practice in order to survive and – if possible – manipulate the system. Through their figures the author of *Splendour* – herself a woman constantly shifting among multiple subject positions – revitalizes the historical romance genre and opens it up to incorporate the female narrative of history.

Conclusion

In an essay entitled “Do Postmodern Genres Exist?” Ralph Cohen offers an overview of contemporary theories on the issue of genre and concludes that although “[p]ostmodern critics have sought to do without a genre theory” (2000, 295),

[i]f we seek to understand the historical recurrence of certain kinds of writing, the rejection or abandonment of other kinds, genre theory provides the most adequate procedure for this inquiry. If we wish to analyze an individual text, genre theory provides a knowledge of its constituents and how they combine. Not only do these actions recognize the value of a genre theory in analyzing modernist writing, but they demonstrate that postmodern theorists, critics, authors and readers inevitably use the language of genre theory even as they seek to deny its usefulness. (2000, 306–307)

The present study aimed at analyzing how genres such as the romance, the epistolary novel and the historical romance may take on new attires to “house” the representation of the constantly shifting subjectivity, specifically the construction of the female subject. We have demonstrated that by altering the conventions, non-linear narration, the insertion into the narrative of other texts (recipes, anecdotes, letters, sketches, folk songs, etc.), through the blurring of borders among different genres and the mixing of their constituents, and thus subverting readers’ expectations, Ugron succeeds in creating specific female narratives in the various power discourses she depicts.

In order to position themselves as subjects, Ugron’s Annas (and several of the other female characters in her novels) must find the fissures in the system of power and the appropriate sign-system to inscribe themselves into the discourse. In the case of Anna Kevéer (*By the Black River*) this semiotic sign-system is gastronomy: in her attempt to connect with the past she finds cooking as the sole link that gathers all her instances – the newly-wed wife, the descendant of aristocrats, the cosmopolitan, the local celebrity, the lady of the house – and she

uses it to express her female subjectivity. The correspondent Anna in *The A-B Dialogue* uses letters, a male addressee and short stories, sketches, plays, legends to overthrow established power relations and affirm her female subjectivity, conveyed by the multiple reflections of her self. Anna Báthory (*Splendour, The Palatine's Women*), the hunted and wanted woman, embodies the figure of the picara which finally gives her full freedom of choice and autonomy. Having these instruments at hand, she inscribes herself as subject in the male-dominated discourse of history.

A sophomore reader would certainly stop at the genres and classify Ugron's novels according to their recognizable conventions: aristocracy, balls, weddings and love suit romance, letters suit the epistolary novel, while war, royal courts, conspiracies, sultanas and princesses suit the historical romance; and he/she would never reach beyond. However, in Zsolna Ugron's novels genres constitute the means, not the goal; they appear as the author's own semiotic system, the new attire she gives to old genres best shown by the ease with which she plays with them in order to create *l'écriture feminine*.

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Forms of Recall – Politics of Memory. Memory as the Non-Chronological Narrative Form of Historical-Political Identity Quest in the Kádár Regime and Its Survival in the Postcommunist Period

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Abstract. In the film art of the Kádár regime the modernist non-chronological narrative mode became the dominant form of remembrance and communicative memory. In the 35-year period between 1956 and 1990 we can find thirty-five films of this type (e.g. *Dialogue* [*Párbeszéd*, János Herskó, 1963], *Twenty Hours* [*Húsz óra*, Zoltán Fábri, 1965], *Cold Days* [*Hideg napok*, András Kovács, 1966], *Love* [*Szerelem*, Károly Makk, 1971], *Lovefilm* [*Szerelmesfilm*, István Szabó, 1970], *Diary for My Children* [*Napló gyermekeimnek*, Márta Mészáros, 1982]), the majority of which thematize the communicative memory of the recent past of the period (World War II, the Hungarian Holocaust, the 1950s, 1956, the Kádár consolidation) as opposed to the amnesia politics of the time. Although this cinematic corpus is connected to the film history of the Kádár era with all its elements (form: modernism; theme: communicative memory; political discourse: recollection; official politics of memory; the counter-discourse of Kádár's amnesia politics), it survives in the postcommunist period (e.g. *Hungarian Fragment* [*Pannon töredék*, András Sólyom, 1998], *White Palms* [*Fehér tenyér*, Szabolcs Hajdu, 2006], *Mom and Other Loonies in the Family* [*Anyám és más futóbolondok a családból*, Ibolya Fekete, 2015]). After presenting the non-chronological narrative form of historical-political identity quest, the paper seeks to find reasons for the survival of this form and tries to draw conclusions regarding the social aspect and modes of expression of the Hungarian film history of the postcommunist period.¹

Keywords: Hungarian film history, non-chronological narrative form, Kádár regime, postcommunist period.

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1.

In my paper I seek connections between one of the narrative procedures present in the film art of the Kádár era and the issue of social identity, then I make references to the survival of this connection in contemporary Hungarian film.

After the period of socialist realism, from 1954 on, the rebirth of Hungarian film took place in a formal and conceptual sense; after a long period of transition, by 1963, it reached the standards of European modernism. The film directors of the Hungarian New Wave of the 1960s took over a set of formal procedures from European modernist auteurs. From among the three major principles of modern art, namely subjectivity, abstraction and reflexivity (Kovács 2005, 87), the path of reflection is followed by only a few; abstraction is linked to the name of one single auteur, Miklós Jancsó, who does not simply take over but creates this modernist form; while subjectivity is widely present in the oeuvre of Hungarian film directors.

Two form procedures of subjectivity have evolved in modernist film. One is related to time, the other one is in connection with image/sound; the former affects narration, the latter concerns the audiovisual sphere. The subjectivization of time can be carried out by dissolving the chronology of narration. The narrative steps of this conventional solution, which can be linked to the classical Hollywood type narration already spread at the dawn of modernism, are as follows: 1. The suspension of the objective narratorial position and its assignment to the subjective viewpoint of a particular character; 2. the interruption of the continuity of narration; 3. return to the continuous present after the narrated past (flashback) or future (flashforward) event; 4. concomitantly, return from the subjective angle to the objective narrative viewpoint. Thus, in the Hollywood type narration the dissolution of chronology can be assigned a role only by emphasizing the continuity of narration. In the modern film, the principle of continuity undergoes a change: it is transferred from the objective structuring principle to the subjective one, that is, the objective criterion of continuity is overwritten by the criterion of subjectivity. Modernism extends the insular subjectivity of the classical mode of narration, clearly delimited from the objective point of view and the present time of narration, to the entire narration. The characteristic stages of this form principle are as follows: 1. insertion of several flashback and/or flashforward sequences into narration; 2. insertion of several remembering subjects into narration; 3. lack of signification/lack of certainty concerning the present/past, present/future changes; 4. lack of signification/lack of certainty concerning the recalling subjects. The endpoint of the process is the narration dissolving the continuity of narration, fully subjectivizing chronology and point of view, such as Alain Resnais's much quoted classic, *Last Year at Marienbad* (*L'année dernière à Marienbad*, 1961). As concerns style, the large and diverse spectrum in between the classical-objective and modernist-subjective forms is the most

exciting. The majority of the Hungarian films examined in my paper are situated in this intermediary domain.

In the audiovisual sphere subjectivity refers to the referentiality of the image and sound universe. Accordingly, similarly to the dissolution of chronology, within the classical Hollywood type narration we can distinguish realistic images and/or sounds corresponding to the diegesis and mental images and/or sounds corresponding to the character's subjectivity. The blurring of the boundary and status of subjective images/sounds takes place similarly to, and through, the dissolution of chronology, and the endpoint is, again, the narrative that can be interpreted clearly as mental image/sound.

As concerns form, time/chronology and the subjectivity of the world of images/sounds can be closely related; one may result from the other and vice versa (as in the case of the aforementioned *Last Year at Marienbad*), besides, there can be found solutions creating the two kinds of subjectivity with the same form device. Such is, for instance, the associative quick montage imitating the unlimited flow of consciousness, frequently used in Hungarian film.

Modern Hungarian film creates subjectivity mainly through the dissolution of chronology; the same form principle manifests in the shaping of visual/auditive subjectivity. Within the Kádár era, that is, in the premodern (1957–1962) and modern (1963–1969) periods of Hungarian film history, then in the seventies (1970–1979) and eighties (1980–1989), less pronounced in terms of form, thirty-five non-chronological films can be found: 1. György Révész: *At Midnight (Éjfélkor)*, 1957); 2. Imre Fehér: *Truth Cannot Be Hidden (Húsz évre egymástól)*, 1962); 3. János Herskó: *Dialogue (Párbeszéd)*, 1963); 4. Zoltán Fábri: *Darkness in Daytime (Nappali sötétség)*, 1963); 5. Márton Keleti: *Evidence (Ha egyszer húsz év múlva)*, 1964); 6. Frigyes Mamcserov: *The Doctor's Death (Az orvos halála)*, 1965); 7. Márk Novák: *The Martyrdom of St. John (Szentjános fejevétele)*, 1965); 8. Zoltán Fábri: *Twenty Hours (Húsz óra)*, 1965); 9. András Kovács: *Cold Days (Hideg napok)*, 1966); 10. István Szabó: *Father (Apa)*, 1966); 11. Zoltán Fábri: *Late Season (Utószезon)*, 1966); 12. Pál Zolnay: *The Sack (...hogyan szaladnak a fák!)*, 1966); 13. István Gaál: *Baptism (Keresztelő)*, 1967); 14. Pál Zolnay: *You Were a Prophet, My Dear (Próféta voltál szívem)*, 1968); 15. Viktor Gertler: *The Last Circle (Az utolsó kör)*, 1968); 16. Zoltán Várkonyi: *Face to Face (Szentől szembe)*, 1970); 17. Károly Makk: *Love (Szerelmem)*, 1970); 18. István Szabó: *Love Film (Szerelmesfilm)*, 1970); 19. György Révész: *A Journey Around My Skull (Utazás a koponyám körül)*, 1970); 20. Zoltán Huszárik: *Sindbad (Szindbád)*, 1971); 21. György Révész: *There Was Once a Family (Volt egyszer egy család)*, 1972); 22. István Szabó: *25, Fireman's Street (Tűzoltó utca 25.)*, 1973); 23. Károly Makk: *Cats Play (Macskajáték)*, 1974); 24. Zoltán Fábri: *The Unfinished Sentence (141 perc a Befejezetlen mondatból)*, 1974); 25. János Rózsa: *Dreaming Youth (Álmodó ifjúság)*, 1974); 26. Ferenc Grunwalsky: *Requiem for a Revolutionary (Vörös rekviem)*, 1975); 27. Imre

Gyöngyössi: *Expectations (Várakozók, 1975)*; 28. Zoltán Fábri: *The Fifth Seal (Az ötödik pecsét, 1976)*; 29. Rezső Szörényi: *Reflections (Tükörképek, 1976)*; 30. György Révész: *Who Has Ever Seen Me? (Ki látott engem?, 1977)*; 31. Pál Zolnay: *Shaman (Sámán, 1977)*; 32. Péter Szász: *The Great Love of Your Life and How to Forget It (Hogyan felejtsük el életünk legnagyobb szerelmét?, 1979)*; 33. József Magyar: *Thorny Past (Korkedvezmény, 1979)*; 34. Zoltán Fábri: *Requiem (Requiem, 1981)*; 35. Márta Mészáros: *Diary for My Children (Napló gyermekeimnek, 1982)*. Before examining the films thematically, it is worth surveying the film-historical significance of this form principle from various perspectives.

2.

First let us consider the creators of the thirty-five films. The thirty-five films are signed by twenty-two film directors; only five of them made more than one non-chronological film: Károly Makk made two, István Szabó and Pál Zolnay made three each, György Révész made four and Zoltán Fábri made six. It follows from this that the non-chronological form is not appropriated by one auteur or another, and although this procedure is closer to some film directors than others, a wide range of film directors are involved in it. Secondly, the generational division of the film directors is significant. Most of these films were made by the generation starting their career in the fifties; those starting their career in the sixties made fewer and fewer. The downward trend is not dramatic; besides, the more profound involvement of those starting their career in the fifties is also explained by the fact that this is the period when the non-chronological form is spread in European film art. Finally, if we consider the temporal distribution of the films, we also meet approximate uniformity, except for the beginning and end of the period, which requires explanation. At the beginning of the period, in 1957, there is one single film which, albeit corresponding to the non-chronological form, is still closer to the classical conventions, and as such, occupies a typically connective position. Following this, after a few years' interruption, it is only the New Wave that starts to apply the dissolution of chronology, with a special intensity at the zenith of the sixties and at the age boundary of the sixties and seventies. By the eighties this modernist form withers away; similar films born at the end of the decade and in the following period already belong to the era following the regime change, thus they testify to the survival of this form in changed political and poetical circumstances.

Thus, the non-chronological form can be regarded as a representative modernist procedure in the film art of the Kádár era. The ensuing question is what this form actually represents: as concerns Hungarian film, to what extent does the non-chronological form develop in a particular way under the influence of European modernism?

3.

As we could see, the non-chronological form expresses the basic principle of modern film related to subjectivity. Contrary to this, Hungarian film associates subjectivity, and in connection with it, recall and memories themselves, created through the non-chronological form, with community rather than with the individual subject. In the vast majority of the non-chronological Hungarian films the subject matter of recall is aimed at collective rather than subjective memory. All this is proven by the thematic survey of the films belonging to this group. Accordingly, from among the thirty-five films, recall is directed at the private past only in eight cases; in the rest of the films the subject of recall is twentieth-century Hungarian history. Also in the case of the eight films, the social motivation can be excluded only from one single film, Zoltán Huszárik's *Sindbad*: the film examines the abstract meaning of time in the sensory, corporeal medium of subjectivity. The treatment of chronology of the other seven films is related to the present time, that is, to a few weeks, days or hours past, rather than to historical time; besides, the motivation of the storyline is profoundly shaped by direct social, political or ideological factors.

In the case of the other twenty-seven films it is worth further specifying the evoked historical periods. Accordingly, the majority of non-chronological films process the period spanning from World War II to the contemporary present. This is followed, in equal distribution, by films evoking the fifties and 1956, as well as World War II, the 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic, and the thirties.

What conclusions can be drawn from this? Firstly, that in Hungarian film the modernist non-chronological form aimed at expressing subjectivity represents collective rather than subjective memory (Murai 2008, 19). This confirms the social orientation of the film art in the Kádár era, according to which even such a basically subjective form as non-chronological narration can be interpreted mostly in correlation with the social purport. The thematic distribution of collective memories evoked by the films draws attention to the fact that they are predominantly directed at live, personally experienced communicative memory going back to forty-fifty years (Assmann 1992, 20; Murai 2008, 38), and a smaller part of them evokes cultural memory looking back at a more distant past (Assmann 1992, 21). However, the proximity of the particular eras and especially the thematization of the process of recall itself lead to the overlapping of the two kinds of memory.

In close connection with the above remark, a further question can be raised. If we talk about the subjective form of recall, but it is directed at collective memory, what can be the motivation of the story with such a form and subject matter? Motivation as the result of subjective recall and collective memory can be identified in the creation of social identity. In the evoked historical periods

the aim of communicative memory is current political, whereas the purpose of cultural memory is to create a longer-term historical identity. Nevertheless, similarly to communicative and collective memory, the two kinds of identity, the proximity of the evoked periods and the thematization of the process of recall may overlap. More specifically, historical identity may turn into political identity, which also expresses the close connection and interdependent character of the two. Finally, in connection with this form, it is worth drawing attention to those further circumstances which can only be revealed through the ever closer reading of the particular films.

4.

The Kádár era as Soviet type one-party dictatorship, dominates the discourse of power with administrative tools (Foucault 1971). At the same time, the swiftly consolidating Kádár regime does this with sophisticated means, in which culture, especially film in the sixties, fulfils an important role. A determining feature of the discourse of power in the Kádár era is the politics of memory and amnesia (György 2010). Which historical event can be recalled and which cannot? How should particular historical events be recalled? The aim of all this is to create the historical and political identity complying with the discourse of power. The question is to what extent the collective memory of non-chronological films complies with the discourse of power of the Kádár era and to what extent it can be regarded as the counter-discourse of the regime.

In connection with the concept of memory, the political development linked to the consolidation of the Kádár regime, emerging in parallel with the New Wave of the sixties, has to be highlighted. The condition of consolidation is the compromise with society and the leading intellectuals. The compromise with society is carried out mainly on an economic level; with the intellectuals it is effected on an ideological one. The economic conciliation led to the new economic mechanism of the sixties; the ideological one resulted in a more liberal cultural policy hallmarked by György Aczél's name. The false and propagandistic discourse of power of the fifties and following 1956 has no longer place in this cultural policy, while the freedom of political expression has no place either. The consolidating Kádár regime – in which thus one no longer has to lie but cannot yet tell the truth – tries to dissolve the controversial relationship with the past by the social imperative of *amnesia*. If it is not possible to remember as it complies with our discourse, but we cannot permit remembering as it is desired by the society, especially by the leading intellectual elite and the artist intellectuals with a traditionally prestigious role, among them the film directors just getting into the focus of attention, then, we would rather not remember, the power says.

It is 1956 (also due to Kádár's personal involvement), the ensuing retaliations, the Imre Nagy trial, the fifties and, strangely, the Holocaust, that get into the centre of the amnesia politics of the consolidating Kádár regime. The non-chronological films, however, through their determining form principle, thematize the process of remembering itself, and thus, irrespective of their subject matter, concept of history and ideology, they can be interpreted as the counter-discourse of the Kádarian amnesia politics. In this respect the non-chronological form will play an especially significant role, while it subjectivizes the image created about the past, withdrawing it through this gesture from under the authority of the discourse of power; besides, this form thematizes memory itself, contrary to the amnesia politics of the era.

If we examine again the range of themes of non-chronological films based on the evoked historical periods, we obtain additional data confirming the argument that these films actually form the position against the Kádarian discourse of power. The majority of films are centred on the period of communicative memory spanning from World War II to the contemporary present; the period of the fifties also forms part of the thus constituted historical-social continuity as the predecessor of the current regime. The Kádár era, however, tried to dissociate itself from the Rákosi years; it is not accidental that the films about the fifties could proliferate when the era could be represented as a completed event, as a "costume film" (Kovács 2002, 287). In the non-chronological form, the thematization of memory contradicts this very discourse of power.

We meet a similar counter-discourse in the films evoking the Holocaust, which constitute the second largest group regarding the subject matter. In half of the films the voice of conscience is rendered, which the subjectivity of the non-chronological form is especially suitable for, and which also alludes to an unresolved conflict at the level of society, deemed to oblivion by the discourse of power.

5.

If we analyse the ideological purport of non-chronological films closely, film by film, then we will surely get a nuanced image; still, it will not alter significantly, it will rather be confirmed. The memories themselves, the interpretation of the historical past could even support the Kádarian consolidation, as in *Twenty Hours*, the best-known and most debated film in this respect. (Besides the Social and Professional Main Prize as well as the Film Critics' Grand Prize of the 1965 Hungarian Feature Film Week, it wins the Grand Prize and the FIPRESCI Prize of the Moscow International Film Festival.) Nonetheless, such a judgement of *Twenty Hours* must also be complex like the film itself: it represents the political

events between 1945 and 1965 from several perspectives (the non-chronological form provides an ideologically progressive view), it juxtaposes several political opinions, finally, no doubt, it highlights the truth of the character embodying the ideology of the Kádarian consolidation from among several private truths, as the result of lessons learnt from the past, setting it as an example to follow for the present, for the spectator.

Fábri's commitment to the non-chronological mode of narration is marked by the fact that *Twenty Hours* is the central piece of a "trilogy" in the sense of form: it constitutes a transition from the traditional flashback structure of *Darkness in Daytime* to the image and montage solutions of *Late Season* representing the time shifts and slips in a non-conventional way. In the case of *Twenty Hours*, the dissolution of chronology is most closely connected to the ideological purport: this is why the film (together with András Kovács's *Cold Days*) becomes the characteristic piece of the modernism of the 1960s.

The non-chronological form is supplemented with an element present in both *Twenty Hours* and *Cold Days*, namely the multiplication of the narrative point of view. Thus the narrative structure presenting the multiple time planes from several viewpoints violates the cinematic convention in two respects, in terms of both linearity and focalization. By the sixties each solution in turn had already had a considerable universal film historical tradition and we can come across a few exceptional examples of their joint application in classical (Orson Welles: *Citizen Kane*, 1941) and in modern film (Kurosawa Akira: *Rashomon*, 1950); in modernism this becomes the standard procedure (and in the age of the postmodern film it almost becomes conventional). In any case, in Hungarian film history the joint dissolution and juxtaposition of time planes and characters' consciousnesses/viewpoints is a new phenomenon, what is more, it has literary models: *Twenty Hours* is the adaptation of Ferenc Sánta's novel, and *Cold Days* is the adaptation of Tibor Cseres's novel, both written in those times. While relying on the narrative mode of the literary works, the two films also develop further the literary procedures. Arising from the specificities of the medium (montage; the realism of the filmic image), the alternation and superimposition of time planes and viewpoints even increases the fundamental poetical *and* political aim of the literary works, namely the suggestion of the complexity and relativity of historical truth, as opposed to the reductive and false image of history of the previous period. At the same time, it is worth highlighting that the writers – as emphasized by both of their contemporary monographers (Vasy 1975, 142; Zappe 1975, 91) – also draw on film art when elaborating their literary procedures.

Although in the film versions the narrative representation of this concept cannot be fully identified with the tendency towards abstraction characteristic of modernism, Fábri's and Kovács's films challenge the ideological boundaries of the Kádarian consolidation. Contrary to the dissolution of chronology and

multiplication of viewpoints characteristic of modernist film, which formulates the scepticism towards the possibility of knowing the world, evidently, the adaptations of *Twenty Hours* and *Cold Days* do not reach as far as such abstract epistemological/philosophical questions (this will take place in two further pairs of literary works and their adaptations, both being paradigm changing works also from the viewpoint of dissolution of chronology: in Károly Makk's *Love* and especially in Zoltán Huszár's *Sindbad*; what is more, in the former one not irrespective of the political purport either). Fábri's and Kovács's modernist form is destined to strengthen the spirit of the reformist politics of the sixties through the cathartic formulation of historical and political identity. However, beyond this, *Twenty Hours* also allows a reading conforming to the Kádarian consolidation politics, thus from the perspective of the *politics* of memory this film is more representative (although poetically *Cold Days* is a radical work at least to the same extent), this is why in the following I will deal with the detailed analysis of Fábri's film.

How does *Twenty Hours* create the historical and political identity of the Second World War and the contemporary present, and how does this relate to the official memory politics of the consolidating Kádár regime? As concerns the interpretation of *Twenty Hours* from the perspective of consolidation politics, it is worth evoking Sándor Radnóti's appreciation of the novelist, which mentions the literary-political circumstances of the interpretive discourse around the novel's release.

The power that defeated the 1956 revolution, and especially the consolidation, were in desperate need of a valuable work of art, rather than a propaganda work, which justified the happenings in an authentic way; after several attempts Sánta's *Twenty Hours* seemed suitable for this demand. This is why celebrating reviews were published, in an unusual way, already after its publication in a journal, and in the following year Zoltán Fábri had the possibility of directing a film based on the novel. The followers of consolidation, and also those few who defined themselves through their loyalty to the revolution, admitted that Elnök Jóska's figure is a Kádár apology – in a complex manner and with an artistic force. (2010a, 48–49)

Based on the schematic presentation of the novel's history, the author does not call into question the possibility of this ideological interpretation. According to him, “[moralization] does not get dissolved in the novel's deeper layers; the truths of the two protagonists emerge from among the gallery of the richly concretized secondary characters with an equal power and in an undefinable way” (Radnóti 2010a, 49). As a consequence, “Sánta's true imagination as a novelist endowed each character with *their own* truths” (Radnóti 2010a, 50; emphasis in the original).

In another study, surveying the films on 1956, Radnóti nuances the interpretation of Fábri's adaptation from the point of view of consolidation, commonly known and not the least unfounded, in a similar way:

Ingenuously compressing Ferenc Sánta's novel, the script written by Yvette Bíró and Miklós Köllő related a story in which almost everybody had their relative truths. [...] This large-scale dramaturgy of relative truths makes possible that the truth of Elnök Jóska's career, obviously destined to be more or less absolute, also becomes relativized, which leads to what used to be called (in the wake of Friedrich Engels) the triumph of realism. (2010b, 305–306)

Besides the role of the “large-scale dramaturgy of relative truths,” it is worth mentioning the “large-scale modernism” of the dissolution of chronology and simultaneous viewpoints in order to emphasize the relevance of Fábri's adaptation from the perspective of the history of form, through which it even surpasses the novel's poetical solutions. To all this, Fábri's monographer adds the following comment: “[As] compared to the novel, the film's temporal and spatial structure became even more modern: the spectator had to activate greater energies in order to reconstruct the story” (Marx 2004, 140).

Due to the medium specific features, namely montage and the realism of the filmic image, in *Twenty Hours* the dissolution of chronology and the multiplication of viewpoints confront the receiver, even more powerfully than the conceptual way of expression, with the relative nature of reality/truth. The alternation of time planes through quick montage makes the chronological and causal arrangement of events impossible and leaves open several alternative solutions before the right order and causality in the flow of the story is slowly arranged in the spectator's consciousness. The repetition of certain plot elements has a similar consequence, especially if they are repeated from a somewhat altered viewpoint. It is not the event itself that is thus questioned; through the juxtaposition of several alternative presentations it is the viewpoint/interpretation of the event that is relativized. This draws attention to the various interpretive possibilities of reality and truth, through the coequal and effective representation of diverse verisimilitudes, made possible by the realism of the filmic image.

For instance, the quick montage of the opening sequences introduces all the time planes and characters of the story; however, the lack of narrative connection among the time planes and characters makes impossible (for the time being) their placement within the story. The repeated representation of the gun scene, constituting the dramaturgical peak, from several points of view, has a similar effect. Several other recurrent form solutions contribute to making the spatial-temporal boundaries, their order as well as the viewpoint ambiguous; such is the jump cut, or as its opposite, the insert of the same spatial element from the

same point of view, on different time planes; the asynchrony of image and sound representing distinct time planes; the freeze frame of flashbacks expressing the heightened state of mind of the one who remembers.

Fábri's procedure of dissolving chronology simultaneously formulates, through juxtaposition and as a flow, the historical *and* political identity of the sixties, the expression of which is carried out by resorting to the modernist non-chronological mode of narration. At the same time, in the light of the era's politics, the interpretation of historical and political identity shows a different image. As concerns historical identity, the deep disillusionment, following the joy of the 1945 redistribution of land, in the dogmatic politics of the fifties, which leads to the 1956 revolution, is subversively revealed. But as concerns political identity, from among the juxtaposed and thus subversively relativized truths of the characters of different backgrounds and mentalities, there emerges one single truth, the one which can be identified with the statement of the Kádarian consolidation. This emphasis is carried out not through the non-chronological mode of narration, but simply with the help of the character, Elnök Jóska's figure. Thus, the film's subversive meaning in a political sense clearly arises from the non-chronological mode of narration – or vice versa: the non-chronological mode of narration formulates a subversive political meaning, similarly to films relying on a similar form principle.

6.

In conclusion, I briefly refer to the survival of the non-chronological form in the period after the regime change. The first films of this kind, born in the period of the regime change, still continue the tradition of the “oppositional” character of the non-chronological films and evoke in this manner the events of the 1956 revolution and the ensuing retaliations, which were considered as taboos before (János Zsombolyai: *On Death Row* [*A halálraítélt*, 1989], Károly Makk: *Hungarian Requiem* [*Magyar rekviem*, 1990], András Sólyom: *Hungarian Fragment* [*Pannon töredék*, 1997]). From the turn of millennium on, these films get detached from the earlier political taboos and start speaking repeatedly about communicative and collective memory as well as historical and political identity with the help of the non-chronological form (Szabolcs Hajdu: *White Palms* [*Fehér tenyér*, 2005], Szabolcs Hajdu: *Bibliothèque Pascal* [*Bibliothèque Pascal*, 2010], Ibolya Fekete: *My Mum and Other Nuts from the Family* [*Anyám és más futóbolondok a családból*, 2015]). The fact that in spite of the fundamentally changed social, political, ideological, economic and institutional conditions, this form has survived and is still present in the Hungarian film art proves the significance of this form historical tradition – and it tells a lot about the forms of recall and memory politics of contemporary Hungarian film as well. This may constitute the subject matter of another paper.

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Book Review



**Vilma-Irén Mihály, Levente Pap, Judit Pieldner,
Zsuzsa Tapodi, eds.**
***Homo viator. Studies on Literature, Linguistics
and Culture.***

*Bucharest, Sfântu Gheorghe, Cluj-Napoca: RHT,
Transylvanian Museum Society, 2015.*

Review by

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In order to reach an external position, that of the spectator, travel is required: it enables us to withdraw, thus providing us with an opportunity to step out of apathy and the circumstances we are bored with. Travel is a particular way of solution ensuring us to be in control of situations determined by curiosity, desires and possibilities. The volume of the 2015 international conference *Homo viator*, organized by the Department of Humanities, Sapientia University, Miercurea Ciuc, Romania, the Society of Hungarology from Romania and the Romanian Association of General and Comparative Literature, comprises the written versions of Hungarian-language presentations held on the occasion of the multidisciplinary conference. The presentations, eighty altogether, were held in Hungarian, Romanian, and English. The editors have selected two plenary presentations and twenty-eight studies into the volume, grouping the latter ones into five chapters.

The volume begins with the studies written by the keynote speakers. On the basis of various works from Hungarian and world literature, István Fried examines the experience of travel defined by literary periods and the travellers' personalities. Based on several English, German, and Russian works quoted as examples, he also explains the peculiar imagological motifs reflected in Sándor Petőfi's and János Arany's poems. Through his analysis of a Prešeren-sonnet in the appendix, Fried reveals that the poetic travel/traveller might fail to achieve its goal. In her paper Mihaela Albu gives us some insight into getting to know ourselves and the world beyond by means of travel, elucidating all the knowledge required for

seeing life and gaining maturity as present in the context of folk tales. The first part of the study consisting of three parts is centred on the disillusioned Homoviator, fleeing from reality; the second, on the experience of the well-travelled man; and finally, the third, on the travelogue of those Romanian intellectuals who have been forced into exile by the regime.

In the chapter entitled “Towards a Community of Experience” Emese Egyed writes about the eighteenth century Hungarian poetic (travel) letters especially written by noble ladies, reflecting, among others, the contemporary life of the Transylvanian nobility. It was the organizers’ explicit intention to commemorate the 220th anniversary of Sándor Bölöni Farkas’s birth on the occasion of the conference; Beáta Sikó’s and Judit Erdély’s detailed and illustrious works are directly relevant in this respect. Beáta Sikó closely scrutinizes the traces of Lafayette’s cult and the impact of Levasseur’s travelogue in Sándor Bölöni Farkas’s work. She also draws attention to the way in which the account on Lafayette’s farewell tour influenced the conception and themes of *Journey in North America*. Judit Erdély’s work aims to analyse Sándor Bölöni Farkas’s work in terms of language, stylistics and genre, and to introduce us into its linguistic context. Adél Csata, examining the image of nation in Ferenc Verseghy’s *Almarék erdélyi herceg, avagy a szebeni erdő* [*Almerich, Prince of Transylvania*], points out that the translator integrates the images of the Romanians created in various eras, therefore Verseghy’s novel translation depicts a landscape of stereotypical images. The configuration of the travel motifs in the poetic novels is analysed by Lenke Kocsis, who comes to the conclusion that there are no strictly genre-specific peculiarities in the topic. Orsolya-Petra Pavelka proposes to examine Miklós Jósika’s literary career in terms of history of mentality and society, thus applying two non-fictional corpora of text as the cornerstones of her research. Edit Bakó assumes the task of studying the issues of nationality and national minority; she discloses these by means of presenting Gergely Moldován’s first volume.

The works belonging to the second chapter of the volume, entitled “Gaining Experience, Passing Memories,” are related to intercultural experience and the dilemmas of cultural mediation. Regarding the chivalric or noble study trips that became common amongst the noblemen in Transylvania in the seventeenth century, Emese Rácz describes József Teleki and Ádám Teleki’s study trip for gaining experience abroad. On the basis of a fragmentary manuscript, Tímea Berki examines how Sámuel Brassai used to travel, verifying the role of music in his life. Szilárd Szilágyi leads the reader into Ignác Kúnos’s research expedition to Asia Minor in 1890. Kúnos is considered to be the discoverer of Turkish folk-poetry; in his paper, Szilágyi attempts to resolve the contradictions being so frequent between Kúnos’s papers and letters. Ferenc Németh is present in the volume with a study on pleasure trips brought about by bourgeois voege. He writes about a story of four friends’ Easter pleasure trip, which was so successful

that the participants founded the society of pleasure travellers. A travel cannot dispense with a good guide-book, the generic definition and function of which are explained by András Lukács; based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, he gives a new definition for the guide-book.

Examining the images of otherness, the relation of the self and the foreign were also issues debated in the conference. We can read the relevant studies in the chapter "Familiarity and Alienation in Space and Time." Comparing Mór Jókai's *Az arany ember* [*The Man with the Golden Touch*] and Péter Esterházy's *Hahn-Hahn grófnő pillantása* [*The Glance of Countess Hahn-Hahn*], Diána Sóki aims to explore the novelistic roles, functions, and meanings of the Danube; Sóki examines the river as a text and a deposit of texts. Examining Miklós Mészöly's *Pontos történetek, útközben* [*Exact Stories, On the Way*], Lili Balogh discloses the general feeling of an age. In her work, the effect of the text on the reader is illustrated through the examination of narration. The spatial and temporal motifs of setting off, a frequent theme in Transylvanian lyrical poetry, are characterized with metaphors of László Király's pre-1990 poetry by Szilárd László Szilveszter. He examines the ways in which the various motifs of familiarity and foreignness appear due to the lack of freedom to travel, and how these motifs get related to metaphors and allegories of the road, roving life and pilgrimage in László Király's poetry. Flóra Kovács, analysing Zsófia Balla's poem *Vonatok* [*Trains*], points out that the fields of travel, time, and metrical poetry are interrelated, and that the poetess makes the trip with an attachment to literary traditions. Space is the major trope of János Térey's oeuvre so far, states Ágnes Balajthy, who ascertains by means of the examination of strategies of spatial poetry in the author's work that the representation of space is closely related to that of the various kinds of travel experience in the texts. Analysing Terézia Mora's prose poetics, Éva Toldi comes to the conclusion that continuous movement, the layered and accumulating dynamism of space and the self-stratification of liveliness take place because the only thing happening in the novel is ceaseless change of place. While analysing Gergely Péterfy's novel *Kitömött barbár* [*Stuffed Barbarian*], Zsuzsa Tapodi states that it is travel that provides the plot of the novel with a frame and structuring principle. The journeys mainly have initiating, awakening, and self-reflexive functions in Richard Flanagan's novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. In her reflections, Júlia Vallasek elucidates that the protagonists of the novel remain irrevocably in the state of travelling, against their wishes and due to what they have undergone, for they build a narrow path leading not to the geographical north, but to the inscrutable "northern realms" of human nature. Focusing on the cyborg phenomenon from a new aspect, Eszter Vidosa examines the travel commencing when someone goes beyond the boundaries of body and identity.

The chapter "Travelling between Cultures" includes studies on intercultural interaction, all of which are linked to Vojvodina. In her study Erika Bence

explains the phenomenon of travelogues in the latest Hungarian literature from Vojvodina. Analysing the intercultural “time-space” of contemporary Hungarian short stories from Vojvodina, Gábor Crnkovity points out that travel takes place along two axes, horizontal and vertical, and the two-dimensional, mutually free access between them is provided by the history and context of short stories. Gabriella Lódi examines the tropes of road and journey in some contemporary short stories from Vojvodina, presenting the anecdotes and motifs of nostalgic travel, and she comes to the conclusion that the road does not leave the framework defined by the text, and finally, it returns to its starting point. Csapó Julianna Ispánovics analyses the role of bibliography in Vojvodinian Hungarian science and culture; she states that Vojvodinan bibliography – accomodating itself to the circumstances of minority position – has survived, and stands up in terms of both quantity and quality.

The final chapter of the volume of studies, entitled “Interaction between Cultures and Languages,” contains linguistic studies. Based on the accepted view claiming that no literary interpretation may take place without taking the linguistic rendering of a work into consideration, Réka Pupp seeks the linguistic forms expressing the trope of travel in the literary text in question, *Szindbád hazatér* [*Sindbad Returns Home*] by Sándor Márai. Interpreters become real travellers among cultures, languages and customs, so they always need to be vigilant – this is Krisztina-Mária Sárosi-Márdirosz’s conclusion. In her study she points out that interpretation does not deal with creating the equivalence of micro-contexts, but is aimed at establishing a much more complex equivalence, which, in an ideal case, will meet the expectations of the target-language audience. Analysing the types and roles of code-switching in the use of language among the Hungarian minority from Vojvodina, Ilona Rajsli draws the following conclusion: code-switching may fill a long-felt gap, but may also express prestige, an attitude to language; it may have a style or register changing character; it may also express the speaker’s solidarity with his or her group.

The thoroughness, richness in detail and high standard of the papers in the extensive, 419-page volume demonstrate the presenters’ interest and mastery in the issue of *Homo viator*, which was the title of the conference and also of the volume of studies. In this way, the presentations facilitate a more profound understanding and exploration of this set of issues. The various natures of the roads are reflected through the multi-faceted features of the discussed and interpreted works, demonstrating that both external and internal journeys lead us to a new place, a distinct level of cognition.

Translated by Béla Lukács

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