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MIKLÓS RADNÓTI AND THE BIBLE

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U.K.

The young Radnóti enters the field of Hungarian poetry with a rebellious stylization: the title of his first collection of verse in 1930 is *Pogány köszöntő* [A Pagan Salute]. Yet "paganism," fashionable in the 1920s, is merely a mask or posture, just as the quasi-religious terminology of Radnóti's first published poems has precious little in common with real religious faith. One of these early verse cycles is entitled *"Az áhítat zsoltàraF* [The Psalms of Devotion] and in this one just as in the next one *"Sirálysikoly"* [Seagull Scream] Radnóti employs Christian terminology for pure poetic effect. For example, in the poem *"Sirálysikoly"* he talks of "the millions / in whose stead I dream my dream / and am resurrected Christlike / and blood-dye-red evil dawns / to sin and desire."[1] In another, socially challenging and rebellious poem *"Szegénység és gyűlölet verse"* [The Verse of Poverty and Hate] the young Socialist poet uses an elaborate and rather bad metaphor where he compares the black shadow under his own eyes to "a Golgotha" where "upon sweat-crucifixes... the coal-dust covered Christs of the nights were crucified in blue" ("Verejtékkeresztektől görnyedő ráncokkal terhes Golgotha volt a szememalja, ahol az éjek szénporos Krisztusai feszültek kéken.").[2] In yet another poer. from the same period *"És szólt és beszélt vala Káin Ábellel"* [Cain Said to Abel his Brother] an exact biblical quotation appears for the first time; it refers to Cain's words to his brother Abel, before he commits fratricide. Emeiy George in his 1986 book finds in this work support for the hypothesis that Radnóti read the Book of Genesis as a child.[3] This may be so, but the way in which the young poet uses the Cain myth is, to say the least, curious. He takes upon himself Cain's role inasmuch as he interprets the circumstances of his own birth as "murder" or something close to murder, "murderously heavy I broke loose, / like a first leaf from the curse-groaning, bitter tree" ("... gyilkos nehezen szakadtam le mint első levél az átkotnyögő keserű fáról.").[4] Radnóti

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also identifies with Cain's rebelliousness, he also seems to suffer from the burden of the "original sin". The poem's other allusions are far too cryptic to tell whether it also represents a challenge to his uncle (who was also his guardian) or it is mere play-acting in a biblical guise.

In Radnóti's next collection *Újmódi pásztorok éneke* [Song of Modern Shepherds] the religious and biblical mannerisms continue. References are made to various biblical figures in a variety of contexts. For example, in the poem *"Olasz Festő"* [Italian Painter]: "Yesterday he painted a Mary, a girl with / lovely eyes, and he sang. Now it's Christ / he sketches, under Judas's kiss" [Tegnap Máriát festett, szépszemű / lányt és énekelt. Most Krisztust / vázolja Júdás csókja alatt...][5] or one could point to *"Két szentkép"* [Two Icons] where the Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist are portrayed more or less as in religious paintings. Yet the main tendency of Radnóti's "biblical" poems of this period is a democratization or profanation of holy figures. Béla Pomogáts in his book on Radnóti points out that "the profanation of religious images was frequent in art at the turn of the century."[6] He also quotes what the young Radnóti wrote in his dissertation on Margit Kaffka relating to her poem *"Szüzanyánál"* [With the Holy Virgin] which in Radnóti's words is "frivolous and respectful at the same time."[7] Radnóti in his pre-university years and later at Szeged rebels against the sacralized rigidity characteristic of the representation of Christian saints and of Christ himself; he also tries to harness Christian mythology into the service of Socialist thought. (This combination of a kind of biblical Christianity and pacifist Socialism can be detected in the work of Henri Barbusse whose *Jésus* (1927) was not only read by the young Radnóti, but also quoted in the motto of his first book of poetry.) But the one short poem that caused trouble for the emotionally still unsettled student of Szeged University was his *"Arckép"* [Portrait]. Let us quote it in full in Emery George's version:

I am Iwenly-two years old. This is how Christ must have looked in the fall at that age; as yet he had no beard; he was blond, and girls dreamed about him at night![8]	Huszonkét éves vagyok. így nézhetett ki ősszel Krisztus is ennyi idősen; még nem volt szakálla, szőke volt és lányok álmodtak véle éjjelenként!

Reading this poem now it is hard to understand why Radnóti was accused of "defaming religion." In this poem the speaker does not identify himself with Christ, he only says: "this is how Jesus must have looked at my age" which is, after all, as good a piece of fantasy as any, especially if one accepts the Unitarian view according to which Jesus was not of "divine essence" at birth, but became Prophet and Redeemer when he reached maturity. Also, knowing of Mary Magdelene's later devotion to Jesus, it does not sound to me

defamatory that girls might dream of the "young, unbearded" Jesus who still had not started his teaching in Galilee.

Lábadozó szél [Convalescent Wind, 1933], Radnóti's third book of verse, was his ideologically most committed collection, the poet repeatedly referring to "the proletariat" and to himself as "the poet of the poor" - a role he wrongly assumed for a short period of time. There are no biblical references at all in this collection. They reappear in the next book *Újhold* [New Moon] published in 1935. Not all are direct; sometimes it is the tone of the poem that is evangelical, not its semantic entity. Marianna D. Birnbaum in her work on Radnóti claims that "invastigating Radnóti's poetry from the standpoint of religious utterances, the evidence found is very meagre indeed."[9] I rather disagree with this statement, but much depends on our interpretation of the term "religious utterance." Does it have to reflect the canon of an established religion or just a particular belief such as, say, the survival of the spirit? Also, admittedly, there is a qualitative difference between the religious imagery of the young Radnóti and the mature poet, and I may not be the only critic who defines the publication of *Újhold* as a turning point in Miklós Radnóti's poetry. It was around 1934-35 that the young rebel and agnostic Socialist (partly under the influence of the Catholic priest and poet, Sándor Sík, his teacher at Szeged University) began to appreciate and embrace Catholicism and, in all probability, to read the Bible regularly. The Old and New Testaments at first impressed him as literature, as poetry, but later became a source of faith and love, a source of hope in the survival of the spirit. While of the Christian religions Radnóti felt closest to Catholicism, the Bible he read regularly and cherished was the Protestant (Gáspár Károlyi) version of 1590, not one of the later Catholic versions.

This fact we know from a short article written by Radnóti in 1937 at the request of Béla Kőhalmi who edited an anthology *Könyvek Könyve* [Book of Books] which collected writers' utterances about their favourite reading matter. Here Radnóti first identifies himself with Hungarian cultural tradition ("I accept as my own the entire tradition of Hungarian literature...") and becomes more specific further on when he says: "Lately my permanent or rather recurring reading matter has been Károlyi's Old and New Testaments, Csokonai, János Arany, Kazinczy and Babits's *Amor Sanctus.*"[10] In other words, the Bible entered Radnóti's life some years before the outbreak of the Second World War, but probably at the time when his new awareness of death had already begun to take shape.

I think the year of change was 1934, although even earlier an indirect allusion to religious faith is made in *"Tört elégia"* [Broken Elegy] a poem dedicated to Sándor Sík. It is a lament for the hanging of two unnamed men,

probably Fürst and Sallai, two Communist organizers who had fallen victim to the summary courts system instituted in the summer of 1931 in response to an outrageous act of (non-Communist inspired) terrorism. This poem ends with a reference to the poet's beloved, who "sometimes, when she thinks / I don't notice, secretly believes in a God / and prays to Him for me" [De néha azért ő, ha azt hiszi / nem veszem észre, titkon hisz egy istent / és ahhoz imádkozik értem].[11] The point here is not only that the poet's beloved prays, but that he notices her praying and does not seem to object to it. Also during 1934, Radnóti more than once contrasts the peace he finds in love and the menace of a hostile world, which will eventually destroy him, will kill him "with its long knives." And only a year or maybe a year and a few months later in the poem *"Háborús napló"* [War Diary], which is mainly a reflection on the ongoing colonial wars in Africa and Asia, the following near-prophetic statement is made: "What may I speak of? / Winter and war are coming, / I'll lie broken, no one will notice; / worm-filled earth will fill my mouth and eyes / and my body will be shot through by roots."[12]

While the survival of the spirit seems to be a problem often considered and confirmed by the poet in these years (see Part 2, Tuesday Evening in "War Diary"), from 1936 onwards one can detect some New Testament imagery in Radnóti's poems. It does not appear dramatically, but in the context of the poet's contemplation of his destiny; for example in the title-poem of *"Járkálj csak, halálraítélt!"* [Keep Walking, You, the Death-Condemned!] Here Radnóti bids himself to live a blameless life in times of great tribulation:

> O Poet, now live a pure life -
> As dwellers on the snowcapped, tall
> Mountains the wind sweeps; innocent
> As the Christ child - made flesh in paint
> On pious old pictures - frail and small.

The last two lines (in Hungarian: "mint jámbor, régi képeken / pöttömnyi gyermek Jézusok")[13] are then contrasted with an admonition in the opposite emotional direction:

> And be tough as the big wolves who bleed
> From many wounds, yet live indeed.
> [S oly keményen is, mint a sok / sebtől vérző, nagy farkasok][14]

The "painted baby Jesus" imagery is linked in the poet's mind with the nativity scene, which appeals to Radnóti in its unpretentious simplicity. This is reflected in the short and in some ways "naive" poeni *"Lapszéli jegyzet*

Lukácshoz" [Marginal Note to Luke], which was written in 1937. Radnóti's fascination with this particular scene can also be detected in his *Diary* where we find impressions of a visit to the studio of sculptor and potter Margit Kovács's in mid-1939. Radnóti mentions here that she has just finished a nativity with "a wonderful Mary and magic Three Kings."[15]

The next poem where we find evidence of Radnóti's preoccupation not only with death but with the afterlife (a crucial teaching of Christianity) is the majestic *"Ének a halálról"* [Song about Death] written after Dezső Kosztolányi's funeral. In this poem, while not referring to any particular passage in the Bible, Radnóti stresses both the human fear of death and the terror at the separation of soul from body, "what was one world now revolves in two" [mi egy világ volt, kétfelé kering], and he ends the poem with a short prayer: "Guard, oh Lord, the pathways of the soul" [Őrizd Uram, a lélek útjait].[16]

The date for this, in my view, very spiritual and Christian poem is November 1936, Soon afterwards a new tone enters Radnóti's poetry; something that has its source in the Old Testament though it is apparent in the New Testament as well, especially in its final book - the prophetic tradition. The context in which this (for Hungarians not at all new) tradition appears is the whirlwind of agressive nationalism and Fascism inexorably pushing Europe toward the Second World War. The dress rehearsal for it is undoubtedly the Spanish Civil War - and one can well understand why this event caught Radnóti's attention to such an extent. I assume that Radnóti's first poem of this "prophetic" kind, *"Lapszéli jegyzet Habakkuk prófétához"*[Marginal Note to the Prophet Habakkuk] was written after the German-Francoist terror-bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in April 1937. In the collection *Meredek út* [Steep Road] the Habakkuk poem just precedes the poem *"Aludj"* [Go to Sleep] with its pointed reference to "Shanghai and Guernica." Also, the poem's opening lines: "Cities / stood in flames, / villages / erupted" [Városok lángoltak / robbantak faluk][17] is also a clear enough allusion to bombing raids against the Spanish Republic. This short, "marginally structured" poem is in fact an invocation of anger, of a kind of righteous prophetic anger, which until then had not been part of the poet's disposition, a request for "black rage" against those who take innocent lives in wars of conquest. Why was Radnóti particularly impressed by this somewhat obscure Old Testament prophet? Maybe because in the first chapter of his book Habakkuk is reproachful towards God. "Why dost thou make me see wrongs and look upon trouble? Destruction and violence are before me." (Habakkuk, 1:3) Then the prophet continues with a description of the Chaldeans, this "dread and terrible nation" who are used by God to punish the sinful people of Judea, though eventually they are defeated and annihilated. I think the element of moral indignation is

of the utmost importance: Radnóti cannot gauge God's intentions but, seeing the massacre of the innocents, doubts for a moment the Lord's fairness and tries to confront the victory of Evil with the single-minded fury and fiery rhetoric of a Jewish prophet.

So far I have discussed only the obvious links that exist between the Bible and Miklós Radnóti's poetic vision, indicating those parts of the Scriptures which inspired him in various ways. There is, however, evidence of a powerful inspiration that never yielded a poem, or if it did, the poem was promptly destroyed. In July 1939, as Radnóti relates in his *Diary*, he and his wife travelled to Paris and interrupted their journey in Vienna. At the Westbahnhof they were confronted with a rushing crowd of people, which included uniformed Nazi storm troopers. This experience suddenly evoked in Radnóti's mind an image from *The Book of Revelation* (12:1-6) about the woman "clothed in the sun" and the great red dragon that is ready to devour the child whom the woman is about to bear.[18] This apocalyptic image had been living in Radnóti's subconscious ever since his childhood when a maidservant's tales told to the ten year old boy seem to have revolved around this particular image from *Revelation.* After the crowd scene in Vienna, Radnóti intended to write a poem about the Apocalypse (perhaps using some of its imagery in the modern context) but was dissuaded by his wife Fanni, who implored him not to add anything to the original text of St. John's, for as Chapter 22 verse 18/19 says "If any one adds to them, [the words of the prophecy in this book], God will add to him the plagues described in this book."[19]

As a matter of fact Radnóti was not the only Hungarian poet whose imagination was touched by the visions of John. In Endre Ady's posthumous book *A halottak élén,* 1918 [Leading the Dead] there is a poem written during the First World War *"A Titok Arat"* [The Secret is Harvesting], in which "the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet," the whore of Babylon appears; she is the monster who drinks the blood of Jesus and of the martyrs. In this poem Ady claims, "And the soul has died / And this is worse than to be dead in the mud / It is a worse death than life" [S meghalt a lélek / S így rosszabb, mint holtan a sárban / S ez rosszabb halál, mint az élet].[20] In this collection of Ady's there are no less than seven poems with mottos taken from the Bible, amongst them yet another poem referring to the Revelation *"A Csodák Föntjén"* [On the Plateau of Miracles]. And, interestingly, one also comes across a prose poem entitled *"Ésaiás könyvének margójára"* [In the Margins of the Book of Isaiah] which asks questions about the inscrutability of God's will and human nature: "Would therefore the shining light of man's divine mind be so much of a vanity that a mere breeze can turn it into night?"[21]

I am quoting Ady here because there is an easily discernible connection between his shock at man's degradation in the senseless massacre of the First

World War and Radnóti's increasing helplessness and horror at Hungary's embroilment in the Second World War on the side of the Third Reich. There can be no doubt while Radnóti personally refused to accept the racist Nazi-style classification of Jewishness even after the Hungarian parliament passed one anti-Jewish law after another, he became resentful and embittered about the treatment of "Jews" (whether professing Judaism or Christianity) during the war years. I do not want to discuss some of the truly distressing experiences that Radnóti underwent during his service in the forced labour unit to which he was assigned. As for his resentment, it remained normally unvoiced and was expressed only on rare occasions, as for instance in these lines of the *"Negyedik ecloga"* [Fourth Eclogue]: "I always wanted to be free, and guards / Have always marched beside me on my way" [Szabad szerettem volna lenni mindig / s őrök kísértek végig az úton].[22] Even when talking about a friend who had disappeared in the Ukraine (as in the *"Ötödik ecloga"* [Fifth Eclogue]) Radnóti does not denounce the murderers in a tirade of righteous indignation. He maintains the sad, elegiac tone and seems to be psychologically unable to complete the poem, intended as a lament. Anger, however justified under the circumstances, appears in his poems infrequently and, on the whole, indirectly. Radnóti gives the impression of a person who desperately believes in sanity even when temporarily confined to a lunatic asylum. Behind his poetry lies the firm conviction that European culture built on the twin foundations of Judeo-Christian tradition and Greek Humanism will somehow sustain the spirit even when a tidal wave of hatred and irrationality threatens to sweep it away.

This conviction seems to break down in March 1944 when German troops occupy Hungary, and a crackdown takes place on the last vestiges of parliamentarianism and Hungarian independence. In this respect I find the short poem *"Ó, régi börtönök..."* [Oh Peace of Ancient Prisons...] important. It demonstrates the change from the rule of reason (however shaky) to that of terror. Its immediate consequence is to reinforce and activate the prophetic apocalyptic trend in Radnóti 's poetry. In a situation when "Reality, like a cracked flowerpot / no longer holds form, and just waits / to fling to the winds its useless shards" [A valóság, mint megrepedt cserép / nem tart már formát és csak arra vár, / hogy szétdobhassa rossz szilánkjait],[23] the rational Humanist approach to the world no longer makes sense. A world in chaos and lawlessness requires a different model of evaluation; it is time to turn to the more ancient, biblical mode of the prophet.

The poem *"Töredék"* [Fragment] is a summary of the horrors characterizing the year 1944 in German-occupied Europe. It consists of five stanzas each beginning with the line "I lived on this earth in an age..." [Oly korban éltem

én e földön...][24] and followed by a list of violations of the moral law. All biblical commandments are ignored: man is not only killed but killing is done with pleasure and voluntarily; the heroes of the age are traitors and common criminals; the average citizen has turned into an amoral beast. People who are still alive envy the peace of the decomposing dead. It is an age (or rather "it was," for the poet speaks in the past tense) in which "even the poet was silent" hoping for the return of the Prophet Isaiah for only he could voice "a fit curse" upon what was happening. So although the poet tells of the iniquities of the age, he still feels incapable of passing judgement - the appropriate curse can be uttered only by a prophet of Old Testament stature, like Isaiah...

Although the tone of the poem is that of an ancient chronicle, the structure of "Fragment" resembles a poem by Dezső Kosztolányi, written in the early Thirties. This is *"Litánia"* [Litany] with its two-line stanzas, each line beginning with the words: "In my age..." [Az én koromban]. The opening lines of Kosztolanyi's piece reflect the general disorientation of European industrial society between the two world wars: "In my age / steely machines were rattling in the heavens / In my age / mankind had lost its aim forever" [Az én koromban / zörgött az egekben a gépek acélja / Az én koromban / nem tudta az emberiség, mi a célja].[25] In *"Fragment"* Radnóti changes the emphasis of the first line by indicating the baseness of the age in the very first word: "in such an age I lived..." *[Oly korban* éltem én...] and blames for mankind's degradation not so much technological civilization as man's complete loss of moral principles. The prophetic tone of Radnoti's poem is further enhanced by a deliberately archaic vocabulary (e.g. *balhitek* in the first stanza, *az élő irigy lé a férges, síri holtat* [the living...would envy the grave-dweller the worms eat] and *a rettentő szavak tudósa* in the final stanza).[26]

If in *"Fragment"* the poet is still tentative about the reappearance of the Prophet, he is passionately affirmative in one of his last and most accomplished poems, the *"Nyolcadik Ecloga"* [Eighth Eclogue]. Here the dialogue of the Poet with a prophet of the Old Testament takes place on a mountain top - on a "rugged mountain walk" leading to Lager Heidenau where Radnóti and his fellow-labourers are languishing behind barbed wire. The prophet-like person identifies himself as Nahum, a Jewish prophet who thundered against Nineveh - not unlike Jonah whose *persona* was borrowed by Radnoti's poetic mentor Mihály Babits, in his *"Jónás könyve"* [The Book of Jonah], but different from him inasmuch as his prophecies about the destruction of the sinful city were actually fulfilled. The Poet clearly is familiar with Nahum's (rather short) book. Indeed, in describing the destruction of Nineveh he almost quotes verbatim from Nahum's book: "Whole nations scramble to the

slaughter..." [Gyors nemzetek öldösik egymást...].[27] The Poet then inquires what has brought Nahum back to earth and is told that is was "wrath" and a wish to see the downfall of Evil ("the strongholds of sin fall"). It seems as if God's dispensation to preach was timeless - in similar historical situations the response to sin and iniquities can be remarkably alike. The Poet is in awe of the Prophet's vigour and determination to follow his mission, but in the concluding passage of the poem Nahum assures the Poet that he knows his work, which is also feeding on "wrath," and that he can see a connection between the poet's and the prophet's wrath. It is "food and drink to the people. Whoever would may live on it until / The coming of the Kingdom..." [...étek a népnek, / s innivaló! Élhetne belőle, ki élni akar, míg / eljön az ország...]. What kingdom? The one promised by the young disciple, "The young Rabbi whose life fulfilled our words and the Law" [rabbi, ki betöltötte a törvényt és szavainkat].[28] Here the speaker is still Nahum, but he becomes a composite character, for already earlier there is a reference to Isaiah,[29] and in the last passage of the poem Radnóti in fact turns to the Book of Zechariah. It is in the concluding two chapters of the latter that the Old Testament clearly foretells the appearance of the Lord in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. And it is exactly this to which Radnóti's Prophet alludes to in the "Eighth Eclogue"; his words link the Old Testament with the New. The "young disciple" is Jesus and the country toward which the Prophet leads the march, asking the Poet to follow him is the Kingdom of God and of love.

Whether Radnóti at this stage was still a Socialist or not, is immaterial. The Prophet and Poet will set out together toward the country of God. For as the Prophet says, "What I asked before / Is the Lord's end? Lo, it is that Kingdom" [Hogy mi a célja az Úrnak, / - kérdem? lásd az az ország].[30] It is a country foretold by the Bible, not by earthly powers. In truth, we know to what place the last march led Radnóti: to the meadow and hastily dug mass-grave at Abda. But the final lines of the "Eighth Eclogue" give a clear message: in the midst of a cruel war and universal cataclysm the poet stresses the primary Christian values of love, peace and universal brotherhood. And even the awareness of the forced march that follows cannot make one forget that in those terrible days the true spirit of the Bible was captured most impressively in the poetry of this Jewish-born Catholic, this innocently killed young follower of Christ, Miklós Radnóti.

Notes

1. Miklós Radnóti, *The Complete Poetry,* transi. Emery George (Ann Arbor, 1980), 58. (Hence: CP).
2. *Radnóti Miklós összes művei* (Budapest, 1976), 18. (Hence: RMöm), (My translation).
3. Emery George, *Miklós Radnóti, A Biography* (New York, 1986).
4. Radnóti, CP, 60.
5. *Ibid.,* 87; RMöm, 47.
6. Béla Pomogáts, *Radnóti Miklós* (Budapest, 1977), 33.
7. *Ibid.,* For the original text see RMöm, 661.
8. Radnóti, CP, 88.
9. Marianna D. Birnbaum, *Miklós Radnóti, A Biography of His Poetry* (Munich, 1983), 139.
10. RMöm, 605.
11. Radnóti, CP, 126; RMöm, 87.
12. Radnóti, CP, 159. Emery George's translation.
13. Miklós Radnóti, *Forced March. Selected Poems,* transi. George Gömöri and Clive Wilmer (Manchester, 1979) 18, and RMöm, 133.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Radnóti Miklós, *Napló* (Budapest, 1989), 52.
16. Radnóti, CP, 189; RMöm, 153.
17. Radnóti, CP, 192; RMöm, 156.
18. *The Holy Bible. Revised Version* (London, 1952), 975.
19. Radnóti, *Napló,* 25.
20. *Ady Endre Összes Versei,* vol. 2 (Budapest, 1955), 272.
21. *Ibid.,* 265.
22. Radnóti, *Forced March,* 39; RMöm, 213.
23. Radnóti, CP, 262; RMöm, 227. Emery George's translation.
24. RMöm, 231.
25. Kosztolányi Dezső, *Válogatott versei* (Budapest, 1956), 275.
26. RMöm, 232.
27. *Forced March,* 52; RMöm, 238.
28. *Ibid.;* RMöm, 239.
29. *Ibid.,* "Majdan az én torz számat is érintette, akárcsak / bölcs Izaiasét, szénnel az Űr..."
30. *Ibid.*

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS IN RADNÓTI'S POETRY

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„Durch sein Gedicht stiftet der Dichter Gedächtnis."
(Hans-Georg Gadamer)

In a short article published in 1974 János Pilinszky, one of the most original Hungarian poets of the twentieth century, made the following claim:

> "What I find unique in Radnóti's life can be expressed only with the help of the unfortunate expression 'situational congeniality.* In his case talent - which is responsible only for a small part of the achievement of a so-called creative man - was supplemented by a tragic situation that was not foreseeable from the perspective of the beginning of the poet's career. His early verse contained some Surrealistic elements. The perfectly bucolic lyrics which followed were entirely unexpected. He seemed to be destined to compose idylls in a Latin tradition about a paradise lost and regained."[1]

There may be poetic exaggerations in this statement, but the problems raised by Pilinszky are by no means negligible. The questions as to how information about Radnóti's life may affect the reception of his works and how the avant-garde and Neoclassicism are related in his poetry are crucial for any historian of literature.

1. The impact of the poet's tragic fate on the perception of his works

Although no reader of Radnóti's verse can ignore the sad end of the poet's life, it is not the best idea to approach his works from the perspective of his death. While it is undeniable that in his posthumous volume the poems are arranged in chronological order and the date attached to each text has become a signature for the readers, as well as a metonymy of the speech situation and of some events in the life of its author, it is no less true that a biographical interpretation can hardly do justice to the specificity of the speech gesture represented by any individual poem, for it may conceal the fact that the lyric

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self always belongs to a given text. In other words, it is no less dangerous to read Radnóti's poems as documents of the different stages in his life than to interpret the works of Petőfi in a similar way. In *Hesitant Ode* (composed on 26 May 1943) the speaker seems to warn the reader not to devote too much attention to the personal destiny of the poet, "for I'm worth no more than the value of the word / in my poem."[2] After Radnóti's achievement had become sanctioned as a monument of anti-fascist literature, scholars came to realize the drawbacks of such a canonization. As early as 1964 István Sőtér remarked in a lecture on Radnóti delivered in Paris that "not even the most moving tragedy can grant exceptional significance to a work,"[3] and some members of the next generation (Miklós Szabolcsi, G. Béla Németh, and others) made attempts at an immanent approach to the poems.

Those who ask how Radnóti's output is viewed in Hungary today may be confronted with several paradoxes. It is difficult not to see the discrepancy between works about Radnóti published in the West and in Hungary. On the one hand, during the last decades more translations of his verse and prose have been published than of works by any other Hungarian author;* on the other, it would be almost impossible to name any middle-aged or younger scholar working in Hungary who could be called a specialist of his poetry. Since his name was hardly mentioned by the participants of the conference on Hungarian lyrics between the two wars held at Janus Pannonius University in 1991,[5] one may have the impression that Radnóti is not regarded by most scholars as one of those who revitalized Hungarian poetry in that period. In the last twenty years or so fewer and fewer undergraduates have chosen to write on his works at Eötvös University, and when I inquired at the other faculties of humanities, most of my colleagues spoke about a similar situation in Debrecen, Szeged, and Pécs. While in the 1950s Radnóti was one of the favourite authors of those who opposed the official literary canon, in the 1990s the young generation seems to have turned away from the works of the most significant Hungarian poet among the victims of the Holocaust. Neither the disciples of G. Béla Németh nor the youngest generation of critics have published any major essay on Radnóti. The interpretation of individual poems is lacking, the methods of structuralism or post-structuralism have not been applied to them, and no comprehensive appraisal of the historical position of Radnóti's verse has been made in the last decades.

It would not be a far-fetched conclusion to say that there is to date no adequate book on Radnóti. The latest and by far the most serious scholarly monograph was published in New York in 1986. The almost 800-page-long volume by Emery George[6] deserves the highest praise but mainly as a meticulous analysis of the foreign sources of Radnóti's poetry and only to a lesser extent as an interpretive and evaluative study of the original texts themselves.

It would be easy to continue the line of paradoxes. Most readers agree that Radnóti's best poems were written at the very end of his life, during the months spent in a forced labour camp, when he had no hope that the lines he jotted down would be read by anyone. Contrary to the expectations one might have, the tone of several late poems is idyllic rather than tragic. Because of this, it cannot be taken for granted that Radnóti's posthumous collection can be read as the voice of a collective fate. It is even more problematic to argue that the foreshadowing of the Holocaust can be glimpsed in his earlier volumes. While a canon of Holocaust literature has emerged as a result of several studies of the works treating the persecution of Jews during World War II, any attempt to interpret Radnóti's achievement as belonging to such an international canon might run the risk of excluding the majority of his poems.

To be sure, some of the usual objections raised against the concept of Holocaust literature are irrelevant for readers of the Hungarian author. "There is no such thing as a literature of the Holocaust, nor can there be. The very expression is a contradiction in terms. (...) A novel about Auschwitz is not a novel, or else is not about Auschwitz."[7] This statement made by Elie Wiesel or the even more familiar remark that "nach Auschwitz (...) unmöglich ward, (...) Gedichte zu schreiben,"[8] can apply only to post-Holocaust works which cannot claim the kind of authenticity of texts written by victims during the persecution. The diaries kept by those who suffered have a documentary value that is absent from the memoirs called eyewitness, or survivor accounts. Post-Holocaust literature may have a degree of illegitimacy, since there is a danger of pretense in the exploitation of others' pain. Only those texts of unquestionably high aesthetic quality may be exceptions representing a departure from the traditions of imitation or *Erlebnis* by creating a poetics of remembrance. In such cases it would be misleading to speak of an imaginative misappropriation of atrocity. The works of Celan or Pilinszky are obvious examples.

The poems composed by Radnóti in the forced labour camp are less rich in connotations than Celan's *Engßihrung* or Pilinszky's *Apocrypha,* highly cryptic texts in which ambiguities, sudden shifts, enigmatic discontinuities, and the polyvalence of words create difficulties for the interpreter, but they have an additional documentary value by representing an unexpected legacy to us from the dead. This aspect of Radnóti's late works gives them a significance supplementing and possibly even surpassing their contribution to Hungarian literature.

Before placing these poems in the larger context of Holocaust literature, several distinctions can be made. First of all, some texts were written in Hebrew or Yiddish, others in some languages used by assimilated Jews. A third

type is represented by Celan. In the majority of his works he used the language of Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Heidegger - whose works had made a decisive impact on his idiom -, thus proving that the German language was not irreparably polluted under Hitler,[9] but occasionally he mingled German with Hebrew and/or Yiddish, as in such pieces published in the volume *Die Niemandsrose* (1963) as *Die Schleuse* or *Benedicta.*

Radnóti did not possess a poetic idiom comparable in strength to Celan's. Although it is undeniable that their works belonged to different paradigms - the Hungarian author worked in a historical context characterized by the conflict between avant-garde experimentation and Neoclassicism, whereas the younger poet lived in an age dominated by Neo-avant-garde and Postmodernism -, this cannot explain the discrepancy between the output of a good minor poet with a handful of fine texts and the works of a major artist whose stylistic originality represents a landmark in twentieth-century poetry. Another difference between their works is that while Radnóti put a heavy emphasis on Classical prosody, Celan relied on the long tradition of Jewish lamentation. The artistic goals and the conceptions of language of the two poets were poles apart. While Radnóti set himself the task of glorifying language by reworking traditional forms, particularly such genres as eclogue, verse epistle, or hymn, Celan's ambition was to deconstruct and even eliminate language and conventional forms of structural organization. The Hungarian poet's desire was to purify the diction that had been violated by some of his predecessors; his German-language colleague viewed accepted usage as a veil that had to be torn apart in order to get at things (or Nothingness) behind it. For the former expression meant the recreation of the past, for the latter the undermining of rhetoric. These two possibilities also preoccupied other writers and were defined by Samuel Beckett in a letter written in 1937. The first he called "eine Apotheose des Wortes"; the second he characterized in the following way: "Grammatik und Stil. Mir scheinen sie ebenso hinfällig geworden zu sein wie ein Biedermeier Badeanzug oder die Unerschütterlichkeit eines Gentlemans. Eine Larve. Hoffentlich kommt die Zeit, sie ist ja Gott sei Dank in gewissen Kreisen schon da, wo die Sprache da am besten gebraucht wird, wo sie am tüchtigsten missbraucht wird. Da wir sie so mit einem Male nicht ausschalten können, wollen wir wenigstens nicht versäumen, was zu ihrem Verruf beitragen mag. Ein Loch nach dem andern in ihr zu bohren, bis das Dahinterkauernde, sei etwas oder nichts, durchzusickern anfangt - ich kann mir für den heutigen Schriftsteller kein höheres Ziel vorstellen."[10]

This description anticipated a later paradigm in the history of poetic diction than the one Radnóti represented. Post-Holocaust literature at its best is related to a poetics of silence. The following untitled piece from *Atemwende*

(1967) clearly shows how an allusive treatment of the Holocaust may go together with a cult of the unspoken:

> STEHEN, im Schatten
> des Wundenmals in der Lull.
>
> Für-niemand-und-nichts-Stehn.
> Unerkannt,
> für dich
> allein.
>
> Mit allem, was darin Raum hat,
> auch ohne
> Sprache.

Radnóti seems to have been the only important poet of the Holocaust to distance himself from the traditions of Jewish culture. Yitzak Katznelson used hexameters in his *Song of the Slaughtered Jewish People,* but his long poem was composed in Yiddish. While in most Post-Holocaust works there is a profound dissatisfaction with non-Jewish culture, no such alienation or devaluation can be felt in the works of Radnóti. He never cut himself off from the Latin authors he studied at school, but relied upon them even after his tragedy had liberated him from the modish eclecticism to which several members of his generation were attracted.

The growing awareness of the threatening impact of the Third Reich made its influence felt in at least two ways on Hungarian culture. Writers and artists looked for accepted forms of expression with the aim of trying to reach a wide audience. At the same time, they wanted to rely on well-established traditions, which individuals could find helpful in their defense of the human personality. Both tendencies contributed to the rise of Neoclassicism. Besides Radnóti, Zoltán Nadányi, Jenő Dsida, Sándor Weöres, and Zoltán Jékely are generally regarded as the main representatives of this trend in the 1930s.[11] The Populists also turned to the past, but they drew inspiration mainly from the songlike short lyrics and *Lebensbilder* of Petőfi, in contrast to Radnóti, who studies the Romantic recreation of Latin idylls and found a justification for his eclectic approach to culture in Biedermeier art, the topic of several books published by Béla Zolnai, one of the professors whose lectures the poet attended at Szeged's Ferenc József University in the early 1930s.

The poetry of Radnóty's formative years is usually considered to be mediocre. One perceptive critic of the older generation described his first response to it in the following terms: "What I saw in it was studied unease, (...) a mannered approach. I was made nervous by (...) the constant idyllic

pose, the loud smacking kisses and even more so the acting (...). Who could have imagined that it was possible to arrive from this stage at greatness in poetry?"[12] Radnóti himself was aware of his limitations. As late as 1939 he made his fictitious *Doppelgänger* Jean Citadin emphasize the gap between his ideals and practice: "No, I am not a poet yet (...). I am still very much preoccupied with language; it rolls obstacles in my way; it is ill-disposed and stubborn. You can still feel that the poem was written by someone. It is still too much of a performance by a conjurer. I do not like shows. A poem is supposed to express feelings like whistle or cry, or a hiccup after drinking wine. You should not be made aware that it is constructed of some material. Are you aware of stone in Strassbourg cathedral?"[13]

2. From eclecticism to maturity

No matter whether one's focus is on the Surrealistic images, the references to Biblical prophecy, or the collective voice, *Pagan Salute* (1930), despite the qualifications made by some critics, is not an insignificant collection. Sometimes the pastoral mood, combined with a neoprimitivism somewhat reminiscent of Francis Jammes, whose verse Radnóti translated, is in conflict with the interpretation of the story of Cain, full of autobiographical implications, but the overall impression is one of variety. Contrary to a widespread opinion, the weaknesses of the young poet's eclecticism were less apparent in his first volume than in its immediate successors. Both the tone of pastoral elegy and the Biblical allusions were continued without much improvement in *Song of Modern Shepherds* (1931). Occasionally social criticism made itself felt, thus anticipating the dominance of working-class ideology over poetry, which became so conspicuous in *Convalescent Wind* (1933), published by the Szeged Youth Arts College. As for the political verse not included in this collection, George Gömöri has called it "embarrassingly poor."[14] Whatever the instrinsic value of Brechts's ballads or chronicles, their influence on Radnóti's verse proved to be detrimental. Both the sequence *Male Diary* (between 19 April 1931 and 6 October 1932), incorporating newsclippings, and the *Song of the Black Man Who Went to Town* (20 March - 3 April 1932) are mediocre. It is quite understandable that Babits used *Convalescent Wind* as an example in his attack on the revival of populism.[15]

Radnóti's interest in oral literature was due to his close friend Gyula Ortutay, a folklorist who was a member of the illegal Communist Party. Left-wing political views went together with a cult of non-European culture. The poet had no first-hand knowledge of the folklore of black Africa; his

reading of anthologies by Blaise Cendrars and Yvan G oil was undoubtedly related to the avant-garde cult of "primitive" art. In fact it was the leader of the Hungarian avant-garde movement, Lajos Kassák, who drew Radnóti's attention to the activity of the two poets. The French translations of African songs were reshaped by the Hungarian poet; they were subjected to yet another stage of textual processing. Some of these adaptations were included in *New Moon* (1935), but their significance was historical rather than aesthetic. In any case, it would be difficult to find any major poem in Radnóti's fourth collection of verse.

In view of the ideologically conservative patriotism of his late poetry, it is safe to assume that after a brief association with Communists his main goal became to be fully assimilated to non-Jewish Hungarians. As is well-known, in 1934 he applied for a legal change of name from Glatter to Radnóti, and in 1943 he and his wife were baptized in the Roman Catholic faith by Sándor Sík, one of his former professors, a roman Catholic priest and poet of Jewish origin. These were symbolic gestures. Except for *Marginal Note to the Prophet Habakkuk,* composed in 1937, and a few other poems, the impact of the Jewish visionary tradition was marginal on his work; that may have been the reason why not a single example of his work was included in what is probably one of the most comprehensive collections of Jewish poetry edited by Jerome Rotherberg, a vast anthology including texts by such avant-garde authors as Gertrude Stein, Max Jacob, Yvan Goll, Tristan Tzara, and Edmond Jabès.[16]

Having renounced Judaism, Radnóti turned to the cultural legacy of his country, Classical antiquity, and Christianity, His growing attachment to the Hungarian past can be seen in *While Writing* (17 March 1937), a poetic "hommage à Kazinczy," the organizer of Hungarian literary life and language reform in the early 19th century; in the essays; in the great joy he felt when Northern Transylvania was returned to Hungary;[17] and even in his dismissal of the readaptation of a nineteenth-century novel by Zsigmond Móricz. Traditions have to be preserved, and the most severe criticism is justifiable if someone tries to violate the past by reinterpreting it from the perspective of the present. "He should be punished, his work has to be confiscated and banned," Radnóti wrote about Móricz in his diary on 4 January 1941.[18] In sharp contrast to the Expressionist Gottfried Benn, who drew a clear-cut distinction between culture and art, Radnóti viewed the former as an indispensable precondition of the latter. The late poem *Root* (8 August 1944) suggests that the creative process is incompatible with being uprooted. The speaker is an artist who is indifferent to the outside world. For him culture is comparable to the root nourishing a plant from below; "there, I am building the poem," he says.

"Wozu Dichter in dürftiger Zeit?" The question asked in the seventh stanza of *Brot und Wein* made both Radnóti and Celan reassess the function of poetry. The Hungarian poet translated and his German colleague often cited Hölderlin. While the author of *Wie wenn am Feiertage...* seemed to suggest a critique of the highest traditional values of Western culture by emphasizing the ambivalence in the relationship between the Classical and Christian worlds, Celan reached a more radical conclusion. *Zürich, zum Storchen,* an imaginary dialogue with Nelly Sachs, is a harsh attack on God:

> Vom Zuviel war die Rede, vom
> Zuwenig. Von Du
> und Aber-Du, von
> der Trübung durch Helles, von
> Jüdischem, von
> deinem Gott.

The rage against the Creator is replaced by the interpretation of God as unnamcable and unidentifiable in *Psalm:*

> Niemand knetet uns wieder aus Erde und Lehm,
> niemand bespricht unsern Staub.
> Niemand.
>
> Gelobt seist du, Niemand.

This is a far cry from Radnoti's growing fascination with a Christian God. The Hungarian poet found relief in the New Testament, having reached the conclusion that what seemed absurd from a human perspective had a deeper meaning for God. This paradox is the key to the understanding both of the peculiar place of Radnoti's verse in the canon of Holocaust literature and of his later influence on Pilinszky, the leading Catholic poet of the subsequent generation in Hungary.

The realization that for a Christian there is nothing suprising in the Sermon on the Mount appeared in Radnoti's work at precisely the time when his language became less turgid. The first signs of a stylistic development can be seen in *Keep Walking, Condemned to Death* (1936). It is perfectly understandable that for his fifth volume Radnóti was awarded the Baumgarten prize by Babits, who was the most severe critic of his earlier work. This collection is marked by images of winter and death, as well as by an interesting discrepancy. While there is a growing emphasis on the preservation of poetic conventions, some of the imagery is highly innovative. The short lyric *Praise* (27 January 1936), consisting of two four-line stanzas, can be taken as a

characteristic example of this ambiguity. The title refers to the pieces of the section supplementing the psalms in the official song-books of the Hungarian Reformed Church, but the closure is in conflict with the archaic style characteristic of Protestant songs:

> Ha meghalsz, meghalok; porainkból
> egyszerre sodor majd forgó tornyot a szél.

The verbal economy is new in Radnóti's verse and dependent upon the grammar of a non-Indoeuropean language. Accordingly, the degree of translatability is rather low. The first three words make two ways of reading possible: "If you die, I shall also die" and "If you and I perish." No less compressed is the meaning of the next sentence: "our ashes are suddenly, simultaneously and violently transformed - literally 'twisted' - into a tower or spire that is turned around by the wind." The emphasis is on an adverb suggesting temporality and modality ("egyszerre") that is lost in the English translation:

> When you die, I'll die; out of our dust the wind
> will twirl a single spinning tower.

Experimentation with imagery and intertextuality was continued in *Steep Road* (1938). Once again, if the original poems are read side by side with the English versions, it is difficult not to observe that not all of the complexity is preserved in translation. Here is the crucial passage of the *First Eclogue* (1938) as rendered by Emery George:

> Still, I write, and I live in the midst of this mad-dog world, as
> lives that oak: it knows they'll be cutting it down; that white cross
> on it signals: tomorrow the tree men will buzz-saw the region;
> calmly it waits for that fate, yet it sprouts new leaves in the meantime.

In a few cases the English text is somewhat mannered: for the adjective "kerge" - usually associated with "sheep" - the compound "mad-dog" is substituted. In the version by Emery George the original understatement is replaced by an exaggeration; in the other translations the solution is even less satisfactory, because the allusion to the world of animals is missing from sach words as "insanity," "frenzied," or "crazy." On other occasions the grammatical value of the English word is too weak: the rhetorical strength of the verb "fehérlik" is absent not only from the simple adjective "white" used by George

and Wilmer-Gömöri, but also from the genitive "of white" in the version by Ozsváth-Turner or the paraphrase "that cross blazed to its trunk bleaches" substituted by McRobbie and Kessler.

However impressive Radnóti 's last volume, in which the language of the seeker of home is afforded a deeper significance, the continuity of his style is more than apparent. Metonymy and simile are still frequently used. In *New Moon* the first poem starts, the second ends with a comparison, and *Foaming Sky* has a piece entitled *Similes* (16 November 1941). Between 1933 and 1941 the poet relied systematically upon explicit metaphors. Gottfried Benn insisted that the use of the word "as" (or "like") was incompatible with modern poetry, for it was "immer ein Einbruch des Erzählerischen, Feulletonischen (...), ein Nachlassen der sprachlichen Spannung, eine Schwäche der schöpferischen Transformation."[19] It is conceivable to relate this stylistic ideal to a paradigm shift in the interpretation of the world: such explicit metaphors as simile and apposition may be regarded as elements in a system of poetic conventions closely tied to religious language. If it is legitimate to see a connection between the two spheres, it is possible to argue that only godless poetry could be called modern: "Il est aisé d'être poète parmi les dieux. Mais nous autres venons après les dieux. Nous n'avons plus le recours d'un ciel pour garantir la transformation poétique, et il faut bien que nous demandions quel en est le sérieux de celle-ci."[20]

If one chooses to adopt such influential views, Radnóti cannot be called a modern poet in the historical sense of the word. It is more proper to read him as one of the representatives of the Neoclassicism predominant in the interwar period. His systematic reliance on intertextuality can only confirm this judgement.

In his voluminous monograph Emery George maintained that Radnóti's work as translator was so closely related to his own verse writing that in some cases the distinction became blurred. This was a logical consequence of the poet's firm belief that the writing of poetry was an intertextual and perhaps even interlingual activity. Accordingly, some of his best work can be seen in his *Nachdichtungen.* This is by no means exceptional in twentieth-century poetry, as the examples of Ezra Pound, Yves Bonnefoy, or Sándor Weöres may testify. Miklós Szabolcsi has discovered allusions to poems by Petőfi, Verhaeren, Ady, Kosztolányi, and Attila József in *Restless Turning of Fall* (10 October 1941), and traces of Tibullus, Virgil, Hölderlin, Babits, and Kosztolányi in *End-October Hexameters* (between 28 September and 14 November 1942).[21] *Only Skin and Bones and Pain* (August-September 1941), the poem on the death of Babits, starts with the first word of the *Funeral Oration,* an early

Hungarian text composed around 1200, and continues with an explicit reference to *Supplication to Saint Blaise,* a poem on death by Babits himself. In *A la recherche...* (17 August 1944) the Proustian title is coupled with an *Auftakt* reminding the reader of *Zalàn's Rout,* the long epic poem by Mihály Vörösmarty. The first stanza continues to imitate the Romantic work, so that the nineteenth-century text seems to be hidden behind Radnoti's poem of remembrance. The similarity of the metre creates the impression of a palimpsest, and the speaker is making a point of recalling the epic about the Hungarians' ninth-century conquest of the Carpathian basin in a forced labour camp in Serbia. The discrepancy between the two situations underlines the speaker's attachment to his homeland. Indirect generic or prosodie forms of intertextuality are no less obvious in other poems: *In a Restless Hour* (1939) is an Alcaic ode, and the versification of *Forced March* (15 September 1944), one of the poet's last and finest lyrics, is heavily indebted to the form of Walter von der Vogelweide's elegy *Oweh, war sint verschwunden.*

The original meaning of the generic term eclogue has a deeper significance in this context; it is related to Radnoti's idea that poetry is "selection" from earlier texts rather than the creation of something strikingly new and original. This conviction is in harmony with the poetics of Neoclassicism represented by the later Babits, author of *The Book of Jonah,* who viewed poetry as recreation. It is an open question whether the eclogues, these utterances of self-encounter and self-reflexivity, represent Radnoti's finest achievement. Some readers may prefer the more innovative short lyrics in which the tradition of German Romanticism and Expressionism is continued. *The Ragged Robin Opens* (26 August 1943), *Dream Landscape* (between 27 October 1943 and 16 May 1944), *May Picnic* (10 May 1944), and *Root* (9 August 1944) are characteristic examples of this generic type, evincing Radnoti's gift of pure line and tone. The antecedents of these poems can be found in some late poems of Dezső Kosztolányi and Attila József, written in the 1930s. Together with these they were to make a major impact on Pilinszky, who drew inspiration from them in his effort to hide conceptual meaning behind the description of natural phenomena.

3. The translatability of Radnoti's poetry

"Is it possible to translate Radnoti's poetry? In my view Sylvia Plath could have been fit for the task."[22] Why did Pilinszky believe that the author of *Ariel* could have been an ideal interpreter of *Foaming Sky*[1]} One possible answer to this question is that, except for Pilinszky, the American woman poet may have

been the most imaginative non-Jewish artist to identify herself with the victims of the Holocaust. At least two pieces from her posthumous collection could be mentioned in this context. The following lines are from *Lady Lazarus,* a poem about suicide:

> A sort of walking miracle, my skin
> Bright as a Nazi lampshade,
> My right foot
>
> A paperweight,
> My face a featureless, fine
> Jew linen.

The other poem entitled *Daddy* is addressed to a dead father who was German. The awareness of this ethnic origin gives a special emphasis to the speaker's assumed identity:

> An engine, an engine
> Chuffing me off like a Jew.
> A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.
> I began to talk like a Jew.
> I think I may well be a Jew.

How far have the translators succeeded in rendering what Pilinszky thought only Sylvia Plath could have recreated in the true sense? Understandably, Emery George, who has translated and analysed all the texts by Radnóti, paid special attention to the intertextual aspects of the Hungarian poet's output. On many occasions he even did justice to the visionary and grotesque imagery of the late pieces, as in the following two lines of *Columbus* (1 June 1943):

> Wind turns the pages. He leaves it, has other thoughts,
> above him there purrs a wild, taut sky with giant claws.

The same translator emphasized the limitations of his work; for example he admitted that "in 'A la recherche...' the polysyllabic internal rhymes are all but untranslatable."[23] In fact much of what is remarkable in the late verse may be lost in translation. The very titles of the posthumous volume seems to have been mistranslated by some. "Clouded Sky" and "Sky with Clouds" are literal, whereas the Hungarian phrase "Tajtékos ég" is metaphorical. The adjective derives from the noun "tajték" meaning "foam" or "froth." "Foaming Sky" seems the best solution. The verb "tajtékzik" stands for the state of mind of someone who is very angry. Thus, the secondary meanings of the original title

are lost in the translations by Emery George and Stephen Polgár. The menacing connotations are quite obvious if one remembers the last stanza of the title poem, composed on 8 June 1940:

> A holdra tajték zúdul, az égen
> sötétzöld sávot von a méreg.

These two lines are rendered by the two translators as follows:

> Clouds slide down on the moon; on the sky
> poison draws a dark green shape.
>
> Clouds pour across the moon. Anger
> leaves a poisonous dark-green bruise on the sky.

Clouds are not even mentioned in the original, and the English verbs are much weaker than their Hungarian equivalent, which is suggestive of violence.

Emery George did his best to find the equivalents of Radnoti's verse forms. In some cases, however, a few stylistic devices may have escaped him. He argued that in his translation of / *cannot know...* (17 January 1944) he succeeded in rendering the phonic correspondences of "ők felelnek (...) éji felleg" in English by way of sound repetition.[24] In fact not two but four words are linked together by alliteration:

> s fojtott szavunkra majdan friss szóval ők felelnek.
> Nagy szárnyadat borítsd ránk virrasztó éji felleg.

Not only the four alliterations but also the archaic connotations of "felleg" are lost in the English version, and the contrast between the two adjectives is weakened. All in all, the formal closure is hardly perceptible in the translation:

> and they will answer our checked words in phrasing clear and loud.
> Spread over us your great wing, vigil nocturnal cloud.

Needless to say, it is easy for a native speaker of Hungarian to miss stylistic components in the English version of any piece of his own national literature. My last example is to show how translation may open a gap between the interpretations of the two texts. A highly original structure of an inner debate makes *Forced March* one of Radnoti's most remarkable poems. The opening of the poem is a fragmented sentence:

Bolond, ki földre rogyván fölkél és újra lépked

In the complete English edition this first line reads as follows:

The man who, having collapsed, rises, takes steps, is insane;

This is less close to the Hungarian than Markus Bieler's German version:

Narr, der, zu Boden sinkend, aufsteht sich neu entlangbringt,

The key word is "insane." In Hungarian it is possible to have an adjectival predicate without using the copula, whereas in English no such ommission is acceptable. As a result, there is no way of making the violent contrast between the fragmented syntax of the first and the elaborate sentence structure of the second ten lines, so the reader of the English text cannot be made aware of the structural originality that gives an extra dimension to the antithesis between the Surrealistic vision of a tragic form of existence in which death can be the only form of liberation and the deliberately artificial evocation of an idyllic return to man's archetypal unity with nature.

The first and last words are highly emphatic: "bolond" (crazy) is opposed to "fölkelek" (I will rise). This fundamental structural principle is respected by the German interpreter, who starts with "Narr" and ends with "ich stehe auf!" The fact that all the English translators had to sacrifice this important correspondence makes one wonder whether it might be easier to translate Radnóti's verse into German than into English. The Classical metre is preserved by several translators, but the archaic verbal and adjectival forms in the opening and closing lines of the first part ("fölkél" and "honni") are absent from all the English versions. In the original these elements represent a stylistic domain which is in striking contradiction with the following images:

(...) ott az otthonok
fölött régóta már csak a perzselt szél forog,
hanyattfeküdt a házfal, eltört a szilvafa,
és félelemtől bolyhos a honni éjszaka.

(...) over the homes, that world,
long since nothing but singed winds have been known to whirl;
his housewall lies supine; your plum tree, broken clear,
and all the nights back home horripilate with fear.

The question is not how far the highly visual imagery is preserved in the translation. What is lacking is the stylistic tension between archaism and innovation. Since this tension may be the distinguishing feature of Radnoti's style, the loss cannot be called negligible.

In view of the fact that Radnoti's works have a relevance beyond the boundaries of Hungarian literature, it is quite understandable that they have been widely translated. The studies of his poetry written and published in the West are remarkable and should inspire Hungarian literary historians to reassess his achievement. Still, the interpretation of his verse depends largely on how his poetry has been received by Hungarian readers. Paradoxical as it may be, his artistic development was closely tied to his growing attachment to the culture of his country. The poems of *Foaming Sky* are strongly intertextual, and a whole body of Hungarian literature underlies their poetic diction. The ultimate test of the understanding of these lyrics is the reader's ability to identify himself with a lyric self who has a large body of texts in his ear. No translation can do justice to the wide range of intertextuality, since most of the earlier poems used for the purposes of direct or indirect quotation belong to the collective memory of a Hungarian-speaking community. As one of the more recent interpreters of Radnoti's work observed: "During his life he found himself in conflict with his ethnic origin, his education, and several social forces including the working class. What he never found problematic was his sense of being Hungarian."[25]

Notes

1. János Pilinszky, "Radnóti Miklós," in *Tanulmányok, esszék, cikkek* (Budapest: Századvég, 1993), II, 265-266.
2. All translations are by Emery George unless otherwise specified.
3. István Sőtér, "Külföldieknek - Radnóti Miklósról", in *Gyűrűk* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1980), 333.
4. The English translations mentioned later in the essay are as follows: *Clouded Sky,* trans. Stephen Polgár, Stephen Berg, and S. J. Marks (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); *The Witness: Selected Poems by Miklós Radnóti,* trans. Thomas Ország-Land (Tern Press, 1977); *Forced March: Selected Poems,* trans. Clive Wilmer and George Gömöri (Manchester: Carcanet, 1979); *The Complete Poetry,* ed. and trans. Emery George (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis, 1980); *Under Gemini: A Prose Memoir and Selected Poetry,* trans. Kenneth and Rita McRobbie and Jascha Kessler, with an introduction by Marianna D. Birnbaum (Budapest: Corvina, 1985); *Foamy Sky: The Major Poems of Miklós Radnóti,* sel. and trans, by Zsuzsanna Ozsváth and Frederick Turner (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).
5. Lóránt Kabdebó and Ernő Kulcsár Szabó, eds, *"de nem felelnek, úgy felelnek": A magyar líra a húszas-harmincas évek fordulóján* (Pécs: Janus Pannonius Egyetem Kiadó, 1992).

6. Emery George, *The Poetry of Miklós Radnóti: A Comparative Study* (New York: Karz-Cohl, 1986).
7. Elie Wiesel, "For Some Measure of Humility," *Sh'ma 5/100* (October 31, 1975): 314. Quoted in Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature* (Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 14.
8. Wiesel's argument is only one of the many observations that seem to echo Adorno's *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* first published in 1949. The penultimate sentence of this essay reads as follows: "Kulturkrilik findet sich der letzten Stufe der Dialektik von Kultur und Barbarei gegenüber: nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch, und das frißt auch die Erkenntnich an, die ausspricht, warum es unmöglich ward, heute Gedichte zu schreiben." Theodor W. Adorno, *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft, I. Prismen - Ohne Leitbild* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 30.
9. "Celan war offenbar an die deutsche Sprachheimat, die ihm keine Heimat bot, tiefer gebunden, als jene anderen Dichter waren, die sich gelentlich auch in einer anderen Sprache noch versucht haben." Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gedicht und Gespräch: Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1990), 97.
10. Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* (New York: Grove, 1984), 52.
11. G. Béla Németh, "A halálhívás és az életremény vitája," in *Századelőről - századutóról: irodalom- és művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok* (Budapest: Magvető, 1985), 383.
12. Aladár Komlós, "Radnóti olvasása közben," in *Kritikus számadás* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1977), 161.
13. Miklós Radnóti, "Ikrek hava," in *Radnóti Miklós művei* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1982), 520.
14. George Gömöri, "Miklós Radnóti: The Complete Poetry," *World Literature Today,* 55, no. 4 (Autumn 1981), 706.
15. Mihály Babits, "Népiesség," in *Esszék, tanulmányok* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1978), II, 382-384.
16. Jerome Rotherberg, ed., *A Big Jewish Book: Poems and Other Visions of the Jews from Tribal Times to Present* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubdelay, 1978).
17. Miklós Radnóti, *Napló* (Budapest: Magvető, 1989), 95.
18. *Ibid.,* 129.
19. Gottfried Benn, "Probleme der Lyrik," in *Gesammelte Werke* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1975), 1068.
20. Yves Bonnefoy, "L'acte et le lieu de la poésie" (1959), in *L'improbable suivi de Un rêve fait à Mantoue* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1980), 107.
21. Miklós Szabolcsi, "Radnóti Miklós halálos tájai," in *Radnóti tanulmányok,* ed. Edit B. Csáky, (Budapest: Magyar Irodalomtörténeti Társaság, 1985), 105-107.
22. János Pilinszky, "Radnóti Miklós," in *Tanulmányok, esszék, cikkek,* II, 266.
23. Emery George, *The Poetry of Miklós Radnóti,* 487.
24. *Ibid.,* 426.
25. Tibor Melczer, "Radnóti Miklós nemzeti klasszicizmusa," in *Radnóti tanulmányok,* ed. Edit B. Csáky, 78.

FROM CAIN TO NAHUM: SHIFTS AND CHANGES IN RADNÓTIS POETIC VISION

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The impact of the scene in which the twelve-year-old Radnóti learned about the circumstances of his birth was hard and painful.[1] Magnifying its effect was another confrontation three years later, in which he discovered that, besides his mother, his twin brother died on that night as well. Jolted to the core, the boy searched for ways to reorient himself, to find a "rationale" for so much suffering, for so much "injustice," for the spell death cast on his life.

And he did so, eventually. Muting the factuality of those ghosts and blurring their shapes, he learned to manipulate them in his poetic imagination. In this way, he found the freedom to search for legends which would help him understand what happened in terms of ancient, magical beliefs in guilt and sacrifice. The story of Cain and Abel, with its powerful sweep of emotional and ritualistic elements, came to his aid. Embracing it, he generalized the dramatic narrative and came to view his life as marked by guilt and weighed down by the curse cast upon him for the murder of his mother and brother, a guilt and a curse through which he conceptualized, and by which he interpreted, the events of his birth. In this way, both became part of his identity. Out of them, his personal ethos and his moral struggles emerged, affecting, in turn, his experiential responses and his self-image, shaping his awareness and perceptions alike.[2]

The imbrication of this primal, symbolic tale with his own life determined, however, not only Radnóti's psychic processes and intellectual development, but also his poetry. It inspired his imaginative structures, and it interplayed with his other prominent themes. In certain poems only its fragments or inversions appear, arising in fleeting images or slivers of thought; but in others the legend emerges full-blown, manifesting the entire line of the rich mythic drama by which Radnóti stored and worked out the events that surrounded his birth.

He explored them one by one in his prose piece "Gemini", letting the *persona* repeat the words that had haunted him since his youth: "You killed them. You killed them, you kill-ed th-em, you killed them."[3] The voice stutters

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and breaks as it speaks, echoing the stammer of the speaker in the early poem "I Had No Mother": "My Mother has ...; execrated me... / In... deed, she ... has ... ex ... e ... crated me."[4] The boundary between observed and imagined truth disappears in this perception: past events turn into myth and myth into lived experience.

The poem "And Cain Spoke Unto His Brother Abel," written in 1928, manifests one of Radnoti's first poetic attempts at formulating the legend. As the speaker says:

> Abel, brother, yesterday the primal crime awoke me:
> I had murdered your snow-white dreams and damned I was urging myself
> endlessly on down the night-darkening avenues of vainendeavor,
> between rows of icy and dolorous trees toward the morning.
> . . . . . .
> .. . [OJn the ancient day of my being, the gravid sky
> bellowed aloud: with murderous weight I riped my life
> like the first leaf from the bitter, the sighing, cursebearing tree.
> . . . . . .
> I am Cain, and yesterday the primal crime awoke me,
> I am Cain, and you my brother Abel![5]

In the poem "Quiet Lines, Bowed Head," composed just one year after "Cain," Radnóti returns to the subject of his birth:

> By midnight my mother bore me, by dawn
> she died, carried off by the fever;[6]

Eight years later, the birthday poem "Twenty-Eight Years," explores again that scene, presenting the speaker himself as wickedness incarnate:

> Monster I was in my nativity,
> twin-bearing mother - and your murderer!
> Whether my brother breathed, or he
> came lifeless forth, I cannot say,
> but in the blood and groans of torment there
> they lifted me toward the day,
> the little brute who gained the victory,
> leaving a debt that others had to pay:
> two lives, the price of me.[7]

Out of the poem "The Dreadful Angel," written just a year before his death, the same dramatic apprehension emerges, demonstrating the shadow this event cast over Radnoti's life. But this time, the myth exhibits new patterns and new

elements. Rather than functioning as an invisible, impersonal force that works from *inside* the scene of birth, from the hearts of the "murdered mother and brother," cursing the living child, banishing him from the world of humans, now evil assumes a shape and threatens "the sinner." The guilt torturing the child bursts into a living form that seeks retribution, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The new iconography is the Angel of Death, a creature bold, vengeful, and frenzied. His struggle with the poem's *persona* is as powerful as it is violent:

> The dreadful angel in me is invisible
> today, his screeching almost still.
> You startle at its whisper. Is it
> someone come to pay a visit
> or a grasshopper tapping at the sill?
> It's he. . . .
> . . . . . .
> Out of the soul's cave, in his hour
> he rises to accuse me, shriekingly.
> Mad again. Like poison, so he works in me,
> sleeps but rarely, lives within me
> and outside of me.[8]

The evil arising from the newborn, has now produced a full-blown, horrific ghost:

> In the white cave
> of moonlit night, in rustling sandal, he
> runs through the fields to rummage in my mother's grave
> Was it worth it then? - he wishpers to her,
> breaking her sleep; then in a choked, insistent breath:
> you bore him, and it was your death!

Cunningly and forcefully, the unholy creature, much like Goethe's Erlkönig, moves to take possession of the victim. But Radnóti's Angel acts out of motivations different from those of Goethe's Ghost of Death: while the latter kills an innocent being, the former executes, thereby restores, the divine order. However horrific, there is nothing that would wash murder away but murder:

> This is your mask of skin; here is the knife;
> a sigh; a moment of no pain; the gates of life!
> And on the table there awoke the gleaming knife.

The drama echoes the ancient words: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground." The curse is not forgotten; it demands sacrifice.

"The angel" recurring again and again in Radnóti's work does not, however, always emerge as an executor of divine vengeance. Intermingled with him is an indifferent character, the creature who appears suddenly in the midst of Serbia's violated landscape. In the first of the "Razglednicas," composed in the early fall of 1944, on the death march Radnóti was forced to endure, this figure emerges as standing and watching the road on which the pain-struck, ghostly masses of Jews move. It is for the last time in his work that Radnóti summons Fanni, but he does so only in a flash. Then, he lets her merge with the creature, who stands quietly in the wasteland of Death:

> And you're the only constant in the changing and the mess
> you shine on eternal beneath my consciousness;
> mute as an angel wondering at the catastrophe,
> or the beetle of burial from his hole in a dead tree.[9]

Etching itself into his mental processes, Radnóti's consciousness of guilt and punishment molds his life into a dramatic, powerfully construed legend.

In some poems, rather than his mythical self-recriminations, the child's sense of abandonment and exile dominates. In fact, certain lyrics express a sense of shattered innocence, a theme that pervades also "Gemini," demonstrating the force of the blow that the knowledge of the circumstances of his birth had on Radnóti's life and poetry. As "Memory," the poem of the twenty-one year old expresses:

> O h l -
> bare-legged child -
> stood with my arms lifted high
> under the sky;
> white was the field
> crowded with ladybirds, stars in the rye!
>
> And then whatever god I beheld
> bended away his eye![10]

Orphaned, vulnerable, and forsaken, the boy cannot comprehend why he is singled out, why he is rejected. Yet incomprehension does not dissolve sin. Whether aware or unaware of what he had caused, he knows that evil must be expiated. It is this self-lacerating morality that Radnóti imposes upon himself, ignoring the reality of the incompetent medical treatment, responsible for the

deaths of his mother and infant brother. He regards the myth of guilt as an integral part of his own psychic identity, offering himself up for a ritualistic blood sacrifice, as if to redeem the world through that ancient reckoning of original sin.

*

While the themes of sacrifical brotherhood and isolation maintain their prominent roles in the *oeuvre* of Radnóti, by the early thirties, they are joined by a number of new ones, among them that of global devastation. Emerging in the lyrics of "Like a Bull", images of destruction start to spread through Radnóti's landscapes, linking up with another major theme: the moral obligation of resisting violence. As "Like a Bull" shows:

> but the bull snorts and doesn't flee as the deer are
> fleeing; he fancies that when his hour comes round he'll fight
> and fall, and the pack will scatter his bones all over the meadow-
> and slowly, sadly, bellows into the buttery air.
>
> Even so will I struggle and so will I die;
> Still as a sign to posterity the fields will preserve my bones.[11]

The poem, the first piece in his fourth volume of poetry *New Moon,* captures two beings, first the bull then the *persona,* both as being attacked by the wolf pack, murdered, and left unburied, their bones scattered around the fields. This is an image of premonitary significance, especially if seen from the perspective of "War Diary" and "A la recherche", not to mention the dam at Abda. But where did this image come from? Clearly, in Hungary, during the interwar period, the miscarriage of justice was hardly a rare occurrence; nor were the cruelties committed by the police in the prisons or by the gendarmerie in the countryside. But the vision emerging from the "bull poem" does not project injustice; nor does it recall the cruelties of the Hungarian "law-enforcement" officials. Rather it suggests the vulnerability of being, the desecration of the body, and the moral imperative of restoring human dignity. It also presages the coming disaster.

But where do these notions emerge from? After all, August 3,1933, the date of the poem, lay remote from the time of the prewar atrocities perpetrated in Ethiopia and Spain. It was in chronology even further removed from the horrors of the death camps and the massacres committed during World War II. As a matter of fact, at this point of history, there was no indication of the rise of that extraordinary aggression that exploded a few years later on several

continents at once. Although motifs such as the collapse of values, failure, nightmare, and destruction had played major roles in the works of a number of artists even before World War I, and had become central to such movements as Dada and Surrealism later; although the pictorial images of this era presented men again and again as dying in the trenches or limping along on crutches, the iconography of the human body visited by an unprecedented devastation - corpse thrown upon corpse, tortured, desecrated, and unburied - was wtill quite unusual in the literature as well as in the visual arts of the early thirties.[12]

Of course, Radnóti was not the first one among the poets of the time to augur disaster. There were a number of artists in both the Hungarian and the international arena, who felt compelled to call attention to, and struggle against, what they defined as "the reactionary forces" of the world. But Brecht's hopes of keeping his "Virginia alight" "during the earthquakes" or his predictions of the "hurricanes destroying bourgeois society" captured something other than Radnóti's vista of the gathering danger. So had the programs and platforms of Breton, Paul Eluard, and Marcel Duchamp, advocating the destruction of Western society, or the propositions of Aragon, succintly expressed in his remarkable line, "Shoot Leon Blum."[13] In the "bull poem," the *persona* is attacked and killed by "a wolf pack," in fact, by the mob, an image essentially different from that exhibited by the activists of the left, projecting the world as involved in a mortal struggle against "the bourgeois order."

But if not the expectation of urgent social reforms or the pressures of the ideology of the "uninterrupted Revolution," if not the apocalyptic vision of "the battle of the righteous," what forces blew afflatus into Radnóti's images of devastation? And what made them conflate with his bent of connecting historical events with his own life, remolding them into shapes of myths? Placing his lyrics in the context of the time in which he lived, we may perhaps suggest some answers.

First of all, we must not forget that by the year of 1933, salvos of new political events started to resound in the European theatre. On January 30th, Hindenburg named Hitler Chancellor; on February 27, the Nazis set the Reichstag ablaze, and one day later, those sections of the Weimar constitution which guaranteed individual and civil liberties were suspended. On April 1, a statewide boycott was launched against Jewish business, and on May 10th, the books of Kafka, Heine, Freud, and Einstein burned to ashes at the stakes, set afire by the guards of the new, revolutionary millenarianism.

If these events were shocking to the enlightened Western mind and consciousness, not to speak of the Jews watching them, even more shocking had to be the fact that not even the great and powerful European heads of state

protested against them. Rather, they were eager to please, appease, even to court the German leadership. The first among them was the Hungarian premier Gömbös, one of the most prominent Magyar anti-Semites, whose slander of the Jews competed with those of Hitler, Streicher, or Goebbels. Now, he hurried to Germany before any other political leader, and expressed his admiration for and recognition of the Führer. (The second acknowledgment of the Nazi state came from the Vatican, signing a concordat with Hitler, suggesting the necessity of making peace with him, a suggestion, which, as a matter of fact, most nations would heed.)

Of course, the question that some critics would want to raise in response to these remarks cannot and should not be avoided: does it have any significance for a poem, a poetic theme, an image, or a meta-narration *what* stirred it into being? Can we know *which* factors, if any, were at work in the process? And, whatever the answer to these questions, can we either trace the *real* historical experience back to the poem, or discern through it the shapes of its author's inspiration?

These questions might be worthy of consideration within the framework of the formalistic reading processes controlled by the dogmatic restrictions of the canon of "New Age criticism."[14] But it would hardly make any sense to devote such processes to the large corpus of works by artists who languished for years under the threat of, and were physically exposed to, the brutal, totalistic, and indiscriminate annihilation process the Nazis designed for the Jews.[15] Clearly, dilemmas such as whether or not all experience is "self-enclosed" or whether or not "meaning is communicable" involve ideas, concepts, and notion's that are quite irrelevent to our discussion of Radnóti. To read his work and separate it from the context in which he wrote, from the frantic, xenophobic, and fanatically nationalistic cultural climate of Hungary in the interwar period and from the large chorus of literati who denied him the right to define himself as a Hungarian poet would be to fail to understand the blight of Radnóti's life. To see his visions of the rising catastrophe as merely the manifestations of a melancholic soul, which has a constitutional affinity to death and dying; without tying his poems to the political events that threatened his self-image, his life and being, the events that tortured him beyond measure and killed him in the end, is to fail to understand Radnóti as well as to misread whis work. Merely to apply hermeneutical observations to his verses when he inscribed in them his own existential experience of fear of torture and death, the features of which he carefully circumscribed, would simply be to reject a meaningful discussion of his poetry and life.

*

Still, however significant, however threatening, however ominous, the German political developments of 1933 appear to our post-Holocaust understanding and however menacing they must have appeared to Radnóti at that time, they could hardly have brought about instant changes in the poet's psychic perceptions and his poetic imagination. Those events alone could not have simply caused jolts powerful enough to bring about the sudden crystallizing of Radnóti's image of Holocaustal violence and the channelling of his creative energies into an iconography of disaster. Usually, change needs more sustained time to evolve or more direct pressures to well up suddenly. As it usually happens, things turn slow at their center of gravity. Since the shifts in the German political power structure were still quite remote from the Hungarian theatre in 1933, they alone could not have made instantaneously a deep, and emotionally-stressed impact on Radnóti. This could only then have happened, according to the Freudian notions about the nature of trauma, had he already suffered one of a similar nature, which, while festering, interconnected with and was, in turn, reinforced and magnified by the political events taking place in Germany. Only then could the wrenching changes in Radnóti's poetic and psychic landscape have taken place that manifest themselves in the "bull poem." Only then could those eminous events of 1933 be recognized for what they were on the darkening horizon. But what kind of a trauma are we here talking about? What kind of an injury did he suffer? What blow did he conceal?

Looking around, we must note that the answer to these questions lies quite near at hand. Indeed, if we examine the history of every-day life in the Hungarian universities of the interwar period, we must note the ubiquity of a set of recurring violent scenes, launched to chase the Jews out from the institutes of higher learning: to make these places *judenrein.*[16] Flaring up in the fall of 1930, just when Radnóti arrived in Szeged, at the country's campuses, among them at the Ferenc József University, such riots demonstrated both the rise of the right's political power and the unwillingness of the government to deal with the problem promptly and effectively. What took place on these occasions involved a group of eight to ten people (sometimes as many as twenty or twenty-five), calling for the removal of the Jews from the lecture halls, academic gatherings, or the corridors of the campus. Usually, the rioters thumped and screamed anti-Semitic slogans, throwing stink bombs in the midst of the crowd. Other times, they just grabbed one person whom they identified as a Jew and beat him up cruelly, leaving him on the ground, his bones broken, bleeding. Often, the mob did not go inside, but waited for their victims to enter or to leave the premises. The Jewish students were attacked then at the door or at the gates. There can be no doubts, Radnóti had an intimate knowledge of and must have been deeply perturbed by these riots,

which, as Csaplár explains, and the Jewish newspapers of the day demonstrate, were from the fall of 1930 part of the quotidian routine.[17]

But one could ask, why would these beatings have made such an enormous impression on Radnóti? Why would they have penetrated his psychic perceptions and his poetic imagination? Why would they have been that traumatic? After all, as we know, he considered his Jewish background hardly essential for his identity as a Hungarian poet. In fact, it was the image of the latter he embraced and idealized. Why should he have identified himself with the victims of these riots, when he found no particular reason to identify himself with them before or after the beatings?

To be sure, he did not identify with them. But by the early thirties, Radnóti must have understood that no matter how *he* defined himself, in the eyes of the *bullies* he was nothing but a Jew. However degrading this understanding appeared to him, he could hardly have escaped knowing the threat it implied. Ignoring the problem does not mean he did not know what went on, rather that he could not deal with the pressure.

As a matter of fact, the mark of the Jew insulted him and undermined his dignity as a human being; his exclusion from the community of the Magyars denied him the place among the Hungarian poets he so ardently desired. Small wonder that at first neither the scenes of beatings, the victim of which he could, of course, easily have become at any given minute, nor the terror of exile from all he valued, appeared as themes in his poetry.[18] He rather turned to ideals and goals he found more dignified to appropriate, some through which he defined himself, some of which he shared with many of his closest friends and comrades. In this way, he became part of a passionately patriotic, universally sacralized struggle against the country's backwardness: the struggle for the economic, social, and cultural rise of the Hungarian countryside.

As soon as he arrived in Szeged and enrolled at the university, he became a member of the Gábor Bethlen Circle, a club that committed itself to the populist cause. Exploring the lives and culture of the hamlets, homesteads, and villages around the city, the members of the Circle dedicated themselves to the idea of social justice: to the goal of changing the lives of the down-trodden, poverty-stricken peasants, achieving thereby a moral transformation of Hungarian society. This dedication did not involve social work alone. It absorbed Radnóti's intellectual and psychic energies as well: it suffused his *ars poetica* and inspired his poetic imagination. Small wonder that many of his lyrics composed in the first three years of his sojourn in Szeged carry populist themes and socialist topics.

But "Like a Bull" reveals an experience that differs from that manifested in the rest of Radnóti 's work after his arrival in Szeged. Breaking to the surface

from the deep, and cutting across his populist style, this experience foreshadows a vision that would become prominent in his later-day lyrics. Besides this poem, the rest of the lyrics of *New Moon,* also point toward changes. Most of them reflect Radnóti's waning political activism and anticipate new structures and new perceptions.

It is with the volume *Just Walk On, Condemned to Die,* however, that his work arrives at the point of transition. With Italy occupying Ethiopia and Franco leading the Falangists against the Spanish Republic, Radnóti's poetry registers the new circumstances. Suddenly, he foresees the destruction of human civilization. The beatings at the university, the scenes, which he forged once into a vision of violence in the "bull poem" but suppressed otherwise, coalesce now with vistas of global massacres. What he suddenly perceives is a universal curse, cast upon creation. The beast from the other world, standing at the gate between life and death, lifts up his face: it is war itself. New images start to appear to him. From the mid-thirties onward, Radnóti sees the horrific in the context of a new war: hence his premonitions, hence his visions of death. Many poems of the volume last mentioned allude to apocalypses and have war and atrocity as their structuring principle. In the lyrics of "A Garden of God's Hill," war and bombs appear, with the *persona* standing amid the lovely garden of the summer house, seeing the future which would destroy the idyll:

> And you young man, what death is waiting now for you?
> is that insectile buzz the bullet's sound
> or will you, smashed and scattered by a bomb,
> be ploughed into the dark beneath the ground?[19]

The image is clear and concrete. War arrives on the wings of bullets and bombs, raining death on millions of people. And there is no one who would stop it. As the voice says in "Guard and Protect Me":

> And what's the word worth here between two wars?
> Scholar of words, the rare and arduous,
> what worth am I? - when bombs are everywhere
> in hands most lunatic and fatuous?[20]

The horrors of war emerge in the hexameters of the shepherd's voice in the "First Eclogue", projecting the collapse of civilization:

> Is it true what I hear? - on the crest of the wild Pyrenees, that blazing
> muzzles of cannon debate among corpses frozen in blood,

> and bears and soldiers alike take flight from the place? That armies
> of women, the child and the aged, run with their tightly-lied bundles
> and throw themselves down on the earth when death comes circling over?
> That corpses outnumber any who come there to clear them away?
> Say, for you knew him, did he that they call Frederico survive?[21]

With his stare fixed on Spain (like that of so many of his contemporaries), Radnóti sees the heretofore unthinkable turning into an everyday reality: war rages, madness predominates, universal disaster threatens global survival. He responds intensely to the brutality of the Falangists and relives the death of Federico Garcia Lorca again and again, capturing the world as a battleground of the forces of a victorious Armageddon against the armies of the innocent.

Of course, this was hardly the first time that Radnóti associated harsh reality with mythical occurrences. Now again, like long ago, he needed explanations, new ways of seeing history. His own heroic self-recriminations failed to account for the enormous events playing themselves out before his eyes. What he envisioned was the destruction of millions. He groped for answers.[22]

And again, he found them in his own poetic imagination, shifting his focus from the specific story of Cain and Abel to the vista of permanent violence. Now he discerned chaos everywhere: the world was blighted; calamity, intrinsic to life, wreaking havoc on its own, challenging the divine. One might ask whether such a shift in the interpretation of the myth of Cain - that evil is *not* caused by guilt, but by the wrath of forces raging unchecked - would undermine its own original symbolic content. But in fact, this alternative also resides within the Western literary tradition. As Quinones explains in his analysis of *Beowulf,* "... by having a progeny, Cain has come to provide the mythical basis for the *continuity* of evil" (emphasis mine).[23] And he maintains that one feature this myth represents in culture is that of "reciprocal violence," that "[tjhe monster, the feud, and the particular nexus of relationships suggested by the Cain-Abel theme exist in the context where Creation is undone..."[24] Where evil is so widespread that it suffocates creation, violence prevails.

Also, there had always been inconsistencies and ambivalences in Radnóti's vision of the myth. Cain was, but the infant Miklós *was not,* guilty of murder. While this fact alone did not destroy the fabric of Radnóti's poetic self-definition, his new concept of *universal* guilt did create some shifts. First of all, his beliefs clashed with the concept of "original sin," a concept well known in the realm of the fundamentalist Christian metaphysics, but foreign to the ethos he embraced. For him, *sin* could not have explained the destruction of millions. *Everybody* could not have been guilty. If it were the case, the real issue lay not

so much in the evil of Cain but more in the fact that Abel had no place to hide. With this re-interpretation of the myth of Cain and Abel, Radnóti shifts his focus from individual guilt to that of universal violence.

If before 1933 he saw guilt as the cause for suffering, hereafter he believed that evil runs havoc, destroying the innocent. In this state of the world, there are only two tasks left to the poet: to pursue the good and to battle against evil. And Radnóti hears the call to save his country - as generations of Hungarian poets have heard before. Now his poems start to make use of oracular power and prophetic language both to evoke the horrors of war and make manifest his destiny as the speaker of the divine. So the speaker emerges in the poem "Annotations to the Prophet Habakkuk":

Cities blazed,
thunderstruck;
villages
burst in fire!
Come to me
thou severe
Habakkuk!

Though the black
cinders cool,
still the fire
in my soul
will not slack,
and its pangs
tear like fangs.

And my food
and my drink
turn to gall.
Head to foot
black as soot
rage make me all.[23]

Radnóti 's poetic imagination is driven now by the moral imperative to warn against, and save the world from, the impending disaster. He perceives his calling as crucial for his country's redemption: he hears the voices of ancestor poets and feels the measure of the public heartbeat. His style becomes more and more striking, more like those of the Biblical prophets. He uses two voices, his own and that of the divine whom he evokes, for whom he speaks. With the passion the Romantics infused in their progeny, with the patriotic obsession of Petőfi and his poetic legacy, with the urgency of the Old Testament prophet

who sees what others have not yet perceived, Radnóti feels compelled to speak and warn of the imminent catastrophe, compelled to be true to the mission he has chosen to embrace.

His voice resounds with mesmerizing intensity in "Fragment", in the poem he wrote in, and had then smuggled out from, the barracks, just before he was taken on his last trip by cattle car to Yugoslavia in May 1944:

> In such an age I dwelt on earth
> when men had fallen so beneath their nature
> that they, unbidden, for their lust would kill,
> and foaming stagger in the tangles of confusion,
> possessed by tainted creeds, bewildered by delusion.
>
> In such an age I dwelt on earth
> when the dumb poet must wait and hold his peace,
> hope for the day when he might find a Voice-
> for none could here pronounce the dark, demanded, verse
> but that Isaiah, master of the fitting curse.[26]

In others, his voice turns lyrical, insisting on the necessity of remaining "pure" while struggling against overwhelming evil. In the poem "Just Walk On, Condemned to Die", while discerning the presence of the uncanny on the road, in the bushes and the trees, including the omen in the sky, the *persona* affirms his task of living an exemplary life:

> O poet, live as clean as those
> hilldwellers in their windblown snows,
> O live as free of sin
> as baby Jesus in
> an ikon where the candle glows,
> as hard as the great wolf who goes
> wounded and bleeding through the snows.[27]

Using striking language, replete with dramatic effects, the speaker of "Guard and Protect Me" pleads for strength:

> Guard and protect me, salt and whitening pain,
> you snow-white consciousness, abide with me:
> let not the brownly-burning smoke of fear
> soil or besoot my word's white purity![28]

This heroic cadence and this tragic, prophetic voice characterize Radnóti's poetry from the mid-thirties onward. Through them, he could express his

awareness of the specter of war and his fear of global annihilation. Through them, he could also convey his psychic need to conflate both his personal life and global history with myth. This mode of seeing the world and composing poetry define his work during his repeated call-ups as a Jewish slave laborer, even in Bor. As a matter of fact, more intense than ever before, in "The Eighth Eclogue," he still molds his words into the amazing beat of the classical hexameter and suffuses them with the stories of two books: that of the Law and that of the Miracles. And despite his pain and vulnerability, he still makes sense of the world through myths, juxtaposing the Poet and the Prophet, both of whom would find the "solution" in the light kindled by "the /rabbi who came to fulfill the Law."[29]

Radnóti's hold on myths weakens only during the last few weeks of the death march. The idyll appears for the last time in his second "Razglednica," projecting "a lake ruffled only by the step/ of a tiny shepherdess,/ where a white cloud is what the ruffled sheep/ drink in their lowliness."[30] But this image is elusive and distant, more a miniature that can hardly be seen as contrasting with the burning countryside, and, as we know, the corpses of more than a thousand Jews murdered at Cservenka.[31] The voice of the prophet is mute in the third and the fourth of these "Picture Postcards"; but that of the poet is not yet. On the edge of life and death, heart-wrenchingly near the mass grave, the stinking mountain of the dead, he still uses classical measures, rhymes, and the ancient art of alliteration to express the power of myth in poetry.

Notes

1. See his recall of the scene in "Ikrek hava: napló a gyerekkorról" [Gemini: A Diary about Childhood] in *Radnóti Miklós Művei [The Works of Miklós Radnóti]* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1978), 536-542 (cited hereafter as "Gemini," and the volume as *Works* and page numbers).
2. In another context, see the universal significance of the Cain-Abel theme in the Western cultural tradition: Ricardo J. Quinones, *The Changes of Cain: Violence and the Lost Brother in Cain and Abel Literature* (Princeton: UP, 1991) (cited hereafter as *Cain* and page numbers).
3. "Gemini," *Works,* 541.
4. Miklós Radnóti, "Nem volt anyám" (I had No Mother), in "Kék füzet" (Blue Book), unpublished.
5. "És szólt és beszélt vala Káin Ábellel," *Works,* 18-19 ['And Cain Spoke unto Abel His Brother'] *Foamy Sky,* trans. Zsuzsanna Ozsváth and Frederich Turner (Princeton: University Press, 1992), 8-10 (volume cited hereafter as *FS* and page numbers).
6. "Csöndes sorok lehajtott fejjel," *Works,* 26, *FS,* 10.
7. "Huszonnyolc év," *Works,* 119, *FS,* 25-6.

8. "A félelmetes angyal," *Works,* 192-93, *FS,* 87-«.
9. "Razglednicák," 1, *Works,* 214, *FS,* 117.
10. "Emlék," *Works,* 44, *FS,* 13.
11. "Mint a bika," *Works,* 73, *FS,* 16.
12. See the discussion of Rudolph Binion, though, who observed a fomenting aggression in German society during the interwar period: "Ketzerisches zur Kriegsfrage" [Heretical Thoughts on the Problem of War], in *"So ist der Mensch... ": 80 Jahre Erster Weltkrieg ["Such is Man... ": 80 Years after World War I],* 195 Sonderausteilung (Vienna: Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 1994), 122.
13. Louis Aragon, "Front Rouge" [Red Front] in Maurice Nadeau, *The History of Surrealism,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), 288.
14. See David H. Hirsch's seminal work, *Deconstruction of Literature: Criticism after Auschwitz* (Hanover-London: Brown UP, 1991) (cited hereafter as *Deconstruction* and page numbers), elaborating on the futility of applying the "new critical approaches" to the works written by authors who lived under the pressure of endless humiliation and the threat of slaughter posed by the Holocaust.
15. See on this topic the discussions of such scholars as Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 19; Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven: UP, 1975), 1-30; Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature* (Chicago: UP, 1980), 1-23; and, of course, David H. Hirsch's outstanding treatment of the topic: *Deconstruction,* 23-68.
16. E.g. Raphael Patai, *Apprentice in Budapest: Memories of a World That Is No More* (Salt Lake City: Bigham Young UP, 1988), 256-64.
17. E.g. Ferenc Csaplár, *A Szegedi Fiatalok Művészeti Kollégiuma* [The Art Forum of Szeged Youth], Irodalomtörténeti Füzetek [Notes on Literary History], 52 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1967), 123-25. To understand the extent and the impact of these beatings, one must study the weekly issues of *Egyenlőség* [Quality], which give detailed account on the ongoing atrocities.
18. Later, when he learns to transform the experience of violence and humilation into mythical ideations and visions that allow him to identify with "all of humanity," he can write about these things. See the poems "A *Meredek út* egyik példányára" *Works,* 158, *FS,* 43; "Dal" *Works,* 159-60, *FS,* 44; "Talán", *Works,* 165-66, *FS,* 52-53; "Ó, régi börtönök," *Works,* 202, *FS,* 98; "Zsivalygó pálmafán," *Works,* 203, *FS,* 99, etc.
19. "Istenhegyi kert," *Works,* 93, *FS,* 17.
20. "Őrizz és védj," *Works,* 138-39, *FS,* 33.
21. "Első ekloga," *Works,* 141, *FS,* 34-35.
22. Anguish for the suffering of the innocent is a dominant theme in Radnóti's work. See the "First Eclogue," in which "armies/ of women, the child and the aged, run with their tightly-tied/ bundles," (see Endnote 21), or "Thursday," (Csütörtök), *Works,* 157, *FS,* 42, capturing blood as running "... from the lamb's white teeth," and "... the raw flesh [that] feeds the snow-white turtledove"; or 'The Third Eclogue," (Harmadik Ecloga), *Works,* 175, *FS,* 60-61, with its speaker's lament: "... this age must murder its poets" or the poem of 1944 January "I Know Not What..." (Nem tudhatom...), *Works,* 196-97, *FS,* 96-97, with its images of the "old granny" weeping "in the graveyard," the "trembling laborers," the "innocent poets," and the "breast-feeding infants," all of whom emerge as juxtaposed to the "Robot-Pilot" on mission.
23. *Cain,* 44.

24. *Cain,* 45.
25. "Lapszéli jegyzet Habakkuk prófétához," *Works,* 136, *FS,* 31.
26. "Töredék," *Works,* 206, F£, 104-5.
27. "Járkálj csak, halálraítélt!" Dorfes, 115, *FS,* 24.
28. "őrizz és védj," *Works,* 138, fS, 33.
29. "Nyolcadik ecloga," *Works,* 213, *FS,* 115.
30. "Razglednicák (2)," *Works,* 214, PS, 117.
31. See Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary,* rev. enlarged ed. I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 350; Nathan Eck, "The March of Death from Serbia to Hungary (September 1944) and the Slaughter of Cservenka: Story of a Survivor of the Death Pit," ed. Shaul Esh, *Yad Vashem 2* (Jerusalem: Publishing Department of the Jewish Agency, 1958), 272-281; Also see other eyewitness accounts of the murders at Cservenka at YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York: the statements of Tibor Groner, Max Singer, Alexander Naumann, George Engel, Eugene Klein, Nicholas Derera, L. Benedek, Ladislas Fischer, and R. Rosenthal.

HELP ME, PASTORAL MUSE: THE VIRGELIAN INTERTEXT IN MIKLÓS RADNÓTTS ECLOGUES

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It has become a commonplace in literary history that by the mid-1930s even the most committed avant-garde poets belonging to the so-called "third generation" of writers grouped around the periodical *Nyugat* turned increasingly to closed form. Already in 1925 Mihály Babits had called for a "new classicism,** by which he meant much more than just a return to traditional versification. Rather, he advocated a return to the "natural totality of eternal art" ["visszatéréssel az örök Művészet ... természetes teljességéhez" Babits II, 139]. In addition, there was the Hungarian literary past stretching back at least to romanticism according to which the poet is supposed to take on the role of national spokesman and unacknowledged legislator. Thus the poets abandoned experimentation as somehow foreign and "un-Hungarian"; one after the other like prodigal, errant sons they dutifully returned to the *alma mater* that refused to tolerate the puerile foolishness and lack of seriousness of any foreign "ism*' because it was incompatible with the traditional role of the poet.

Radnóti's own "turn*' in renouncing earlier expressionist and surrealist experimentation in favour of more traditional writing conforms to the general trend, although the decision to reterritorialize is not without a certain ambivalence. As he wrote in his journals in 1942, "'költőiségem' (mit mondjak helyette) nagy veszélye az izmusokra való hajlam" [a grave threat to my poetic identity is the penchant for various isms], and when recalling his having been under the spell of surrealism for a time, he tries to pass it off as if it were little more than an adventure of youth and a near-fatal disease (267). In spite of having received a solid grounding in the Hungarian classics as a major in Hungarian literature, he writes that he knew the poetry of Jean Cocteau "thoroughly" before he knew that of János Arany, adding revealingly that "az Aranyhoz fordulás is a lélek védekezése volt" (ibid.) [my turn to Arany was also the self-defense of the soul]. At the same time he regrets the taming of his visionary powers, and notes with a tinge of ruefulness that "az azzal járt nyelvi bátorságot kellene visszaszereznem újra" [I should recover the linguistic audacity that went with that]. Despite such scattered traces of nostalgia for an

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avant-garde past, Radnóti's turn is perhaps the most radical among his contemporaries, for he appears to have taken the call to some new classicism almost literally, to the extent that in the last two or three years of his life almost all his major poems were written in a few select classical meters, chiefly hexameters. Moreover, the series of eight poems that constitute the pinnacle of his oeuvre are adaptations/transpositions of the pastoral, especially its Virgilian version, which Radnóti, after the generic term ("selection") applied to the work of the Roman poet, chose to name "eclogues."

The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship of Radnóti's eclogues to the verse of his roman precursor, placed within the wider context of textual genealogy and appropriation. It is an attempt to find some answers to the question asked by Emery George in the introduction to his translation of Radnóti's selected poems: "Why the eclogue form; what does Radnóti need Virgil for?" (18). The answers critics sought to provide, from at least Imre Trencsényi-Waldapfel through Béla Pomogáts to Marianna Birnbaum and beyond, were in part to emphasize, as does Birnbaum, that "there is a deep affinity between Virgil and Radnóti regarding the purpose in writing their eclogues. As the modern interpreters of Virgil claim, 'at the time of an inhuman world of brute force, Virgil built up his own Arcadia, in order to escape into it"' (14-15). George's own reply is somewhat analogous, claiming that "the Latin poet offers the Hungarian a firm foundation for his very poetic being" (19), and he sets up a kind of dialectic between Radnóti, "the maker of idylls" and the "angry communist poet" [sic], ending up by way of a synthesis "in the transcendent choreography of literary borrowing and repayment" (ibid.). The affinities noted and elaborated by critics are in the main based on biographical, psychological, historical, and ideological grounds, depicting Radnóti's classicism as both a testimony to his rationalism, realism, and return to the values of the great humanist tradition, and a formal weapon of a committed anti-fascist against the »rationalism threatening to destroy those values.

None of these approaches are without interest; however, the present brief inquiry assumes what Theodor W. Adorno wrote about Kafka's work, i.e., that "Kafka's authority is textual" (185). Bearing in mind obvious differences, it is arguable that Radnóti's authority is also textual, or more precisely, *inter textual.* In more exact formal terms Radnóti's recourse to the eclogue constitutes a kind of poetic outdoing. In his diary notes for 1942 he considers his own position in the prevailing literary milieu as anything but attractive: "Poros a költészet még így is körülöttem. Versenyre költők. Kivel versenyezzek? Boldog Arany, Petőfi szállt veled, s boldog Ady, Babitscsal szálltál. Attila lenne..." (266) [All around me poetry is covered with dust. Come, poets, let us

compete! Who can I compete with? Happy Arany, Petőfi soared with you, and happy Ady, you soared with Babits. Attila could be...], the last reference naming Attila József, who died in 1937, as the only possible poetic rival. The choice of Virgil and with whom Radnóti in the end decided to compete attests to his desire to find a space, to carve out a poetic niche for himself in a literary situation devoid of true challenge. Instead of some Oedipal struggle, however, the context with a worthy and venerable opponent is fought on a textual plane, and it may more usefully be taken as a line of flight in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari. As they put it, "The question of the father isn't how to become free in relation to him (an Oedipal question) but how to find a path there where he didn't find any" (10).

In a sense, however, Virgil is just a pretext for Radnóti to challenge the authority figure in Hungarian poetry whom he would like to out/undo. It is the assumption of this paper that behind Virgil stands Arany as the fateful precursor - Arany, the quintessential Hungarian poet, the master in all poetic genres. In life and in his metatextual commentaries Radnóti can be seen as the dutiful great-grandson to Arany; of the three pictures adorning the wall of his study, which he calls "family pictures", *Napló* 209 two are of Arany and the third, significantly, is of Ferenc Kazinczy, the language reformer and classicist. Until all his books are confiscated by the guards in the forced labor batallion his most precious possession is a collection of Arany's poems, and when he is asked to read aloud to the other inmates, his choice is *Buda halála* [Buda's Death]. Yet if one looks through Radnóti's entire poetry, one would be hard put to find the slightest reminiscences and echoes even in the manner of a homage, let alone any intertextual traces of Arany's poetry. On the one hand Arany is venerated as both poetic father figure and literary savior from the dangers of various literary fads that would have branded Radnóti a "cosmopolite," a term of disapproval in Arany's vocabulary, and in some sectors of Hungarian literary life of the 1930's an allusion to the Jew. On the other hand when it comes to actual practice Radnóti does his best to write as if János Arany had not existed. Radnóti's adoption in his later writings of various strict forms, notably the elegiac distich and the eclogue written in hexameters, show a tendency diametrically opposed to Arany who employed the hexameter only in his early mock epic, *Az elveszett alkotmány* [The Lost Constitution], abandoning it completely in favor of more "authentically" Hungarian meters in the later poetry. Along with Arany Radnóti does, of course, wish to escape Virgil as well. The intertextual connection with Virgil in the eclogues is claimed not for the sake of veneration or some solid aesthetic-ideological "ground," but more importantly to correct him, parody him, deface and disfigure his "monumentality" and "originality - to show, in Paul de Man's sense of the

term, the "nonsacred" and "decanonized" character of Virgil's Arcadia (de Man 97-98). By calling, somewhat brazenly, his own series of poems "eclogues," Radnóti lures the so-called cognescenti into believing that nothing matters but some fundamental affinity between Virgil's work and his own, only to confound them by almost constant ironic reversals and displacements. It is important to note in this connection that an element introduced in the later eclogues is the allusions to the Hebrew prophets, notably Isaiah and Nahum, after a somewhat earlier reference to Habakkuk. For someone like Radnóti who refused to consider himself a Jew but wanted more than anything to be taken for "just" a Hungarian, and in no sense a "Jewish-Hungarian" poet, the appearance of the prophets signifies not only a return of the repressed but far from being a kind of "syncretism" of classical and biblical authority, as some critics have suggested, the latter proves to be a corrective to the ruins of the classical ideal.

As scholars have noted, Radnóti's turn to the eclogue form began with his translation of Virgil's *Eclogue IX* for a bilingual edition of Virgil's poems in 1938, a translation which, at least in Trencsényi-Waldapfel's view, decisively influenced Radnóti's turn to the classical (306). As it will emerge in the present reading, in addition to echoes and textual scraps taken over by Radnóti, there would appear to be an even closer relationship between the corresponding eclogues written by the two poets, i.e., between Virgil's *Eclogue I* and Radnóti's *First Eclogue,* and so on, all the way to the final piece in the collection.[1] Radnóti wrote his own first eclogue within a few months of the completion of the translation, and a fair number of lines may be traced back to Virgil's IX. The epigraph to the poem also comes from Virgil, though in this case from near the end of *Georgics* I, 505-506: "Quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas: tot bella per orbem/tam multae scelerum facies;..." [here are right and wrong inverted; so many wars in the world, so many shapes of sin].[2] It is plausible that Radnóti's three dots were meant to suggest that the knowledgeable reader continue to read the intertext, for a few lines later Virgil specifically writes that "hie movet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum" (509) [here Euphrates, there Germany awakes war], thus through Radnóti's updating alluding not only to Nazi Germany in the west, but wholly unwittingly, and yet prophetically, to the other great power in the east. Both poems have for their main themes the relative weakness of poetry to effect changes in the real world, a preoccupation which will be all-pervasive in Radnóti's eclogues; but the differences are crucial. In Virgil's eclogue the shepherds bemoan the fact that Menalcas, who supposedly stands for Virgil, has sought unsuccessfully to have his farm returned to him after it was confiscated as a result of the triumvirs' rewarding the veterans of the civil war by giving them land. Instead

of a private grievance, a satisfactory resolution of which in any case is recounted in *Eclogue I,* Radnóti's indignation is fuelled by another, the Spanish Civil War, and the whole age is indicted as destructive to poets. (Radnóti mentions Lorca and Attila József as victims of this "horrible world".)

Virgil's lines

> sed carmina tanlum
> nostra valent, Lycida, tela inter Martia, quantum
> Chaonias dicunt aquila veniente columbas (Eel. IX, 11-13)
> [but in matters of war our songs, Lycidas, are worth as much
> as, they say, the Chaonian doves when the eagle comes] [3]

are reinscribed far more strongly in Radnóti's First Eclogue as when the Shepherd asks the poet, "Hát te hogy élsz? visszhang jöhet-é szavaidra e korban?" [How do you live? Can your words find an echo in this age?] to which he replies. "Ágyúdörej közt? Üszkösödő romok, árva faluk közt?" [While cannon boom? In smouldering ruins, deserted villages?] For while Virgil's appeal to Octavian will be successful, i.e., the future Augustus respects poets and poetry sufficiently to correct an injustice, the modern era soon to experience total war spares neither the writer nor the work: "S jó, ha a szél a parazsat kotorászva / tört sorokat lel a máglya helyén s megjegyzi magának" [At best only the wind poking through the pyre's ashes will find some broken lines to remember], as if Radnóti's poet were to proleptically conjure up his own fate and the *Bor Notebook* found on his body in the mass grave. The generally positive tone of Virgil's *Eclogue I,* in which the poet practically deifies Octavian for listening to his plea and bringing long hoped for peace to Italy, is countered in the *First Eclogue* by the Poet's profound disgust with the world and a sense of foreboding as to his own inevitable destruction. Comparing himself to an oak tree already marked with a cross to be cut down, the Poet ironically indicates a profanation of the classical ethos which considered the oak sacred to Jupiter, and also again prophetically, Radnóti's later (wholly futile) conversion to Christianity, for having been literally marked with the sign of the cross did not cancel out the other mark of having been branded with the yellow arm band which in the end proved to be the more decisive.

The *Second Eclogue* continues to be preoccupied with the futility of poetry in the midst of war, not surprisingly since it was finished in late April 1941, a few weeks after Prime Minister Pál Teleki's suicide and the German expansion to Yugoslavia and Greece. The transhistorical dialogue between Poet and Pilot is imbued with a sort of antique, quasi-Stoic fatalism, their actions flowing out

of some primal law such as necessity. The Poet, as he says, writes the way the cat miaows or the dog barks or "the little fish flirtatiously lays its eggs"; analogously, the Pilot appears untroubled by the deadly effects of the bombs he drops, for he has become fused with his machine and acts like an automaton. Both speakers appear to lack an ethical dimension: I write, shrugs the Poet, what else can I do? I drop bombs, answers the Pilot, even though I'd much rather be with my lover. But in the Poet's twice repeated statement, "írok, mit is tehetnék" [I write, what else is there for me to do?] there is also something of the defiance of "Hier ich stehe, ich kann nicht anders," suggesting the underlying presence of a moral will. Such moral direction, however, is weakened by the displaced status of both Poet and Pilot, for the Pilot's complaint, of his being homeless between heaven and earth ("ég s föld között hazátlan") ironically reverts on the Poet as well, who despairs of the effectiveness of his words. Further irony may be seen if Virgil's *Eclogue II* is invoked, for there, too, Corydon the shepherd pours out his songs of unrequited love while conscious of their futility. In addition, there is a more definite echo here of the Poet's similar practice of writing as if driven by iron necessity which all nature must obey: "Torva leaena lupum sequitur, lupus ipse capellam, / florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella, / te Corydon, o Alexi: trahit sua quemque voluptas" (63-65) [the fierce lioness follows the wolf, the wolf himself the goat, the lusty goat follows the flowering clover, and Corydon you, o Alexis; each is led by his desire]. Thus, for Virgil, in proper Epicurean fashion, the goal of all creatures' instinctive pursuit is pleasure; while in Radnóti grim necessity brings about bitterness and indifference in face of a world inexorably descending to darkness. Virgil's Corydon can still legitimately escape to nature; for Radnóti's Poet little remains except to conjure up an image of *homo technologies,* a prospect of dehumanization in which he himself is implicated.

It is not surprising, then, that the *Third Eclogue,* written some six weeks later, is a plaintive invocation of the entire classical literary heritage in order to offer legitimation for the modern poet. The cry, "Help me, Pastoral Muse," repeated several times in the poem, is uttered in a café which the poet with light irony calls "an urban grove," where instead of flute-playing shepherds he is surrounded by a group of noisy salesmen and cigar-chomping lawyers. The image stands both for a desire to transform the sordid present into a semblance of the bucolic past and a simultaneous devaluation of Virgilian rustic simplicity as nothing more than an aestheticization of harsh everyday reality. As in the previous two eclogues, here too, the fear of death, the death of poets, insistently appears; it is against these odds that the poet implores the muse as to the possibility of writing poetry, particularly about the "miracle of love."

Once again the prophetic note is struck: "Úgy halnak e korban a költők... / csak ránkomlik az ég, nem jelzi halom porainkat, / sem nemesívű szép, görög urna nem őrzi, de egy-két / versünk hogyha marad..." [How the poets of this age are dying away... The sky falls in on us, no mound is raised above our ashes, no noble Grecian urn will gracefully hold them, only a few poems remain as if by chance]. The "Grecian urn" nostalgically alludes both to Keats' ode and to Donne's "well-wrought urn," emblems of happier ages when poetry had value and meaning.

Thus, the invocation to the Pastoral Muse, which is borrowed from Virgil's *Eclogue IV* (appearing also in *Eclogue VIII*), is at once more desperate and implicitly critical of the relative ease with which Virgil can prophesy the return of the golden age. *Eclogue IV* predicts the birth of a child who will bring about this new age, "quo ferrae primum / desinet ac totó sürget gens aurea mundo" (8-9) [under whom the iron brood shall first cease, and a golden race shall spring up across the world]. In sardonic contrast to this marvellous child stands the image of the child in Radnóti's own *Fourth Eclogue,* taken from his autobiography. Instead of peace, this child brought death into the world, killing (or so Radnóti assumed) both the mother and his twin brother, a psychological burden that weighed heavily on Radnóti throughout his life. Yet the autobiographical reference is further qualified by the deliberate allusion to that other child who comes to establish a golden era: "És megszületni újra új világra, / mikor arany gőzök közül vakít / s új hajnalokra kél a nap világa" [And to be reborn into a new world, when the sunlight blindingly shoots through golden vapours and rises to a new dawn]. Again, Virgil's wishful thinking combined with a flattery of Pollio or Octavian is displaced onto the plane of history, evoking the possibility of a more just world after the end of the present war. With the line "Az írótáblák összetörtek" [the writing slates have been shattered] Radnóti continues the topos of the demise of poetry, while paradoxically continuing to write it; there is also an echo of the despair of the dispossessed Meliboeus in Virgil's *Eclogue I* and his mournful note spoken to the self-satisfied Tityrus, "carmina nulla canam" [I shall not sing songs anymore]. Similarly the plea of the displaced poet, "Segíts szabadság, / ó hadd leljem meg végre honnomat" [Help me, Freedom, o let me find my homeland at last] voices a desire to put an end to the Poet's alienation and come in from the cold, as it were. Yet an intertextual hint, coming from one of Attila József s last poems, "íme hát megleltem hazámat" (József II, 419) [I have finally found my homeland], lends the line a wholly different resonance, one that is bereft of any hope. Such a reading is further corroborated by the undoing of any optimistic closure the Voice, the Poet's interlocutor in the *Fourth Eclogue,* would like to impress on the poem. His highflown suggestion

that "if all is in ruins," then the poet should "inscribe [his wrath] on the sky" [az égre írj, ha minden összetört] is overwhelmed by the earlier line, "A fák között már fuvall a halál" [Death is already blowing through the trees] which will reoccur with slight, though all the more powerful alteration in the *Third Razglednica,* one of the last poems Radnóti ever wrote, "Fölöttünk fú a förtelmes halál" [Above us blows the horror of death]. Radnóti's *Fourth* is thus a deliberate antithesis to Virgil's *Eclogue IV;* and attempting to write the impossibility of writing from the vantage point of imminent death, the Virgilian mode is shown up as little more than an idle pastime.

There is even more direct connection between Radnóti's *Fifth Eclogue* written in November 1943, and Virgil's V. Both poems pay tribute to a beloved figure, now dead. In Virgil the person receives the allegorical name of Daphnis, the protypical bucolic poet, while Radnóti with the dedication "Bálint György emlékére" [In memóriám György Bálint] again appeals to history and the disappearance in the Ukraine of his close friend, the highly respected essayist and journalist, who, like Radnóti, was also made to serve in a forced labor batallion. Radnóti's last line, "Mégsem tudok írni ma rólad" [Still, I can't write of you today] continues as well the by now obsessive topos of writing the impossible. Virgil's shepherds in *Eclogue V* vie with each other in their happy task of deifying Daphnis, who may stand for Caesar, Alfenus Varus, or even Catullus; in Havas's commentary the choice falls on Daphnis as a personification of pastoral poetry (85). So in effect Virgil could then be said to be writing the apotheosis of the kind of poetry he is involved in writing at the time. Despite the surface similarities such as both Daphnis and Bálint having been cut down by a cruel death, and even if the adage "amat bonus otia Daphnis" (61) [good Daphnis loves peace] may be seen to be applicable to both Radnóti and Bálint, the contrast between the two poems is considerable. *Eclogue V* ends in a perfect resolution of justifying the eminence of pastoral poetry and also on a note of poetic amity; by contrast, Radnóti's effort is a self-confessed failure to erect a proper poetic memorial to Bálint. His poem ends up being a "fragment," as indicated by the subtitle he himself affixed to the poem, showing by its disrupted, unfinished shape the disrupted, unfinished life of his friend. Not only can he not praise pastoral poetry, but the only "bucolic" scenes in the poem are the menacing snow clouds of the approaching winter and the vast steppes of the Ukraine where Bálint and thousands of other victims lie buried. The kind of rhetorical gesture whereby Virgil's Menalcas is able to exalt Daphnis to the stars ("Daphnim ad astra feremus," 52) is unavailable to a poet in Radnóti's situation.

The ending of *Eclogue V* where Mopsus offers Menalcas his shepherd's crook as a reward for his superior song will be echoed at the end of Radnóti's

Eighth Eclogue, which consists of a dialogue between a Poet and a Prophet. But the prophetic stance as somehow both inimical and desirable is also present in another poem written between the *Fifth* and *Seventh Eclogues,* posthumously titled *Töredék* [Fragment] which, according to the critical consensus, may be taken as part of the missing *Sixth Eclogue* (although Birnbaum is correct in stating that "there is no poem which is undisputedly identified as the Six Eclogue" 17). Yet *Fragment* contains a number of topoi and rhetorical turns that may connect it to Virgil's *Eclogue VI,* making the conjecture more plausible. The Radnóti text describes a monstrous age in which the poet has had to live out his life, and the diction is deliberately overwritten, replete with ghoulish, not to say grotesque and macabre images reminiscent of Poe or Baudelaire, in an attempt to give verbal approximation to the inexpressible horrors he had witnessed: "az ország megvadult s egy rémes végzeten / vigyorgott vértől és mocsoktól részegen" [the country went mad and drunk on blood and filth, it only grinned at its own hideous fate] and "az élő irigylé a férges síri holtat, / míg habzott asztalán a sűrű méregoldat" [the living envied the worm-eaten dead, while heavy poison foamed before him on the table]. Virgil's *Eclogue VI* recounts how the sleeping satyr Silenus is surprised by two boys, either satyrs or shepherds, and a Naiad, and is compelled to sing a song for them. The stories recounted by the satyr are nearly all about monstrous events and unnatural passions: Pasiphaë's lust for a white bull, Scylla with monsters around her waist tearing sailors to pieces, and finally the story of King Tereus and the horrible meal Philomela and Procne prepare and serve up to him. Silenus, himself a kind of monster, relates these aberrant myths for their entertainment value, in order to shock and titillate; hence the dispassionate tone proper for a storyteller who has not lived but only heard and spliced together the stories - not unlike the way Virgil had taken over and then transformed the idylls of Theocritus. In contrast, the speaker in the Radnóti fragment speaks *in propria persona* as having witnessed and lived through the atrocities. And yet, the adoption of the manner of gothic exaggeration may also be taken as a sign of exhaustion, of the inadequacy of the [pastoral] poetic medium as such. A sense of debility and insufficiency is made explicit in the last stanza: "Oly korban éltem én e földön, / mikor a költő is csak hallgatott," [I lived on this earth in an age when the poets, too, were silent], again having recourse to the paradox of writing-while-not-writing. Similarly to the dubious ending of the *Eighth Eclogue,* Radnóti calls for the prophet to take over the poetic function, as the silent poet stands in wait for the return of Isaiah, the only man skilled in the knowledge of terrible words and capable of justly damning this degenerate age.

The *Seventh Eclogue,* written a month before the *Eighth* in July 1944, is a verse epistle to the poet's wife. It bears no resemblance to Virgil's *Eclogue VII,*

which is another *carmen amoebaeum,* a poetic contest in which Virgil is reworking conventional themes derived from Theocritus. Radnóti is writing in Lager Heidenau in Serbia where he and the remnants of the forced labor unit were transported to work in the nearby copper mines, enduring hardships not unlike those inflicted on the inmates in the death camps. The only implicit connection in the two poems may be between the bucolic scene, a kind of paradisal spot described by Virgil's Daphnis calling on Meliboeus to join him: "hue ipsi potum venient per prata iuvenci, / his viridis tenera praetexit harundine ripas / Mincius, eque sacrant resonant examina quercu" (11-13) [here your cows will come across the meadows to drink, here the river Mincius fringes its green banks with waving reeds, and from the sacred oak tree swarm humming bees] and the anti-pastoral scenery around the camp. The poet calls attention to the fact that the wooden fence surrounding the barracks, fringed with barbed wire, is made of oak, the now desecrated tree of the god, which in this metamorphosis has appropriately become "savage" ("a szögesdróttal beszegett vad / tölgy kerítés"). The poet recognizes his own dehumanization - "férgek közt fogoly állat" [a captive animal in the midst of vermin] as he calls himself - who writes in the way he lives, "Ékezetek nélkül, csak sort sor alá tapogatva, / úgy írom itt a homályban a verset, mint ahogy élek, / vaksin, hernyóként araszolgatván a papíron" [Without putting in the accents, just groping line after line, I'm writing this poem here the way I live, in darkness, half-blind, inching my way across the paper like a caterpillar]. Among the sleepers in the barrack only the poet is awake, alone vigilant and conscious of the end while also hoping for a miracle, perhaps the intervention of a god as foretold by the prophets. However, the prevailing tone and sense are those of a profound resignation, of hovering between life and death, recalling the sensation of displacement in the *First Eclogue* as he tells the wife, "nem tudok én meghalni se, élni se nélküled immár" [I can neither live nor die without you].

The reappearance of the prophet in the *Eighth Eclogue* in the persona of Nahum, whose voice prophesied the destruction of Niniveh, would seem to answer the expectations of the poet in *Töredék* overwhelmed by too much horror. At the end of the dialogue between the Poet and the Prophet, the latter, who identifies himself as Nahum, urges the Poet to join forces with him and proclaim the coming of the new era promised by "the young rabbi who fulfilled the law"; "Útrakelünk, gyere, gyűjtsük / össze a népet, hozd feleséged s mess botokat már. / Vándornak jó társa a bot, nézd, add ide azt ott, / az legyen ott az enyém, mert jobb szeretem, ha göcsörtös" [Come, let's go on a journey, gather the people together, bring your wife, cut staffs for walking, staffs are the wanderers' company, look, give me that one over there, let me

have that one, I prefer one with knots]. According to the communist critic Trencsényi-Waldapfel, the borrowing of the pastoral staff image from the end of Virgil's *Eclogue V* testifies to Radnóti's syncretism, to the "identical nature of the bucolic myth and biblical myth," ["a bibliai mítosz azonossága a bukolikus mítosszal"], and beyond that, to his unbroken optimism in the inevitable coming of the golden age, i.e., the age of socialism (318-319). It is true that the Prophet attempts to instill some hope in the dispirited poet, saying "Ismerem újabb verseid. Éltet a méreg. / Próféták s költők dühe oly rokon" p know your more recent poems. Wrath keeps you alive. The wrath of prophets and poets is common]; nevertheless, his words cannot be taken to subsume entirely the voice of the Poet. In other words, the Prophet presents only one side of the picture, and his final appeal does not turn dialogics into dialectics, the cutting of branches for walking sticks serving as a kind of synthesis. The rewriting of the intertext from *Eclogue V* signifies an ironically sustained difference rather than similarity. The Virgilian shepherd's crook is manifestly venerable and a thing of beauty, "with even knots and ring of bronze," an aesthetic object in itself as well as a synecdoche of the pastoral poetic tradition; as such, it is to be treasured and preserved. By contrast, in the *Eighth Eclogue* the staffs to be fashioned from the freshly cut branches are for immediate and practical use, intended as a support during the wanderers' arduous journey. Aesthetic qualities are of little consequence; in fact, the Prophet prefers a gnarled and knotted staff ("jobb szeretem, ha göcsörtös"), an instrument, in other words, whose "truth" is rough and unvarnished. Such preference would seem explicitly, and ironically, to reverse the extravagant praise accorded to the power of poetry in Virgil's corresponding *Eclogue VIII:* "carmina vel caelo possunt deducere lunam, / carminibus Circe socios mutavit Ulixi" (69-70) [songs can even pull down the moon from the sky, by songs did Circe change the companions of Ulysses]. The valorizing of the prophetic stand would also in a more general way go against the grain not only of Virgil's classical style but that of Radnóti's own classicism as well. Consequently, it is not surprising that the poem ends on a note of irresolution, for the Poet makes no answer as if the Prophet's offer of a way out is something he tacitly agrees with but also something he cannot believe in and make his own. So while the differential intertextual borrowing as an allegorical sign testifies to a belated recognition on Radnóti's part of the Hebraic legacy neglected by a near-exclusive devotion to the Greco-Roman tradition, to turn prophet at this stage would be tantamount not merely to overhaul but to repudiate the poetic ideal he had fashioned for himself.

Virgil's adaptations from Theocritus bring about an "Italianate" pastoral, so that his ten eclogues result in a reterritorialization of the Hellenic model,

emphasizing his own proud Romanness and acquiscence in the new order laid down by Augustus. Conversely, Radnóti's commitment to the pastoral may be taken as a sign of his otherness, of a desire to forge a kind of Hungarian identity for himself through a process of poetic self-making whereby he would escape some of his major precursors and also rid his work of the slightest hint or trace of a nationalism he so vehemently detested but which few of his contemporaries were able or willing to do. However ambiguously and inadequately, the invocation of the prophetic persona in the last eclogues may also obliquely indicate the emergence of the Jewishness he so categorically renounced and repressed. Radnóti's use of the eclogue is disruptive of the very tradition in which he had attempted to inscribe the undescribable; and if the four razglednicas, his last poems, are any indication - the second one being a sort of farewell to the pastoral and the fourth an exact prophecy of his own death - he may very well have abandoned the eclogue form and the whole classicizing manner along with it, had he lived. After all, he was only thirty-five when he was cut down by the executioner's bullet.

Notes

1. In order to distinguish between Virgil's and Radnóti's eclogues, I have used *Eclogue* /for Virgil and *First Eclogue* for Radnóti, and so on.
2. In the essay *The Eclogues of Miklós Radnóti* B. S. Adams has stated that this reversal of right and wrong is "the basic idea of the Eclogues" (Adams 391). I am grateful to Clive Wilmer and George Gömöri's edition and translation of Radnóti's selected poems *Forced March* for alerting me to Adams' article. For the translation of Radnóti's eclogues in my paper, while consulting numerous other editions, I have mainly relied on the Wilmer Gömöri translation, with occasional modifications of my own.
3. For Virgil's eclogues I have used László Havas's edition; for my translations I have consulted the Fairclough translation in the Loeb Classical Library.

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GÖRGEY, LEE, AND PERCEPTIONS

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It was one of those hot July days in Budapest and I had just convinced my Hungarian friend, Judit Ruzicska, to accompany me to the National Cemetery to visit the mausoleum of the Hungarian statesman Lajos Kossuth. I had recently finished the rough draft of my dissertation on the confederation plans of both Kossuth and the former minister of nationalities in the Károlyi government, Oszkár Jászi. I had previously seen Jászi's grave on a visit to Oberlin, Ohio, in 1985, now all that remained for me was to lay some flowers on Kossuth's grave.

To Hungarian friends my fascination with visiting the graves of historic people seemed an aberration. Almost none of them had ever ventured to the National Cemetery. Some who lived in Budapest did not even know its location. Granted, the remains of the Russian soldiers who helped to put down the uprising in 1956 were a vivid reminder of a painful past; however, their failure to know the location of their national cemetery just seemed to be another of the cultural differences that existed between us. One friend, a Hungarian language instructor at the summer program in Debrecen, informed me she had lied to her American students about having visited the cemetery because she felt embarrassed about the responses she received when telling them the truth. Still, she had no intention of going there. Hungarians were known to visit the unmarked graves of Imre Nagy and the dead of 1956, but this clearly seemed to be a people coming to grips with their past. We too have a wall in Washington, a reminder of generation's sacrifice in southeast Asia, for a similar purpose. But Americans are continuously taking trips to cemeteries to honor their heroes, and, in some cases, their villains. One only has to venture to Gettysburg or Arlington during the summer to grasp this American phenomenon of visiting and paying homage to their dead. After all, one can learn a great deal about cultures in the way they honor their dead.

Kossuth's tomb was impressive; however, with the exception of Judit, there were no other living Hungarians present beyond the guards at the entrance.

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We did, however, meet a German tourist who asked us for directions to Kossuth's grave. I could not help feeling the irony that it was we foreigners who were paying homage to Hungary's national heroes and not the indigenous people. Afterward, I could not resist the temptation of visiting other famous dead Hungarians. On my trip to another mausoleum I tripped, literally, over an inconspicuous grave. A further examination revealed the name Artúr Görgey (1818-1916). It seemed so plain! So ordinary! Yes, a great deal can be learned by the way people honor their dead. In fact, Hungarian historiography can be vividly explained by a simple examination of the way the Hungarians have posthumously honored Kossuth and Görgey. It did not escape my attention that under the socialist regime Kossuth had been resurrected. His presence is visible in every Hungarian city I visited. Statues, streets, schools, and stores all reflect his presence. Not so with Görgey. In actuality, not so much as a statue was present in Budapest to honor Hungary's most famous soldier since Ferenc Rákóczi II, who had led the struggle for Hungarian independence from 1703 to 1711.1 could not help feeling that Miklós Horthy, who had done much to enhance Görgey's image,[1] was turning over in his grave at this injustice to a fellow soldier.

Unfortunately, the military talents of Görgey have always been tarnished by accusations that he betrayed Hungary during its War of Independence in 1849. Immediately following the struggle Görgey was branded a traitor by the Hungarian president, Kossuth, who referred to him as "Hungary's Judas." Kossuth alleged that Görgey had undermined the state by surrending to the Russians at Világos, and delivered his officers and soldiers to Austrian vengeance, while he secured amnesty and payment for himself. Unfortunately for Görgey, these perceptions have continued to color Hungarian historiography. Critics question his apparent lack of chivalry in a profession that is steeped in romanticism and demands a code of justice and honor. Military history is often written by what Arden Bucholz calls "participant-observers-career soldiers or civilians who fought in wars."[2] Consequently, a perception exists among certain military circles that a captain must go down with his ship and generals should share the fate of their men and officers. Although there have been attempts, most notably under the regency of Horthy, to resurrect Görgey's image, he is still the victim of these misconceptions. The perception of Görgey's surrender and escape from the gallows has overshadowed his brilliant military performance during the war.

Regrettably for Görgey, he did not possess the personality of a Robert E. Lee, the Confederate general who even in defeat aroused the respect and admiration of both friend and foe. Lee's surrender at Appomattox has never been overshadowed by accusations of treachery. On the contrary, admirers,

such as Winston Churchill, write that "Lee was one of the greatest captains known to the annals of war." Such statements have not been forthcoming in Görgey's defense. Although Friedrich Engels considered Görgey, along with the Pole József Bem, to be the most talented commanders of that age, few today are familiar with Görgey's exploits during the Hungarian War of Independence. According to István Deák, he was "cold, sarcastic, overly modest, puritanical, and contemptuous."[3] Priscilla Robertson states that Görgey

> did not care a fig for Hungary in his heart, or for any other ideal... He sneered, openly or privately, at Kossuth and the government of Hungary, at the common people, at the militia, at his own soldiers, and even at himself.[4]

These are not the personal traits which inspire admiraton and devotion among anyone else but his soldiers. The South could forgive Lee for his blunder at Gettysburg, but Görgey could never escape the charge that he had sold his honor and country for a price.

Regardless of Görgey's performance in battle and the common sense he showed in surrender, accolades are never easily given to commanders who lose a war - in particular, to an individual such as Görgey, whose contempt for politicians and military superiors, such as János Móga and the Pole Henryk Dembinski, led him to obstruct, disobey, and interfere with their decisions. Machiavelli wrote "If a general wins a battle it cancels all other errors and miscarriage."[5] The converse of this statement implies that if a general loses a war, all brilliance, daring, and audacity must be cancelled out by his failure. Charles Fair states

> there have been few men so strategically placed and so overpowering in their authority that they were able,... single-handedly, to bring on a general disaster... [and] in defeat, the first concern of those officially responsible is always to shift the blame onto others and to prove their own conduct to have been above reproach, if not wasted in its brilliance.[6]

As far as Görgey's reputation is concerned, this is an occasion when a unique military leader falls in defeat, losing in the process both the war and his reputation.

Other factors besides generalship can lead to military failure. Command, according to Martin Blumenson,

> is an art to be mastered, a craft that requires specialized knowledge, a well-developed intuition, high intelligence, and the ability to reason. The process of motivating human

> beings and controlling impersonal forces during a clash of arms is extremely complicated and difficult, and successful practitioners of the art of command have been a special breed of men.[7]

As a result, it might be fitting to place Görgey in a category with Hannibal, Charles XII, Napoleon, Erwin Rommel, and Lee, all of whom fell in defeat. He should, however, at least rank in Hungarian military historiography with Rákóczi. Victory requires that one opponent overmatch another in the sum of his generalship plus all other capabilities for waging war. Hence, if historians want to judge Görgey fairly, they must consider the resources at his command along with his performance. In Görgey's case, he opposed superior forces but managed to hold out and inflict defeat with his ill-supplied and poorly supported army.

But all these factors cease to matter as long as Hungarians continue to debate and discredit Görgey's role in the revolution. Since Hungarians refuse to recognize his military prowess, there is little chance that foreign historians will ever give him the recognition he deserves. In the modern western tradition it becomes necessary for nation-states to honor their own heroes before presenting them to the world for approval. Görgey has not passed the first and most important hurdle of national appreciation. Karl Marx would acknowledge that this road to the international recognition must first go the national route.

Lee represents, probably more than anyone else, the precise paradigm of how this process works. There are always two major considerations in describing his military talents: first, he fought against the North, and consequently, after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862, for the continuation of slavery; and second, Lee is the only American general to have ever lost a war. Naturally, had the South won, neither of these factors would have mattered. Lee, however, surrendered to the Union general Ulysses S. Grant in 1865. After the war Lee became the symbol of the Lost Cause for the defeated South. They revered him to the point of worship. His birthday, 19 January, is still celebrated as a holiday in some former Confederate states. Washington College, where Lee served as president from the end of the war until his deatL in 1870, was later renamed Washington and Lee University. Plenty of statues in cities and on battlefields honor his place in American history. His high personal character, his humility, his selflessness, and his devotion to what he considered his duty placed Lee in a unique position to be not only loved by southerners, but also respected and admired by his adversaries. Unlike Görgey, Lee passed the important first hurdle necessary for recognition. Internationally, Churchill, Sir Frederic Maurice, Cyril Falls, and even Bernard Law

Montgomery, have all written respectfully of Lee's military career. His military career may have fallen short of their abstract yardstick of perfection, but his character overwhelmingly satisfied their romantic military code.

Görgey's accomplishments are as impressive as Lee's when one considers the lack of organization, lack of trust, and constant interference of Kossuth's government. His Vác Proclamation of 5 January 1849, which affirmed the independence of the Army of the Upper Danube and its loyalty to the Constitution of 1848, saved both the army from disintegration and the state from collapse. Görgey's troops and officers were passionately loyal to their commander, and at times, were the actual force preventing any government threat to remove him. Görgey's army emerged from northern Hungary to take the counteroffensive, with General György Klapka's army corps, against the Austrian Field Marshall Alfred Windisch-Graetz. Under Görgey's leadership the Hungarians liberated Komárom, Buda-Pest, and eventually, almost all of Hungary. Unfortunately, Görgey was able only to defeat, not to destroy, the Austrian army which opposed him, but his successes were responsible for the removal of Windisch-Graetz as head of the Austrian forces. This campaign was the high point of Hungary's struggle for independence and gave Kossuth the military victories needed to announce the dethronement of the Habsburg dynasty on 14 April 1849. Kossuth, who distrusted Görgey and even ordered his court-martial on 24 March 1849, would not appoint Görgey commander-in-chief of the Hungarian forces until the situation was lost. Görgey, however, was appointed minister of war in May 1849. Also, Kossuth's choice of József Bem, a Pole, over Görgey as commander of all Hungary's troops only served to create further dissension among the army and within the state.

Finally, the addition of Austrian troops from the successfully concluded Italian campaign, the intervention of Tsar Nicholas I's Russian troops under Field Marshall Ivan Paskevich, the appointment of General Ludwig Haynau as the Austrian commander-in-chief in Hungary, and Görgey's further involvement in political issues and intrigues would all play roles in Hungary's defeat; however, judging by the attitudes of the great powers, in particular Great Britain and Russia, it is highly doubtful that Hungary's struggle for independence would have ever ended in victory. For Görgey, the most Hungary could hope for was to fight long enough to convince the opposition to accept a negotiated settlement in which Hungary would retain its autonomy and the April laws of 1848. After almost two months of continual retreat against superior forces, Görgey, having forced the resignation of Kossuth on 11 August, had himself appointed dictator. When he realized the situation was hopeless, Görgey proceeded to negotiate the surrender of his army to the Russians at Világos two days later. Eventually, as Görgey had realized, the

Hungarians would have to settle for a compromise, but that would not be negotiated until 1867.

As for Görgey, he would be forever branded by Kossuth for betraying Hungary. In an open letter dated 12 September 1849, Kossuth put responsibility for Hungary's defeat squarely on Görgey's shoulders. While in exile, Kossuth studied military strategy and tactics so he could personally lead Hungary's forces during its second war of independence and thereby prevent the "intrigues" of another Görgey. Kossuth believed this second struggle would involve the West against Russia, and he was actively involved in émigré politics promoting this new confrontation. Görgey, however, would live the remaining sixty-seven years of his life in the Habsburg empire in virtual obscurity. With the exception of the publication of his memoirs, his reputation and legacy remained a continual subject for debate.

The Vác Proclamation

During the first half of the nineteenth century successful struggles for independence were still very much the exception rather than the rule. In actuality, with the exception of the American Revolution, one would be hard pressed to find a war of independence that in the end brought liberation for the rebel forces. The Hungarian struggle for independence, like those of the Poles before and after them, is another struggle which ended in defeat; however, independence was not the original goal of the participants, and, consequently, even after it was declared the expressed objective by the government on 14 April 1849, there were those, like Görgey, who supported the original objective of loyalty to the king and the April Laws of 1848.

Görgey's dilemma was not unlike that of George Washington, Lee, and Union general George Thomas, who found themselves in similar positions. All of them at one time had served and swore loyalty to either their king or government. George Thomas was as much a Virginian as Lee; however, unlike Lee, Thomas remained loyal to the Union he served. Neither soldier could be a traitor to his personal conscience. Likewise, Görgey chose to remain loyal to his king. Görgey entered the struggle because "the country was in danger."[8] Unlike Kossuth, Görgey recognized tangible objectives and sought to accomplish them. The Vác Proclamation is an expression of his conscience. The Royal Army of the Upper Danube would remain loyal to the 1848 constitution that was sanctioned by the king, and to the principle of constitutional monarchy.[9] Consequently, independence was an anathema to Görgey and the vast majority of those officers who followed him.

Görgey's actions during this period are similar to those of Washington and Lee. Görgey realized the importance of keeping his army intact as a fighting force. According to Clausewitz, the first principal object in carrying on a war is "to conquer and destroy the enemy's armed forces." The Vác Proclamation kept the army alive and intact as an instrument that could be used to force a compromise with Austria based on the 1848 constitution. For Görgey, the army was loyal to King Ferdinand and fought the octroyed constitution.[10]

Like the American Continental Army, it was important for the Hungarian army to exist in order to achieve an equitable solution. Görgey approached Kossuth and the government more than once on the prospect of compromise with Austria.[11] A battle won was the best declaration of independence. The bayonet was necessary to gain Hungary's constitutional rights.[12] Like Washington and Lee, however, Görgey knew that the salvation of his country was impossible without foreign assistance. Washington received such help, and the American colonies' struggle for independence was realized in 1781. Such assistance never materialized for Lee or Görgey. Consequently, both of their struggles ended in defeat, a defeat Görgey knew as inevitable.

"In war," writes Clausewitz, "it is only by means of a directing spirit that we can expect the full power latent in the troops to be developed." Washington's success provides such a paragidm to judge Görgey's actions. Both had the love, loyalty, and respect of their troops. Their armies put their faith in their commanders, who kept them together against tremendous odds and hardships. The Continental Army endured at Valley Forge because of their faith in their commander. Washington never allowed his army to be trapped or destroyed as a fighting force. He realized that as long as it existed, the goals of the revolution could be achieved. Washington only had to hold out until the French and Spanish became involved on the American side. The British, however, had to destroy Washington's army as an effective fighting force or face defeat. Likewise, Lincoln and Görgey understood this important military axiom. It took Lincoln until 1864 to find a general who understood that the destruction of Lee's army was the principal Union objective. He found that person in Grant.[13] When Grant forced Lee to surrender, the war ended.

Lincoln, however, had a distinct advantage not afforded to Görgey. One reason the Union was saved was that the South was even more unprepared (having to raise an army from scratch) than the North. Although the Austrians, during the early stages of the revolution, were more concerned with events in Italy and Bohemia, they still possessed an organized, trained, and equipped fighting force to use against Hungary when the opportunity presented itself. Hungary, like the American colonies, had little time to organize and equip a fighting force that could effectively resist and, if possible, defeat

the Austrians. Görgey's Vác Proclamation, which saved the Hungarian army from dissolution, gave purpose to his army and its goals. The Army of the Upper Danube would not be the tool of any political party. Officers and soldiers who had previously served in the Habsburg army and sworn an oath to the king did not betray that loyalty. The Hungarian army would fight and continue to exist until Austria realized the futility of the struggle and agreed to a compromise that would guarantee the constitution and the honor of the army. It was Görgey's responsibility to safeguard the army as a force, to use it wisely and obey only the orders of the "responsible Royal Hungarian Minister of War." The Army of the Upper Danube was fighting for its country and its king, "the constitution of Hungary was worth a sanguinary contest."[14] Görgey was thereby following Washington's example.

The Vác Proclamation also rescued the army from the naive and military unsound orders of the Hungarian government. For example, as the government abandoned Pest-Buda for Debrecen in early 1849, Görgey was ordered to fight a decisive battle west of Buda against the Austrians. The occupation of Buda would not only disorganize the Hungarian government, but could serve as a visible sign to the people that its cause had perhaps failed. Görgey, who realized that such a battle would almost certainly end in a resounding defeat, would not risk the destruction of his army in such a frivolous manner. Such a defeat would be tantamount to the defeat of the country. Görgey, growing increasingly irritated with Kossuth and the Committee of Defense, issued the proclamation to protect the army from politicians who failed to understand its importance. According to Ian Roberts,

> Kossuth... was first and foremost a politician who found himself having to deal with military affairs by virtue of the office he held. Görgey was a professional soldier of a distinctly practical nature. Soldiers needed discipline, boots, bullets and pay, rather than high-flown oratory about the defence of freedom and their native land.[15]

The psychological significance of Pest-Buda was not lost on Görgey; however, he knew the rebellion would not end with its capture.[16] Although the Austrian commander, Windisch-Graetz, might have favored this more Jominian tactic of territorial occupation, it is essential to point out that Moscow fell to Napoleon, but his invasion of Russia ended in his defeat. Hannibal invaded Italy and lost. Charles XII of Sweden was defeated in Russia. The turning point of the American Civil War was at Gettysburg, the climatic defeat of Lee's last invasion of the North. Görgey knew that the Austrians could not win unless the independent Hungarian army was destroyed; and, just as important, this destruction would have to be registered in Hungary.

Görgey continued to move the Austrians farther away from their bases of supply and into unfamiliar and hostile territory. They would now fight on land of Görgey's choosing and on his terms. In late January 1849, Windisch-Graetz, believing the end of the struggle was at hand, requested the surrender of Görgey's army; he was answered with a copy of the Vác Proclamation.[17] The proclamation was Görgey's gauntlet. The rebellion would not end until the Army of the Upper Danube, like Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, either ceased to exist or was victorious in the achievement of its goals. For Görgey it was a struggle for survival of the nation and self-defense, not independence. It was these objectives, the political goals of the struggle, that served as the greatest difference between the army and the politicians. But like the armies of Xerxes, Napoleon, Hannibal, Charles **XII,** Lee, and countless other invasion forces, Windisch-Graetz and his invading army were defeated and forced to withdraw from Hungary at a time when victory seemed close at hand. Afterward, on 12 April 1849, Windisch-Graetz was dismissed by the young emperor Franz Joseph.

Görgey's Winter Offensive **and** Siege of Buda

In battle tactical success will often hinge on which commander blunders the least. Ultimately victory goes to the army making the least mistakes. Moving great masses of men and material against a large force, which is better equipped and equally committed to your destruction, will undoubtedly leave a great deal to chance. "War," according to Clausewitz, "is the province of chance." This axiom is quite evident in Görgey's winter offensive against the Austrians following the Vác Proclamation. He was fortunate to have a staff of talented corps commanders in whose hands he entrusted the tactical aspects of his battle plans. His corps commanders, in particular, János Damjanich, György Klapka, Richárd Guyon, and Lajos Aulich were all soldiers of merit. Görgey possessed sound leadership principles by having talented subordinates, leaving them alone, and interfering only when it was absolutely necessary.[18] He showed great leadership under fire. ("He who, himself in danger, inspires others with courage, most strengthens his own.")[19] He had the ability to counter decisions of the enemy, and like U.S. Grant, to think and react coolly under the most difficult circumstances.

The intricacies of the winter campaign are beyond the scope of this work; however, to summarize, on 5 February at Branyiszkó against the Austrians under General Count Franz Schlick, Görgey's forces, led by Guyon, broke through a heavily defended mountain pass to endanger the Austrian rear and force Schlick's retreat. This action followed a successful operation in the

north-eastern Zips region which bought the army and government the necessary time to rest and reorganize their efforts. Görgey's operations in northern Hungary occupied the three Austrian army corps led by Generals Christian Götz, Baron Franz Csorich, and Baron Balthasar Simunich until Görgey's position became untenable. Taking full advantage of the situation, Görgey fought his way through the Carpathian mountains to Eperjes and Kassa. He then appeared on Schlick's rear, forcing a retreat. Afterward, he marched down the Hernád to the Tisza to join the main body of the Hungarian army with Klapka to set the stage for the counter offensive and the relief of the fortresses at Komárom and Buda. The success of this campaign, conducted under harsh winter conditions, solidified Görgey's reputation as a military leader.

It is the decision to liberate Buda, however, that draws the most attention among Görgey's critics. It is the one decision during this campaign with which they can find fault. The failure to pursue the Austrian forces after the victorious winter campaign is considered a serious strategic blunder. Klapka, a strong supporter of Kossuth, in his memoirs brings attention to this action as possible proof that Görgey was already planning at this time to assume the dictatorship of Hungary, another false claim which helped to further soil Görgey's reputation. It must be stressed that the decision to liberate Buda came after Kossuth's declaration of Hungarian independence on 14 April 1849. Previously, Kossuth had approached Austria about a negotiated peace based on the April Laws. First, the Hungarians made overtures through William Stiles, the diplomatic representative of the United States. Later, Ferenc Deák and Lajos Batthyány approached Windisch-Graetz on 3 January 1849. However, these overtures were rejected by the Austrians.[20] Görgey had also approached Kossuth about the possibility of compromise with Austria. He believed it was possible to negotiate an acceptable settlement based on the 1848 constitution. But Görgey maintained that Hungarian freedom would be earned by silence and force of arms. It would be achieved lawfully.[21] Kossuth's declaration of independence, however, made without consulting the military leadership in the field, was a mistake. "War admittedly has its own grammar, but not its own logic."

Afterward, Görgey realized that the war "could end only with the complete defeat of the one or the other forces."[22] So if Görgey understood the military reality, why violate this axiom? Should he have pressed the offensive against the Austrians until the issue was solved? Although he points out that ammunition was in short supply, the focus on Buda was a political action. He believed that a negotiated settlement with Austria would be easier to achieve with the capture of the ancient capital.[23] But peace might have been achieved

faster and on more equitable terms with Vienna in Hungarian hands. Certainly the capture of the imperial city would have given greater recognition and legitimacy to Hungary's cause and served as an important pawn in the bargaining process, provided the Hungarians could hold and defend it during the peace negotiations. But it is important to point out that both Vienna and Moscow fell to France during the Napoleonic wars, and Austria and Russia still survived to see victory in 1814. Even with Vienna's capture Austria would not have negotiated a settlement with Kossuth and the Hungarians, and, more significantly, Nicholas had already made the decision to send Russian troops to aid Austria. Also, a previous Hungarian attempt to capture Vienna had ended in failure.

One important consequence of Kossuth's declaration was that Görgey and his actions would become more political. Görgey hoped that Austria would realize it could appease the Hungarian army without defeating it by dispensing with the octroyed constitution and guaranteeing the April Laws.[24] In his letter of 30 June 1849, Görgey wrote to Kossuth that he was fighting for the nation, not the government. He was even prepared to lay down his arms to secure the best possible terms for Hungary.[25]

Previously, Klapka and Görgey agreed that the salvation of Hungary was impossible without foreign assistance. Kossuth's declaration prevented either France or Britain from aiding Hungary's cause. It strenghtened the resolve of the conservative forces in Britain, which supported tradition and the status quo. More important, after the declaration, Britain, which considered Austria's existence vital to its imperial interest, had already given its consent to Russia to put an end to things in Hungary. In actuality, although Britain and France were concerned with Russia's increased presence in the Danubian Principalities, neither state was evern seriously willing to assist the Hungarian cause. Görgey knew it was important to repudiate the law of 14 April in order to stop or forestall the Russian invasion. Hungary could not defeat Austria and Russia. The Russian invasion forces consisted of 190,000 men and 600 guns. Their commander, Prince Ivan Paskevich, planned his invasion with the goal that his forces should have between one and a half to two times as many troops as the Hungarians in order to guarantee victory.[26] Knowing the odds were against him, Görgey continued with the struggle in the hope of winning acceptance of the 1848 constitution. Kossuth's declaration inhibited negotiation and turned the more conservative elements in Hungary against the struggle and toward Vienna for accommodation. The Peace Party, which had approached Görgey for support, reflects this reality.

It is essential to understand Görgey's opinion of the events in Hungary in order to clearly appreciate his military decisions after 14 April. Had he

originally pursued the Austrians instead of concentrating on Buda, it is still doubtful whether he could have taken the offensive successfully across the Leithia. As Clausewitz put it, "In strategy everything is very simple, but not on that account very easy." The great powers would never have allowed Austria to be destroyed, and Hungary did not possess the strength to cause this destruction. Like Lee, Görgey never possessed the illusion that he could totally destroy his opponent's forces. Rather, he wanted to make the cost of destroying his army far beyond the price the Austrians were willing to pay. In this regard he was more like Washington. Unfortunately for Görgey, after his victories Windisch-Graetz was replaced with more resolute commanders, including Baron Haynau; Italy had been suppressed; and Russia was entering the contest. In his last speech as minister of war, Görgey still hoped to defeat Austria before the Russians became heavily involved in the contest.[27] His strategic plans reflected this objective; however, the situation had changed because of the overwhelming opposition against him. Unlike for Washington's enemies, distance was not a problem for Görgey's opposition.

Görgey was himself a realist who understood the situation in a cynical manner void of illusion. He believed Hungary could not defeat Austria and achieve independence without outside interference. Regardless of what action Görgey pursued, he needed to destroy the Austrian army in the hope of negotiating the best possible settlement with the government. He had to keep his force alive as a negotiating piece. As the Austrian army withdrew from Hungary, they drew closer to their supply lines. Fresh troops and ammunition would become more easily accessible. Paskevich was in the process of sending 13,000 Russian troops and 48 guns under General Fyodor Panyutin by rail to Pozsony to support the Austrians.[28] So, for Görgey's critics, the question remains, how far would he have to go to win acceptance of independence by Austria and the great powers, which were so vehemently opposed to any shift in the balance of power? Görgey believed that with Buda in Hungarian hands, he could negotiate a compromise from a position of strength. Even though victory over the Austrian army could have forced the negotiations he desired, in the final analysis, Görgey's conquest of Buda hurt his own plans for Hungary. It was a waste of time, scarce ammunition, and valuable personnel. It would have be more practical to encircle the Austrian garrison in the castle area and continue the pursuit of the Austrian troops to the Leithia, while holding out an olive branch to the new emperor. Görgey's actions, no matter how questionable, were consistent with his political objectives to preserve the 1848 constitution. Such is the result when a soldier allows politics to determine his judgement. According to Clausewitz, "War is not merely a political act, but

also a real political instrument, a continuation of policy carried out by other means."

Consequently, Görgey saw Hungary's salvation as being a defensive proposition, not an offensive one. To conquer Austria was out of the question. He had to keep Hungarian independence alive, which could be achieved only by inducing the West to intervene or by compelling Austria to abandon the contest and seek a negotiated settlement. Kossuth had staunchly based his policy on the former. Görgey, a soldier, realized that without Western support the struggle could not be won; however, he was not prepared to risk the fortunes of Hungary on the uncertainties of Europe, but rather, to force the issue with Austria as long as Hungarian human, material, and spiritual resources could absorb the strain. Görgey believed the events of 14 April negated any assistance against Austria.[29] He also knew Austria's main problem was tactical - they had to defeat Hungary's armed forces, subdue the will of its people, and occupy the country. Such a solution could be achieved only by force of arms. Görgey understood the difficulty of this undertaking and correctly assumed that Austria could not accomplish this objective without Russian support. Therefore, when Nicholas made the decision to assist Austria and send 190,000 Russian troops into Hungary, Görgey knew that he had to force quickly the issue with Austria before the Russian action would dictate a final settlement.

Retreat **and Surrender**

The combined forces Hungary faced in the summer of 1849 numbered over 360,000 soldiers. Görgey's army consisted of about 62,000 troops. Haynau's Army of the Danube included four army corps and a Russian infantry division, loaned from Paskevich, and enjoyed a total strength of 83,000 men and 330 artillery pieces.[30] On 23 June Görgey convinced ministers and senior military officers to concentrate forces around Komárom in a last ditch effort to defeat the Austrians before they joined with the Russian troops entering Hungary from the north. Görgey rejected Dembinski's immediate plan to go south to Szeged since his army at Komárom was further from Szeged than either the Russians at Miskolc or the Austrians on the Czonczó line. He believed Dembinski could not execute an offensive against either enemy without immediately facing an engagement by both forces.[31] Komárom offered the Hungarians a base to supply repeated attacks on the Austrians as long as supplies and morale lasted.[32] Interior lines favored Görgey's Komárom plan; Komárom was closer to his supply lines. But the campaign's failure and Görgey's injury determined that the war should go to Szeged.

Görgey's decision to attack and defeat the Austrian armies before Russian troops could join them was strategically sound, although his suggestion to move the capital to Komárom was not. Even the tsar recognized and understood that Görgey's only choice for success was to defeat each opponent in turn before they joined forces against him. This was one of the reasons Nicholas was upset that Paskevich was unable to destroy Görgey's army at Vác on 15 July 1849, a failure official Russian history would blame on Haynau's recalcitrance in refusing to join with Paskevich. Haynau, who would move south rather than combine with Paskevich, refused to allow himself to be subordinated to the latter's command. Ironically, Görgey still worried Haynau, who feared that Görgey might attack west in Moravia. Consequently, Haynau was instrumental in having Austria approach Prussia to suggest they strengthen their forces in Silesia.[33] Such was the respect Görgey warranted from his adversaries. The divisiveness between Haynau and Paskevich and the failure of both Austria and Russia to complete plans for Görgey's defeat allowed Görgey the opportunity, after being injured and failing to defeat the Austrians, eventually to move south past Vác and down the Tisza and press forward with new plans. As developed by Kossuth and Klapka, the scheme was for Görgey to join with the two Hungarian corps in the south and attempt to defeat the Austrian troops led by Baron Josip Jelačić in the Bánát region. Görgey's march south through northern Hungary, although beyond the scope of this paper, was yet another example of his military prowess.

Görgey's decision to attack Komárom also illustrates his further involvement in Hungarian politics. There was more to this decision than military considerations. His distrust and rivalry with Kossuth was becoming more evident, and Görgey was determined to insure the operation of his independent command. He saw himself as representing the best hope for Hungary's future. In the evolution of modern warfare, politics, with its influence on strategy, plays an increasingly greater role on military decisions. In World War I, Erich von Falkenhayn struggled incessantly for a western front policy against the reluctance of the easterns Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff. These confrontations led to lost opportunities and stalemate, which forced the war to continue with disastrous effects for Germany. Falkenhayn knew Germany could not win a long war, so he pressed the issue at Verdun in hopes of removing France from the conflict. He refused to adopt the eastern commanders' plan to place strategic predominance in the east for a Cannae decision against the Russian forces. Falkenhayn feared being drawn further into the Russian hinterland like Napoleon. He only saw disaster in this policy. Görgey's decision was similar in his hope of removing Austria at Komárom. Görgey's strategy, however, had tangible military objectives: the destruction of the Austrian army.

Falkenhayn chose Verdun for its nationalistic value to the French. He planned to bleed them white in the hopes of forcing them to surrender. Görgey hoped to follow the strategy of Frederick II during the Seven Years' War. Outside of negotiations Görgey had no other recourse for military victory but to defeat his opponents in turn before they joined forces against him.

This final campaign is filled with intrigue and uncertainty on both sides. The combined Austro-Russian invasion caused contradictions and distrust among both states as well as the Hungarian leadership. Criticism abounded with no group or individual beyond reproach. In such circumstances, the accumulated stress pressed individuals to the breaking point. On the Hungarian side, however, Görgey bears the brunt of criticism. István Deák stated that Görgey's actions during this period reflected his "confused logic with its mixture of loyalist-legitimist and radical-revolutionary concepts."[34] Deák believes that Görgey's offensive, to force the issue of a negotiated peace, would have been more appropriate months earlier; however, in June 1849, it was too late and resulted only in a series of defeats and a wasteful bleeding of Hungary's best army.[35] If this was indeed the truth, it would have made sense for Görgey to have negotiated a settlement in June rather than August 1849. Also, if there was no hope of victory and Görgey's plan was doomed to fail and cause an unnecessary waste of human life, should Görgey's decision to surrender be criticized as an act of treachery? Or was it the sound policy of a soldier-statesman? Would critics have been satisfied had Görgey, like Falkenhayn at Verdun, followed a policy that would have wasted human life without the purpose of achieving a tangible objective, all for the sake of honor? Görgey's choice, along with his behavior, determined his fate in Hungarian historiography, but his decision spared the Hungarian nation useless suffering and possibly might have helped to pave an easier path for reconciliation in 1867. The continuation of the struggle to a futile conclusion might have left deeper scars between the Austrian and Hungarian combatants. A future compromise might have been more difficult to achieve. Continuation of the war could only have prolonged the suffering.

Like Görgey, Lee had contemplated a similar policy during the last year of the Civil War when he withdrew from Petersburg, Virginia, in 1865. Finally in supreme control of all Confederate forces, Lee knew, because of a lack of troops, resources, and time, that the South's only hope for military success lay in joining forces with General Joe Johnston's Army of Tennessee in North Carolina. They could then attack and defeat Union General William T. Sherman's army before turning their attention to Grant's forces in Virginia. If Grant and Sherman were to join forces, defeat would be axiomatic for the South. Unfortunately for Lee, Grant prevented the junction of Southern forces

from occurring, and Lee surrendered to him at Appomattox. However, even if this junction had taken place, the South's defeat was just a matter of time. The same scenario was in store for Görgey. His chances for a military solution were at best slim to none. Hope, after his failure to defeat Haynau, lay in the consolidation of all Hungarian troops in the south to defeat the Austrians, prolonging the war, and, in addition, in the chance that some sort of wedge could be driven between the Russians and Austrians that would facilitate either a negotiated settlement favorable for Hungary or intervention by the western democracies. Görgey was looking for the best possible deal. Victory was a quixotic illusion. It was something Kossuth still believed possible. According to Ian Roberts, "Unlike Kossuth who was first and foremost a politician who found himself having to deal with military affairs by virtue of the office he held, Görgey was a professional soldier of a distinctly practical nature."[30] Unfortunately for Görgey and Hungary, his Appomattox lay ahead at Világos.

Görgey's reputation was seriously tarnished by his surrender. Accusations abound concerning his alleged treachery, but Görgey did not go south for the purpose of surrendering his forces. Once at Arad, where he found no troops, he proceeded to send the First Corps of General József Nagy Sándor to Temesvár in order to reinforce Dembinski, who was to be at Arad but had changed his plans.[37] This is not the behavior of one who is determined to surrender; on the contrary, it shows Görgey's intent to continue the struggle. He was still determined to work out the best deal for Hungary, and his army was still his best bargaining chip. Even in southern Hungary his last ditch defense was an offensive against Austria.[38] It was Dembinski's defeat on 9 August that ended the last probability of a successful offensive against Austria. According to Görgey,

> The further continuance of our active resistance to the armies of the Allies could now at most promote personal, no longer national interest... [the country] might at least be freed from the horrible misery of war.[39]

After his surrender to the Russians, Görgey's reputation might still have been saved had he been included as one of those punished at Arad. Görgey seems to have even expected such punishment. The Tsar, however, intervened with Vienna to spare Görgey's life. After all the Tsar had done for Francis Joseph, it would have been a grave insult to deny Nicholas' request. Both the Tsar and Paskevich, who gave Görgey money for his expenses because even as a prisoner, he had to pay for his own travel, believed that the Hungarians should be granted leniency. The Tsar sent the Tsarevich Alexander II to Francis Joseph to inform the young monarch that Nicholas favored punishing

only the ringleaders and pardoning those who had been led astray. The Tsar advocated a policy of clemency and firmness.[40] Later, a Council of Ministers, chaired by Francis Joseph, decided Görgey's fate, but the Tsar's other requests went unheeded and he was outraged by the executions at Arad. He believed that Lajos Batthyány, the former Prime Minister, deserved his fate, but not the generals who had surrendered to the Russians.[41] Such action may explain the comments of "one contemporary Slovak observer who wrote at the end of the campaign, the Russians returned to their own country blessed by the Slovaks, respected by the Hungarians and filled with hatred for the Germans".[42]

Görgey's military successes, like Clausewitz's maxims in this text,[43] are buried, abandoned, and forgotten in a sea of conjecture. Klapka, a harsh critic of Görgey's actions, wrote that he should have been a Cromwell,[44] an interesting comment by someone who attacked Görgey's character and accused him of conspiracy to make himself dictator. In Kalpka's statement, however, rests the problem of Görgey's reclamation: preconceived ideas of who Görgey should have been and what he should have done. It is Görgey's misfortune to have followed the dictates of his own conscience. Such is the lonely life of the individual on top who offers no excuses but accepts accountability for his actions. Victory has many parents but defeat has only one child. Görgey was given the incumbency of that child. It was a responsibility he accepted in the Spartan manner of a soldier, as soldiers have always done. Lee was no different. Duty called and was answered. It was an accountability that was buried with Görgey along with his remains in the national cemetery, where Judit and I inadvertently discovered them. It was a responsibility that Kossuth refused to accept. Perhaps for this courageous act alone, Görgey deserves at least a respectable monument over his grave, but to some that might only unearth and renew an old debate that is better left undisturbed.

Notes

1. István Deák, *The Lawful Revolution, Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians, 1848-1849* (New York, 1979) 183.
2. Arden Bucholz, "Hans Delbrück and Modern Military History," *The Historian:* 3 (Spring 1993) 517.
3. Deák, *The Lawful Revolution,* 183.
4. Priscilla Robertson, *Revolutions of 1848: A Social History* (Princeton, Jew Jersey, 1971), 288.
5. Niccoló Machiavelli, *The Art of War* (Albany, New York, 1940), 233.
6. Fair, Charles, *From the Jaws of Victory* (New York, 1971), 11-12.
7. Martin Blumenson and James L. Stokesbury, *Masters of the Art of Command* (Boston, 1975), x.

8. Artúr Görgey, *Életem és működésem Magyarországon 1848-ban és 1849-ben* [My life and acts in Hungary, 1848-1849], vol. 1 (Budapest, 1988), 138.
9. *Ibid.,* 285-291.
10. *Ibid.,* vol. II, 230-231.
W.Ibid., vol. 1,429.
12. *Ibid,* vol. II, 110.
13. J. F. C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee, A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1982), 42.
14. Görgey, *Életem és működésem,* vol. I, 286.
15. Ian W. Roberts, *Nicholas I and the Russian Intervention in Hungary* (New York, 1991), 73.
16. Görgey, *Életem és működésem,* vol. 1, 298. Görgey abandoned a garrison at Lipótvár (Leopoldstadt) to the Austrians in order to preserve his army.
17. Deák, *The Lawful Revolution,* 235.
18. Görgey, *Életem és működésem,* vol. I, 446.
19. *Ibid.,* vol. II, 207-225.
20. Roberts, *Nicholas I,* 70-71.
21. Görgey, *Életem és működésem,* vol. II, 13-14.
22. *Ibid.,* vol II, 50.
23. *Ibid.,* 66.
24. *Ibid.,* 63-64.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Roberts, *Nicholas I,* 138.
27. Görgey, *Életem és működésem,* vol. II, 190.
28. Roberts, *Nicholas I,* 109.
29. Görgey, *Életem és működésem,* vol. II, 53.
30. Deák, *The Lawful Revolution,* 308.
31. Görgey, *Életem és működésem,* vol. II, 242.
32. *Ibid.,* 246-247.
33. Roberts, *Nicholas I,* 157-160.
34. Deák, *The Lawful Revolution,* 307.
35. *Ibid,* 307-308.
36. Roberts, *Nicholas I,* 73.
37. *Ibid.,* 174.
38. Görgey, *Életem és működésem,* vol. II, 363-364.
39. *Ibid.,* 388.
40. Roberts, *Nicholas I,* 185.
41. *Ibid.,* 206.
42. *Ibid.,* 73.
43. Ciausewitz's quotes for this work were cited from Carl von Clusewitz, *On War* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1982).
44. György Klapka, *Memoirs of the War of Independence in Hungary,* trans, by Otto Wenckstern (London, 1850), vol. I, 183-184.

MARGIT KAFFKA AND DOROTHY RICHARDSON: A COMPARISON

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> One of the things that handicaps women writers in our - and every other - culture is that there are so very few stories in which women can figure as protagonists. Our literature is not about women. It is not about women and men equally. It is by and about men.
> (Russ 4)

Livia K. Wittmann suggests in her article "Feministische Literaturkritik - ein Ansatz der vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft" that a central objective of comparative literature could be "Auf internationaler Ebene herauszuarbeiten, wann, wo und wie neue Weiblichkeitsvorstellungen in den Literaturen erscheinen, solche, die den realen Lebenserfahrungen der Frauen gerecht/er werden" (122).[1] In my opinion, such an objective indeed represents an exciting and surely fruitful perspective for the comparatist. Following the suggestion, I would like to explore in this study the possibilities of a comparative analysis of women writing from a feminist point of view.[2] The subjects of the analysis will be the Hungarian author Margit Kaffka's (1880-1918) and the British author Dorothy Richardson's (1873-1957) selected prose works. It should be added here that while turn-of-the-century women were, as we know, op(re)pressed - to a higher degree than today - and while the following analysis of Kaffka's and Richardson's prose thus appears to state the obvious, the aim of this article is directed by the postulate of Wittmann. Also, since Kaffka is not accessible to the English readership[3] while Richardson and the secondary literature on her works are, I shall devote more attention to the introduction and discussion of Kaffka's work.

Kaffka is a canonized *woman* author. Such important authors and critics as the contemporary Aladár Schöpflin, Gábor Kemény, and members of the "Nyugat" group, and more recently Joseph Reményi, Dalma H. Brunauer, György Bodnár, László Fülöp, and Anna Földes, for example, have published articles and books on her work. For instance, in the *A magyar irodalom*

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története 1905-től 1909-ig, the entry on Kaffka contains the statement that this author is the most important Hungarian woman novelist and that her novel *Színek és évek* (Colours and Years, written in 1911 and published in 1912) is one of the best, most harmonious, and best developed Hungarian novels (216). Although in the critical body of Western literatures Kaffka, as an author from a marginal literature, is less noted, *The International Dictionary of Women's Biography* contains a several paragraphs long entry on her (Uglow 256). However, a distinction should be made between the canonization of Kaffka as an author *per se* and her importance as a *woman and feminist* author. My reading of the secondary literature is that, in general, Hungarian literary criticism has not as of yet developed a critical corpus from feminist point(s) of view.[4] For this reason, Kaffka's work has not been read and analysed from such a critical perspective.[5]

We know that one of the first steps in the inclusion of the large body of women's writing in literary recognition (canonization) is the establishing of the corpus of their works and, hand-in-hand with that, descriptions of their biographies. In the case of Kaffka, where it has been first done from a feminist point of view, this was done in an English-language article, "A Woman's Self-Liberation: The Story of Margit Kaffka (1880-1918)" by Dalma H. Brunauer, published in 1978. The article does not offer a literary analysis of her works. Nevertheless, it establishes Kaffka's importance as a feminist author through her biography (cf. also Brunauer 1982).[6] It is also true that in Hungarian criticism, Kaffka is *occasionally* recognized as a feminist voice. For example, in Nemeskürty's *Diák, írj magyar éneket: a magyar irodalom története 1945-ig* (1983) we can read: "Abban az asszony-írói hangversenyben, amelyben tisztán és áthatóan egy Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, Zelma Lagerlöf műve szól, Kaffka Margit egyenértékű, egyéni varázsú, felejthetetlen hang." ("In the concerto of women's writing, in which the works of Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, and Zelma Lagerlöf are clear and penetrating, the voice of Margit Kaffka is tantmount to individuality, it is magical in the personal, and it is unforgettable") (Gábor Thurzó, qtd. in Nemeskürty 2 701). The most elaborate literary analysis of Kaffka's works appeared in György Bodnár's *A "mese" lélekvándorlása,* whose subtitle significantly is "A modern magyar elbeszélés születése" ("The Birth of Modern Hungarian Narrative") (1988). The objective of this study not being an evaluation of the critical body on Kaffka, I only venture to say the following: While it appears that Bodnár's analysis approaches a certain awareness of Kaffka's feminist stand, it is so only in the most inoccuous and implicit way. Bodnár's main point is that Kaffka wrote her novels in the general context of the Hungarian gentry's demise and degeneration and only within that context is the feminist stand given a place

and justification - and no analysis. Without any doubt, Kaffka's works demonstrate that she stepped outside the gentry thematics and when she does that, as, for example, in the novel *Két nyár* (Two Summers) (1916), her writing clearly establishes a feminist position. (Obviously, this position exists in *all* her writing.)

Dorothy Richardson, as an English-language author and placed within the now existing significant body of feminist literary criticism, is definitely established as a feminist author. As the basis of a comparison between her and Kaffka is the proposition by Wittmann, namely the objective of comparatist studies to research and to establish when, where, and how new woman's images appear in literature. Gillian E. Hanscombe's "Introduction"[7] presents a good example of such recognition:

> Of Ihe early twentieth-century English modernists, there is no one who has been more neglected than Dorothy Miller Richardson. There are several reasons for this. First, the style she forged in the writing of *Pointed Roofs,* the first volume of the *Pilgrimage* sequence, was new and difficult, later earning the nomination "stream-of-consciousness." *Pointed Roofs* was published in 1915 and was, therefore, the first example of this technique in English, predating both Joyce and Woolf, its more famous exponents. Secondly, the thoughts and feelings of its protagonist, Miriam Henderson, are explicitly feminist, not in the sense of arguing for equal rights and votes for women, but in the more radical sense of insisting on the authority of a woman's experience and world view. (1)

Hanscombe's third reason for her interest in Richardson's works, the author's relationship with German culture, although an important one, is less significant in the comparison with Kaffka's work. The first two, however, fall within the argued base, the significance of a specifically woman's and feminist position. These two, an innovative narrative style and the feminist position, I argue, are elements of Kaffka's writing as well.

In this study, I shall focus on the sociological significance of the feminist point(s) of view apparent in the selected prose of these two authors. Following Wittmann's postulate, I am aware of the importance of these authors' innovative narrative and I shall briefly discuss this aspect as well. However, in my view it is the socio-literary significance that should be pronounced in the first instance. In the case of Kaffka this is obvious because of her primary position in formulating the "facts" of women's position in Hungarian society before the First World War. In the case of Richardson, this focus is also justified because, in her case, the secondary literature focused on her narrative innovation and consequently, the socio-literary significance of her writing has been neglected.

The comparison of Kaffka and Richardson can begin with their similar social and educational background. Both come from an impoverished gentry and upper-middle class background, respectively; both had a strict religious (Catholic and Protestant, respectively) upbringing, and both were teachers. Kaffka's experiences of marriage and the male's world were more laden with negative experiences than those of Richardson. One interesting and telling example from Kaffka's life should serve here as a pointer. Endre Ady, the great Hungarian poet, is often mentioned as a friend of the young Kaffka. (This I take to be a kind of legitimization of Kaffka's importance as a poet in her younger years.) It is the more telling that one of Kaffka's first encounters with Ady was a disaster, exactly because of the apparent manifestation of patriarchal values on the part of Ady. On the occasion of a dinner party, Ady and Kaffka left together in a horse-drawn cab. Ady, who drank copiously during the dinner, made physical advances towards the attractive young woman *(nota bene,* not the writer, but the woman). Kaffka, who was interested in an exchange of ideas with the prominent and admired (by her, too) poet, was obviously distraught and disillusioned (qtd. Földes 89-90 from Dezső Szabó, *Életeim).*

An important dissimilarity of Richardson and Kaffka is their span of life and, consequently, their literary output and literary maturity. However, as I am concentrating on Richardson's early work and on Kaffka's prose writing, this dissimilarity becomes immaterial as the works considered all appeared before 1919, that is, shortly before and during the First World War. From Richardson's works I have chosen the above-mentioned *Pilgrimage* trilogy and from Kaffka's works the novel *Színek és évek* (Colours and Years) (1912).

To begin with Kaffka's *Színek és évek,* the novel is the story of Magda Pórtelky, the development of a woman in the gentry environment of demise and decadence, where a woman's only choice is marriage (Szabolcsi 224-25), and resignation to patriarchal values in society. Magda's disillusionment with her life begins with the realization that the initial game of the sexes, the dance of conquest and submission (social and sexual), is disproportionate to the aftermath, the reality of female submission in marriage (78-79). The reigning social codes and the importance of material considerations are omnipresent and determining factors of a woman's defenceless and subordinate position in society:

> A tél végén már volt valami házassági terve énvelem, s a sánta lábú Kendy Elemérrel, akire nyolcszáz hold néz.... Akkor először öntött el hirtelen valami keserűség a tehetetlen voltom, lányi kiszolgáltatottságom éreztén. De nem lelt kifejezést; visszafojtód ott hamarosan a családi fegyelem és szokástisztelet megnyugtató, mert sehova nem fellebezhető rendjében. (95)

> At the end of winter she already had some marriage plans with me and the limping Elemér Kendy, who was expecting eight hundred hectars [of land]. ... At this, the first time, I was filled suddenly with bitterness about my impotence and about my young female defencelessness. But this could not express itself; soon it shriveled into the soothing order of familial obedience and the respect of convention, which cannot be appealed anywhere. (95. All translations from the Hungarian are mine.)

The comfortable societal quality, that she is always surrounded by people whom she knows and whose families are intimate with her family, in no way alleviates the subordinate position she finds herself in as a girl and as a "maniable" girl (100). The marriage of Magda is, for all intents and purposes, arranged. After the Kendy match does not work out, her grandmother orchestrates another, now with a socially inferior, but financially acceptable "suitor," Jenő Vodicska. The fact remains however, that she willingly, or almost willingly goes along with convention. Her almost willing submission to convention and custom is perhaps the most tragic aspect of the situation and the most telling perspective - a paradigmatic social factor - of her position as a woman. When her "almost willingness" results in an inability to pretend love to the chosen groom, her family does not understand and blames her for being inept. Magda's inner response is "Vajon sohase gondoltak arra, hogy asszony is megunhat, megelégelhet, elküldhet egy férfit?" ("I wonder whether they ever considered that a woman too can get tired of, cannot stomach any more, can send packing a man?") (104). Magda's immediate relationship with her "chosen" is confused. The young man, who realizes her qualities albeit still in an environment of male superiority, attempts to comfort her. She is responsive: "Hihetetlen nagy zavar volt bennem ebben a percben. Talán igaz ez, talán igaz!' dobbant fel valami a benső̋mben. Senki, sohasem beszélt velem ilyen komolyan, atyáskodón még ... ". ("There was an incredible confusion in me at this moment. 'Perhaps it is true, perhaps it is!' No one ever spoke with me with such sincerity or with such fatherliness ...") (107). Magda's innate and significant revolt against both her own fleeting "gratitude" for the apparent sensitivity of her future husband and, implicitly, her objection to the social environment follows immediately her feeling of "gratitude": "De rögtön előtört valami gúnyos szégyenkezés bennem a könnyeim, az elérzékenyülésem miatt. ... Hogy mer bíráskodni a hozzám tartozók felett?" ("But immediately something of an ironical shame broke to the surface in me, because of my own tears and affection. ... How dare he pass judgement on what belongs to me alone?") (107). Magda's struggle against the imposition of women's codes and behaviour, throughout her life, here and later, is always bound to universal codes, which most of the time work in support of the codes and required behaviour she is struggling against. In this instance, when her mother notices

her upset state, her objection to the environment of her impending marriage, she monologizes thus: "Milyen okosan beszélt most.... És igaza van, és az anyáknak mind igazuk van, tudtam én ezt. Sokkal okosabb voltam, semhogy valami bolondot, lehetetlent képzeljek." ("And how true it was what she said.... She was right. All mothers are right, I knew. I was much smarter than to imagine something silly or impossible") (111). And she gives up her struggle and marries Vodicska. In the narrative there are few references to sexuality or eroticism in their relationship. But why should there be? She did not love or feel physical attraction to this man. Rather, the realities of married life, as imposed on women, soon enough manifest themselves: "Az uram most kelt fel... jószagú vizektől és szappantól friss az egész ember.... És most elmegy innét mindjárt rend behozva, megreggelizve, kielégülten, mosolygósan; én pedig összeszedem utána a lomot, megvetem az ágyat, kihordom a tegnapi szennyes ruhát, eltörülöm a kávéscsészét..." ("My husband just got up ... the whole man smelt of cologne and soap. ... And now he will leave like a gentleman, after breakfast, satisfied, and smiling, while I clean the junk he leaves, make the bed, put away yesterday's dirty laundry and clean the coffee cups...") (112-13). And she continues to list and describe the miriad house chores she is "responsible" for, finally asking herself: "És ez most már így is lesz mindig. Meddig? ... Amíg csak élünk!... " ("And this will continue. How long? ... For as long as we live!") (113). Her only remedy, if one can call it that, turns out to be a total commitment to the household. As mentioned before, Magda's struggle is compounded by the necessary pretense of social standing. The couple's financial situation is disproportionate to the expectations of their social position. Thus she must maintain the appearance of a gentry household (116-17). This makes her position more difficult, since she cannot break away from the demands social expectations place upon her and her husband. Her mother, again, attempts to give her her view of the "wife's" duties and ways of successfully combining the demands of marriage and social standing:

> A házasságban egy kis ravaszság a főtudomány. Elsiklani a dolgokon, kicsit nyájaskodni, aztán tehetsz amit akarsz. Nem az a fő, hogy felül maradjunk a szóvitákban, hanem hogy belsőleg szabadok maradjunk, és simán éljünk. Azért férfi, hogy ámítsuk kicsit, szeretetből! (117)

> In a marriage a little cunning is the most important ingredient. Don't notice things and be sweet to him, and you can do whatever you want. The important thing is not to win verbal battles but to remain free inside yourself, and that you can live smoothly. Deceive him a little out of love, that is why he is a man! (117)

Magda's efforts to comply with both demands, the marital and the social, are unsuccessful, perhaps because she does both under duress and, more

importantly, because she does not believe in the demands placed upon her by either.

An important episode in the novel brings out the clash of these imposed and forced commitments. It happens when she puts on an impressive dinner for her close relatives. Her husband's parents, who have no understanding for the demands of gentry pretense, openly disapprove of a gala dinner put on by the young couple (122-25). Such and other events in Magda's young marriage prove the validity of her struggle against the impositions of the society in which she lives. Yet, her strength does not let her succumb. Measured on the example of an elderly relative, she admits the possibility that "Lám, az asszonyélet... sem végső lemondás és elszakadás mindentől; van esélye, története, vágya - fájdalma is tán" ("The life of a woman... is not a final resignation and rupture from everything; it has a chance, a history, wishes and desires -perhaps even its own suffering") (127). This recognition on Magda's part establishes a psychological mechanism, which in turn is a manifestation of the "new woman," who, despite the omnipresence of gender oppression, aims at the liberation of her emotional and structural individuality. The "new woman," in its Hungarian context, appears for the first time in Kaffka's works as the depiction of the woman who wants to realise herself not through the male (husband), but through *herself* (Földes 118). At the same time, life continues to represent women's oppression and defencelessness. In this, Kaffka depicts the real difficulties of this "new woman." The self-realisation cannot result in victory for herself because while she demolishes her former dependence (still a kind of security), her new *partial* independence leads her into the morass of insecurity. For this *partial* emancipation she has to pay with her happiness in the intricacies of male/female relationship (Földes 118). In *Színek és évek* the relationship between Magda and Jenő and later Dénes, this problematical configuration of women's awakening is particularly prominent. And the lines of the configuration are fluid, i.e., they flow in and out at all levels of personal and social interaction. For example, the relationship between Magda and Jenő undergoes further open deterioration, when an admirer sends a love letter to her. She refuses the advances and destroys the letter and its contents: the admirer and his offer of an extra-marital relationship are only a fleeting possibility to Magda. Jenő observes the burning of the letter and questions Magda. When she refuses to divulge the demanded explanation, he hits her. Interestingly and tellingly, when she goes to her grandmother to talk and to seek some assurance and support, she cannot speak about it and their talk turns into a discussion about a suitor of her mother, who is a dreamy and unsuccessful social reformer. The situation of abuse, as often, turns into the husbands demonstrations of remorse, promises, Magda's desire to believe, and

the birth of their child... Yet, the continuation of their relationship after this incident appears to stabilize in the sense that Magda lets her aspirations and rebellion momentarily go underground. Jenő made advances professionally and financially (the social arena) and Magda somehow manages to enjoy her life (the personal arena), mainly by letting herself be caught up in provincial politics through her husband and by a total commitment to her household, both traditional parameters of a "wife's" and "mother's" existence. Nevertheless, the descriptions in the narrative that demonstrate the continuing marital and social demands, do not diminish her innate objection and struggle against these demands and impositions, even if at times they retreat into the background of awareness.

The initially successful fortunes of Jenő in provincial politics end in tragedy. After losing an election and accumulating debts, he commits suicide. The years after result in more experiences of defencelessness, now of course compounded by the syndrome of the "widow" and the "single mother." Magda moves to the capital and becomes disgusted with the different yet equally objectionable social circumstances and the obvious advances men make towards the pretty widow, the open prey.[8] After a few weeks, she decides to leave this highly charged and disagreeable urban environment and returns to her home town. Since the death of Jenő, a friend of both, Dénes Horváth, also a lawyer, shows interest in and sensitivity for her. They have many talks which help Magda to overcome her fragile emotional state. Soon he is a suitor. The decision to marry again does not come easy. Magda walks with open eyes and observes and absorbs much around her. The descriptions of these observations tell us as much about the people and circumstances she analyses as about herself. In one instance, she inwardly exclaims "Ó, csak a fiatalság, csak az ne múlna el soha... Igen, nekem még van egy kicsi, hova tegyem?" ("Oh, youth, if only it would last forever... Yes, I still have a little of it, what should I do with it?") (235). But this serious and profound universal quality, expectation from life, will again betray her. It will betray her because of women's position in society. She has no way out but to resign to what everyone expects to be the norm.

In substance, Magda's life has not changed. The three forces pulling her, sometimes all in one, more often in different directions, are her acute awareness of her marginalized and defenceless position in society, her fear of growing old and what that means for a woman, and her resulting resignation that "úgy látszik, nem voltam küzdésre és függetlenségre alkalmas! De más révén, egy *férfi révén* tudtam akarni erősen, mindig" ("it seems, I was not able to fight and be independent! But through another, *through a man* I could want strongly, always") (259). Acting consequently with the recognition of having no choice, she marries the supporting old friend, Dénes. And soon the old and

already experienced environment of marriage and its trap engulfing the woman claim Magda. In addition to the well-known circumstances of servitude on the part of the wife, the new husband is a spendthrift and a gambler. When she attempts to stop the spending, the result of her attempts ends in the bitter resignation that "Kényszeríteni ilyenre csakugyan nem lehet... hiszen férfi!" ("To force him to do that indeed would be impossible... after all, he is a man!") (265). The marriage proceeds as "expected" and Magda bears children, two daughters. She accepts this and enjoys motherhood but at the same time she continuously struggles against the submission to serve to all the demands of the *paterfamilias.* Of course, she has no recourse, "Csak lélekszakadtig munka, ösztökés kötelesség" ("Only ceaseless work and prodding responsibility") (276). These manifestations of her realization of no choice are intermittently interrupted with glimpses of hope in the future, if not for herself, at least for her daughters: "Asszonyok lesznek valaha, mint én. De nem akarom, hogy sorsuk legkevésbé is hasonlítson az enyémre. Majd teszek róla!" ("They will become women like me, but I do not want to their lives resemble to mine in the least. I will take care ofthat!") (277). During the ensuing years her husband slowly turns into an alcoholic, with all the well-known implications for the children and the "wife." The experiences of the woman's position in her society continuously feed her whole being with the negatives and the negation of it all. Perhaps the single most powerful male utterance of position-taking, as well as the a paradigmatic view of society of women, occurs when one protagonist, an otherwise socially progressive man, expresses the following after Magda speaks about her beliefs concerning the new situation of women in society:

> Tudatlanok mániája, minden alap nélkül való. Mindig inferióris marad az asszony állat, nem is lehet másképpen. Hisz az életideje kétharmad részét elfoglalják a fajfentartással járó öntudatlan, állati gondok, kötöttségek, s az értelmét ösztönök igazítják. Ha ezek alól felszabadítja magát, iránytalan, korcs, helyét nem lelő figura lesz, idétlen és boldogtalan. Az asszony vak eszköze a természet céljainak, öntudatra nem jutott, félig még gyökérző, növényéletű lény, akinek minden értéke az akaratlan báj és szépség, mely olyan, mint a virágoké, s a magvak hallgatag, igénytelen, váró termékenysége. Mind a bölcsészek, Platon, Spinoza, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche megegyeznek ebben. Csak a mai beteges mívelödés játszik erőlködve azzal, hogy komolyan számba vegye a nőt. (287)

> All this is the mania of the uneducated, it has no base. The female[9] will always remain inferior, it cannot be otherwise. Two thirds of her life span is taken up by the unconscious, animalistic care and the constraints of procreation, and her mind is governed by instincts. If she liberates herself from this, she will become a degenerate figure, without direction, without a place, idiotic and unhappy. The woman is a blind instrument of nature's purposes, she has not achieved consciousness. She is a still

> rooting, plant-like being, whose total value is unintentional grace and beauty, like those of flowers and their seeds* expecting, voiceless, and wantless fertility. All philosophers, Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche agree on this. Only today's sickly games of education labour with the idea that a woman should be taken seriously. (287)

This ferociously sexist statement is not singular or particular, then or now. It has been and still is, perhaps with a different vocabulary, issued. What is revolutionary in Kaffka's writing is the act of writing it down while speaking with a woman's voice about the life of a woman. It is her courage to manifest the male voice, and then the descriptions of the results of this male voice! Magda's response, although not in tangible action as far as she herself is concerned, is again and again directed towards hope, even if restricted to her immediate family, to her daughters:

> Kislányaim, lelkeim, csak ti tanuljatok! Mindenáron, mindenáron! Ne csináljatok ti semmit a ház körül; majd főzök, seprek, takarítok én, az én kidolgozott kezemnek, szétment, elhanyagolt testemnek már úgyis mindegy. Ti csak készüljetek szebb, diadalmaskodó, független életre; magatok ura lenni, férfi előtt meg nem alázkodni, kiszolgáltatolt mosogató cselédje, rugdosott kutyája egynek se lenni. Csak tanuljatok, mindent; ha az utolsó párnám is adom érte! (289)

> My darling daughters, you must learn, you must study! At all cost! You do not need to do any chores around the house. I will cook and clean. It does not matter any more for my rough hands, my neglected and deformed body. You must prepare yourselves for a more beautiful, triumphant, and independent life, not to be humiliated by any man, not to become any man's defenceless dishwasher and maid, his kicked-around dog. Learn! Everything - even if I have to sell the shirt off my back! (289)

Increasingly, with advancing years, Magda's only aim is to secure for her daughters a future in which they are able to be independent in mind and body. At the end of Magda's story, when she is an old woman, her retrospective is still resignation and the need to compromise. She notes the desolate uniformity of her life in detail, stretching it to mention that her menopause was uneventful. She recognizes fatalistically that her life, as much she tried to revolt, was directed by superior forces against which she had no chance at all (311-13). Now an old woman, she fits the mold and societal expectations, she even became religious and visits the church and confession. Her hopes find *familial* realization, however. She is alone, but her aim for her daughters seems to have been successful. They are educated and obtained professions. One of the final paragraphs of the novel reads:

> Klári is végzett, egyelőre jó zongoraleckékből él, de állás van ígérve neki egy pesti iskolánál. Marcsi azt hiszi, hogy, szerelmes volt egy tanárjába, valami nagy művészbe. Baj is az! ő ráér erre a fényűzésre, nem kell férjhez szaladnia a kenyérért... (321-22)

> Klári too graduated. At the moment she earns good money as a piano teacher but she was promised a position at a school in Pest. Marcsi thought she was in love with one of her teachers, some great artist. Who cares! She can afford such luxury, she does not need to run to a husband for money... (321-22).

Színek és évek is a "multi-dimensional" novel (Fülöp 67). The multi-dimensionality of the novel, its thematics, its psychological, sociological, narratological, etc., dimensions invite an analysis from several points of view. The critical body about Kaffka's works focused on the gentry thematics with sporadic mention of the position of women within the Hungarian gentry. Here, the above demonstrates Kaffka's preoccupation with the sociological factors of patriarchy by describing the sociological with specific attention to the position of women in Hungarian society of the time.

It is an important observation and proposition that Kaffka's novel at hand is a "tudatteremtő, lélekteremtő [regény]" ("consciousness and spirit creating [novel]") (Fülöp 68). It is an obvious extension of this proposition to say that both aspects, namely the "creation of consciousness" and the "creation of spirit" is to be understood with reference to the woman/fern ale consciousness and spirit. This is its most important feature of innovation. Also, the above proposition by Fülöp is the more important because it underlines the suggested intertwining of the author's innovative sociological perception with narrative innovation. In other words, the exposition and critique of the patriarchal value system occurs in a specific narrative style. Thus, Kaffka's writing, in Wittmann's sense, is successful in the presentation of the new woman on two accounts: The work is a reflective ("visszaemlékező") novel (Fülöp 68-69) and its narrative innovation rests in the creation and in the study of the *Weltanschauung* of the remembering individual. The narrative in the novel expresses by the multitude of reflections not only the level of fictionalizing but, at the same time, it expresses this fictionalization on the level of meditation and intellectual position-taking. This is also important because the Proustian reflective narrative was neither as a primary text nor in the secondary literature apparent either in Hungarian literature or literary scholarship of the time, or in Kaffka's specific development as an author. In this sense, Kaffka's narrative innovation can be positioned in the narration of memory. In this too, her work broke new ground in Hungarian literature.

Richardson's trilogy differs from Kaffka's novel in that it does not have a similar up-front accumulative sociological presentation of the woman's

critique of patriarchal values. However, it is there even if in a more implicit manner. Her work was generally described in terms of a pre-Joycean stream-of-consciousness narrative (cf. Hanscombe 1979, 1982; Fromm; Staley, etc.). In the secondary literature, her innovation of the stream-of-consciousness narration has been sufficiently established. In this, her work is markedly different from that of Kaffka. But similarities still abound. One of the areas of similarity inviting analysis is the reflective narrative. As mentioned before, this analysis does not focus on such similarities. What is more appropriate - as this is the main thrust of this study, namely the exposition of the socio-literary in relation to the critique of patriarchal society - is an analysis of Richardson's view of women's position. The trilogy is the reflective account of Miriam and her life, daughter of an impoverished "squire." The story of the first novel, *Pointed Roofs,* takes place largely in Germany - largely, because there are many instances when memory is injected about her previous stages of life - where Miriam obtained a *practicum* for her teacher's education. This novel has to be read carefully, because there is a dimension of strongly and vividly worded national perception in the text in the sense of frequent comparisons between the Germans and the English. What is disturbing in the reading of the novel is not that Miriam criticizes German society, men *and* women, but that she always ends her criticisms with a resolute preference and praise of the "better" English. This kind of nationalistic argumentation for social and cultural superiority is disturbing, particularly in a literary work. However, while this dimension in Richardson's work may be important and inviting for study, in the context of the present analysis it is a secondary dimension. At the same time, this dimension could be perceived, in the comparison with the *Színek és évek,* as an analogy of in that work prominent class perception, i.e., the German environment for Miriam is similar to the gentry environment for Magda. The second novel, *Backwater,* is an account of Miriam's life back in England, again teaching. Perhaps the most important dimension of this novel is Miriam's developing awareness of the submissive role women have in English society, particularly on the level of courtship and social interaction, and her conscious rebellion against religion. In this period of her life, Miriam also struggles with her conflicting emotions about the attraction to loneliness as a conscious choice and what price that would entail. In this struggle, Miriam reveals a mystic dimension of her personality and spirit. Her struggle with the dimension of lone existence is imbued with an implicit (sub/unconscious) sexual referencing (cf. Staley 48-50). In the third novel, in *Honeycomb,* Miriam takes up the position of governess in order to provide better financial support for her family. The affluence she is surrounded by at the Conies', is as much a trigger for envy and the awareness of her

exposed and subordinate position as a trigger to awake social responsibility in her. On the more narrow personal level, Miriam is still yearning for a *male* kindred spirit, which she believes to have found in Mr. Corrie until this hope is destroyed by his public rebuke of her. Another male protagonist, Bob Greville, proposes marriage to her. She refuses to marry him because she cannot reconcile the idea of marriage with the subjugation of the "wife," a necessary element as she well knows. The two immediately personal episodes fully awaken Miriam's rebellion against patriarchy, although she still manifests a yearning for male companionship - as unimaginable as this appears under her terms.

In *Pointed Roofs*, when Miriam is seventeen, she is more concerned with womanly appearance, thus complying more with society's expectations of the "female": "Miriam decided that she was negligible," she thinks when she compares herself to other women in the German school (I 39). In the same vein, Richardson's novels contain implicit references to the "manly" and sexuality (e.g. I 40; II 218-20). In comparison with Kaffka's work the reason for this cannot be that Miriam (and Richardson) was more interested in or occupied with eroticism or sexuality than Magda Pórtelky. It is much more likely that this is rooted in the social environment, both in Germany and in England, which was less rigid in its demands than that of Hungary, Admittedly, this is arguable. It is difficult to propose that in Hungary, in Germany, and in England the class system in general and within a particular class, the mores were or were not less or more prescriptive. Particularly in *Pointed Roofs* the reflection on sociological factors allow for an analysis similar to that of Kaffka's novel above. For example, Richardson writes that the impression of Miriams physical surroundings "brought Miriam the sense of the misery of social occasions" (I 41). Miriam's objection to religion (e.g. I 48), a dimension in which she finds the "leadership" of men particularly distasteful and which will become an important topic in the second novel, manifests itself most poignantly when the social structure of the exercise of religion is observed: "Listening to sermons was wrong... people ought to refuse to be preached at by these men. Trying to listen to them made her more furious than anything she could think of, more base in submitting... those men's sermons were worse than women's smiles" (I 73). Such and other descriptions by Richardson of Miriam's stay in Germany are acute observations of the patriarchal environment. It is an event to her when "Miriam had made out nothing clearly, but the fact that the dentist's wife had a title in her own right" (I 86). The German preoccupation and tradition of the military is not attacked by Miriam because of a pacifist attitude, for example, but because of what this military element means in relation to the position of women:

> 'My fazzer is offitser' - as if this were the answer to everything Miriam had tried to say, to her remark about the almond tree and everything else; and then she felt that there was nothing more to be said between them. They were both quite silent. Everything seemed settled. Miriam's mind called up a picture of a middle-aged man in a Saxon blue uniform - all voice and no brains - and going to take to gardening in his old age - and longed to tell Elsa of her contempt for all military men. (I 93)

A personal interchange is not possible between the two young women because of the overwhelming class/patriarchal "importance" of the other woman's social positioning herself by the profession of her father. The position men have in the social structure continuously reminds Miriam of the position women do not have: "His expression disturbed her. Why did he read with that half-smile? She felt sure that he felt they were 'young ladies,' 'demoiselles,' 'jeunes filles.' She wanted to tell him she was nothing of the kind and take the book from him and show him how to read" (I 106). Miriam is continuously depressed about the social structure that prescribes not only the behaviour of women but more importantly, their emotional and spiritual being. Yet she struggles against it:

> Miriam envied her. She would like to pour out beer for those simple men and dispense their food... quietly and busily... No need to speak to them, or be clever. They would like her care, and would understand. "Meine Damen" hurt her. She was not a Dame - Was Fräulein? Elsa? Millie was. Millie would condescend to these men without feeling uncomfortable. (I 118)

What is striking in this passage is the recognition on Miriam's part that the position of women is not determined only by class. It is the same in all classes, the gentry, the educated, the working class, etc. Yet, she herself cannot and would not want to break social codes, and when the occasion demands it, she too, like the young woman, whose father was an "offitser," positions herself in class consciousness, for example, when she pointedly remarks to Pastor Lahmann that "My grandfather was a gentleman-farmer" (I 128). But the effect, again, is what Miriam dreads. The Pastor replies:

> 'You have a beautiful English proverb which expresses my ambition.'
> Miriam looked, eagerly listening, into the brown eyes that came round to meet hers, smiling:
> "A little land, well tilled,
> A little wife, well-willed,
> Are great riches."
> ... It filled her with fury to be regarded as one of a world of little tame things to be summoned by little men to be well-willed wives. (I 128-29)

Miriam, similarly to Magda Pórtelky, often finds herself drawn to the acceptance, and even desire, of social codes prescribed and exercised by patriarchy. But both women again and again find the will to truggle against these codes and demands. Their rebellion takes many emotional, intellectual, and practical forms. At times, it surfaces that this struggle is possible only by deviance. Just as Magda's mother advises her (Magda) to "deceive him [her husband] a little out of love, that is why he is a man" *(Színek és évek* 117. See full quote above), Miriam comes to a similar conclusion: "Men ought not to be told. They must find it out for themselves. [...] But men liked actresses. They liked being fooled" (HI 400).

An interesting and curious chauvinistic consciousness also reveals Miriam's evolution as a feminist woman in the novels. In *Pointed Roofs* there are several references where Miriam's struggle against patriarchal values manifests itself in a dislike of the specifically German manifestations of patriarchal codes. So, for example, when she monologuizes about how German men "had all offended her at once. Something in their bearing and manner... Blind and impudent..." (I 167), and later she says "She was English and free" (I 180). But this chauvinistic differentiation between German and English will not hold once she returns to England. There, her struggle against the impositions of the patriarchy is just as strong as in Germany before. For example, the contemporary manifestation of the "free" woman, who smokes cigarettes: "She had chosen to smoke and she was smoking, and the morning world gleamed back at her" (II 210). And in England the German male, with his specific cultural baggage reveals himself even attractive, as in the figure of Max: "Max must be foreign, of course, German - of *course.* She could, if she liked, talk of the stars to him. He would neither make jokes nor talk science and want her to admire him, until all the magic was gone. Her mood expanded. He had come just at the right moment" (II 219. Richardson's italics).

The explosion of patriarchal codes is paramount to Miriam and it crosses, significantly, all social and class demarcations: "Of course she had never rushed about in a common park where rough boys came. At the same time - if the girls wanted to rush about and scream and wear no hats, nobody had any right to interfere with them" (II 240-41). This example illustrates Miriam's views of the struggle to break down the patriarchal system, thus allowing for gender equality. It also shows the built-in weak point: The reality of the danger of going to the park because of the "rough boys." The struggle against patriarchy is thus often limited by both external (social) and personal positions. For example, as in the case of Magda Pórtelky, who is forced into a choice between marriage and the if-not-married-then-a-spinster, Miriam's only avenue is her acceptance of and resignation in her position as a teacher. (As

she does not marry, she has no children to care for like the widowed Magda, and her family escapes poverty and social disgrace by the help of one of her sister's husband.) Miriam's *cul-de-sac,* her feeling of being trapped in stagnation, is a recurring theme in the three novels at hand (e.g. II 274). The resignation and feeling of entrapment, extensions of the individual situation, would be defeating if Miriam, like Magda, did not always find the strength to claim her own: "I am myself," she exclaims defiantly (II 286). A characteristic of both Magda and Miriam, this is a very important factor and it needs to be repeatedly pointed out because it is perhaps the single characteristic that allows both women, in the last analysis, to survive. Their struggle, continuously endangered by their resignation to the given, coupled with their aptitude to constantly re-structure their own realities, has a chance only with their resolute confirmation of their own worth - despite of what (the contrary) patriarchy demonstrates.

It can be said that Miriam has come further in her struggle than Magda, perhaps because she does not undergo the debilitating experience of marriage and has not been "executed" by the patriarchal demands of behaviour and role designation in that. Although she is more than aware of the male world on several levels ("Why do people always like a noise? Men. All the things men invented, trains and cannons and things make a frightful noise" pi 327]), in her situation and in her mind, there is still the possibility of finding the male, who will treat her as an equal:

> She discovered that a single steady unexpected glance, meeting her own, from a man who had the right kind of bearing - something right about the set of shoulders - could disperse all the vague trouble she felt [...] there was no need to be alone in order to be happy. (II 319)

Somehow, independently from Miriam's struggle against patriarchy yet implicitly connected with it, she too, like Magda in Kaffka's novel, feels the loss of social status as deeply tragic (e.g. Ill 352 and 360). In this, she experiences the same parameters in her "career" as a teacher and governess, as Magda in her second marriage and loss of financial - and consequently social - position (e.g. Ill 370).

Important as the *possibility* of an equal relationship in marriage appears to Miriam, her observations prove themselves to the contrary. The submissive role that is necessary to have a "good" marriage often appears in her mind:

> He might be heavy and fat. But a leading Q.C. must have thoughts... and he had been thin once... and there were those books... and he would read newspapers; perhaps too many newspapers. He would know almost at once that she thought he read too

> many newspapers. *She would have to conceal that, to hear the voice going on and leaving her undisturbed.* (Ill 367. My italics.)

Miriam's perception of the masculine, i.e., patriarchal world is almost always negative (e.g. "Men's ideas were devilish; clever and mean" III 404), but it is very important to understand that this negative perception is grounded in and a result of her acute observation of the world around her and then decision to focus on what she has seen and experienced between men and women:

> That was feminine worldliness, pretending to be interested so that pleasant things might go on. Masculine worldliness was refusing to be interested so that it might go on doing things. Feminine worldliness then meant perpetual hard work and cheating and pretence at the door of a hidden garden. Masculine worldliness meant never really being there; always talking about things that had happened or making plans for things that might happen. (Ill 388)

This macro-cosmos of the masculine, i.e., patriarchal world translates itself to Miriam into a horrible image of the *possibility* of her married state, one which continuously struggles with the other *possibility* of finding an equal partner.

Richardson created the image of a new woman who rebels against patriarchy with a determination rooted in a *Weltanschauung* fully recognizing the position of women in patriarchal society. Miriam's *Weltanschauung* is based on observation and intellectual position-taking. On the other hand, this frame of mind does not operate as a result of personal experiences like Magda Pórtelky's. Both authors and both protagonists arrived at a rejection of their respective patriarchal societies but both did so following different paths. Magda experienced the *effects* of patriarchy while Miriam *observed* them. For Magda the experience turns into the socio-factual, for Miriam the observation turns into intellectual reflection. This difference also accounts for the different narrative in the novels. Kaffka created the reflective narrative but which is socio-factual, while Richardson created the stream-of-consciousness narrative which is a result of her intellectual and emotional reflections of observations.

Notes

1. My own, somewhat narrow theoretical framework of feminist literary criticism is briefly as follows: 1) the critical assessment of the difference between the depiction/description of the male and the female in literature and how women are perceived/described by male and female authors; 2) the critical appraisal when, where, and how new image(s) of women appear in literature (Wittmann); and 3) the analysis of literary texts from a point of view that takes explicitly into account the above first two areas.
2. Although an important question, I would like to avoid here the problem of "male" feminist criticism. I take the position that it is possible for a man to have a feminist point of view. That a "male" feminist point of view is possible, indeed, necessary, I postulated in *In 1991: A Manifesto of Gender Responsibility* (1991).
3. The only translation of Kaffka's works, her short stories, is in Russian and a recent translation of her novel *Színek és évek* is into Italian not yet published.
4. Although, for example, Anna Földes' *Kaffka Margit: Pályakép* (1987) is still in no way an evaluation of Kaffka's works from a feminist point of view, it at least recognizes the patriarchal ideology prominent in the critical corpus on Kaffka. For example: "A kritikusokat megint elsősorban Kaffka témaválasztása, női látásmódja irritálja. Szemére vetik - nem teljesen alaptalanul -, hogy férfi hőseit is nő szemszögéből nézi. Ami fordítva évszázadokon át nem okozott az irodalom történetében gondot, egyszer csak a realizmus megengedhetetlen sérelmének, elfogultságának tekintendő" ("The critics are again, in the first instance irritated by Kaffka's choice of theme and female [N.B. not 'feminisf] point of view. They reproach her - not without reason - for viewing her male protagonists from a female angle. What has not caused a problem for centuries in the history of literature, suddenly becomes an unforgivable affront towards realism and it is viewed as a biased (prejudiced) position") (123). Although beyond the scope of this article, I question Földes's assessment of the male critical writings on Kafka. Földes's insertion of "not without reason" is curious; does this mean agreement with these critics?
5. The most explicit reference to a feminist point of view is in Lóránt Czigány's *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature,* in the chapter "The Writers of the *Nyugat*" under the heading "3. Women in Revolt: Margit Kaffka" (333-36).
6. For a recent treatment of Kaffka and Richardson see Livia K. Wittmann, "Desire in Feminist Narration: Reading Margit Kaffka and Dorothy Richardson," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature I Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 21. 3 (September 1994): forthcoming.
7. To the trilogy of Richardson's *Pilgrimage 1,* with the novels *Pointed Roofs* (1915), *Backwater* (1916), and *Honeycomb* (1917).
8. The story, until this time occurring in a provincial town, now depicts the urban environment of the capital.
9. In Hungarian, the speaker is using the medieval term "asszonyi állat". In English, the translation of this term would be "the female animal." I found this linear translation too strong - although it corresponds to what the speaker says - and chose "female," in context also connotating a negative perspective.

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BERLIN ET PARIS DE LAJOS TIHANYI

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Dans l'histoire des beaux-arts Lajos Tihanyi est connu comme l'un des «Huit» - un groupe d'artistes - qui se sont présentés pour la première fois en 1911 à Budapest. Mais sa carrière artistique ne se réduit pas seulement à cette période des «Huit». Il a débuté en 1907 à Nagybánya (Baia Mare, Roumanie), là où se trouve le lieu de naissance de l'art moderne hongrois du 20^{e} siècle. Dans cette ville il appartenait au groupe de jeunes peintres qui travaillait sous l'influence des «Fauves» et était surnommé «néo». C'est avec ce groupe qu'il a exposé ses premiers tableaux en 1909 à Budapest. Au début des années 1910 il a participé à toutes les expositions composées principalement des œuvres des «Huit». Il s'était fait connaître comme expressionniste et portraitiste d'une grande sensibilité et ses paysages, ses nus, ses natures mortes dont plusieurs étaient exposés à l'occasion des expositions des «Huit» témoignaient de la profonde connaissance de l'art de Cézanne.

Sa première exposition rétrospective eut lieu sous l'égide de Lajos Kassák à la salle d'exposition «Ma» (Aujourd'hui) en octobre 1918. La plupart des membres de l'intelligentsia progressiste hongroise dont le portrait était exposé s'étaient rendus à cette exposition et cet événement eut un grand écho dans la presse de l'époque. L'un de ses amis, le grand poète Endre Ady l'avait aussi honoré de sa présence.

Après la chute de la République des Conseils hongroise en 1919 il fut obligé d'émigrer, après un bref séjour passé à Vienne, d'abord à Berlin (en juillet 1920), ensuite (novembre 1923) à Paris. Entre juin et septembre 1924 cependant il est rentré à Berlin pour liquider ses affaires.

C'est à Paris qu'il est décédé en juin 1938. Il fut enterré au cimetière du Père Lachaise par ses amis proches: le célèbre photographe Brassai, le peintre Jacques de la Fregonniere et le comte Michel Károlyi, le chef en exü de la révolution hongroise.

Tout au long de son exil Tihanyi a participé à plusieurs expositions collectives, mais il a également exposé seul. A Vienne à la galerie «Moderne Galerie» en 1920, à Berlin à la galerie de Ferdinand Möller en 1921 et à Paris

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au Sacre du Printemps en 1925. Il était membre d*«Abstraction Création» dans les années 30 à Paris.

Le premier ouvrage rassemblant ses œuvres a paru en 1936 à Paris. C'est le poète Robert Desnos qui en a écrit la préface. Grâce à Brassai' et à Jacques de la Fregonniere, la majorité de ses œuvres se trouve actuellement à la Galerie Nationale de Hongrie de Budapest, mais on en trouve également au Brooklyn Museum à New York, à Cambrai et au Musée National d'Art Moderne, à Paris.

A l'âge de onze ans, à la suite d'une méningite, Tihanyi est devenu sourd et en a gardé un défaut de prononciation. Ses amis les plus proches et les habitués du café Dôme le comprenaient, mais Tihanyi, poussé par le besoin de précision, a souvent noté ses récits. A part ces notes il nous reste un grand nombre de ses lettres. Ces écrits peuvent nous servir à reconstituer se vie et à comprendre ses opinions artistiques.

Dans cet article nous nous proposons de présenter le vie berlinoise et parisienne de l'artiste. Nous essayerons de reconstituer la lutte qu'il a menée pour la reconnaissance de son art, sa vie à Berlin sous la République de Weimar en proie à l'inflation, et aussi l'image de Paris dont rêvait le peintre, un Paris qui promettait une vie facile mais au prix de grandes privations.

Cet article est basé sur la correspondance de Tihanyi et sur les écrits de ses proches. Nous allons examiner son intégration dans son nouveau milieu et les difficultés de sa vie quotidienne. Il est certain qu'il n'était qu'un parmi tant d'émigrants de l'époque mais son cas peut servir d'exemple. Il est le symbole et le représentant d'une génération dont la vision du monde est déterminée par 1919 à tel point que -malgré l'amnistie générale de 1926 - il n'a pas pu rentrer dans sa patrie et il a accepté l'exil jusqu'à sa mort.

Vienne n'était qu'un lieu de transit pour la majorité des artistes emigrants. Les amis les plus proches de Tihanyi ont tous quitté Vienne pour aller en Allemagne. Tihanyi est resté dans la capitale autrichienne pendant relativement longtemps parce que cette ville lui promettait quelques succès passagers. Au début de son séjour il a trouvé un mécène en la personne du Dr Oscar Reichel qui l'a aidé à organiser une exposition assez rapidement à la «Moderne Galerie». Son mécène lui a suggéré de réaliser une exposition ambulante et cela a éveillé dans l'âme du peintre le désir de conquérir Berlin.

Mais bientôt le Dr Oscar Reichel a commencé à ne plus soutenir Tihanyi: il pensait qu'en rachetant toutes ses œuvres il pourrait mieux motiver le peintre. Tihanyi a refusé cette proposition.

Au cours de son exposition Tihanyi a indiqué pour ses tableaux des prix tellement élevés qu'il était impossible de les vendre. Reichel a donc renoncé à l'achat ainsi qu'au soutien du peintre. Le projet de l'exposition ambulante a échoué et Tihanyi a quitté Vienne.

A Berlin, personne ne l'a attendu comme à Vienne un an auparavant. Ses amis ne pouvaient pas l'aider; ils étaient, eux aussi, à la merci de leur situation. Une aide si urgente n'aurait pu venir que de quelqu'un comme le Dr Oscar Reichel marchand et collectionneur de tableaux, mais hélas! Reichel n'était plus là. C'est le peintre lui-même qui s'exclame dans une de ses lettres: «Je n'ai pu encore rien faire pour ma nouvelle exposition... celui en qui j'avais le plus confiance... ne veut même pas négocier. Il n'y a personne d'influent à portée de la main qui pourrait éventuellement m'aider.»[1] L'impatience s'est emparée de lui, il ne voulait pas s'incliner devant le mesquinerie des petits commerçants. Il était convaincu que s'il était connu en Allemagne il serait plus recherché mais en ce qui concernait les expositions il était devenu de plus en plus pessimiste. L'exposition devrait être «Comme je la veux», «comme je la mérite» écrivait-il au poète Ödön Mihályi.[2] Il s'était déjà préparé à faire une exposition collective au cas où il n'aurait pas pu faire une exposition individuelle. Rien que pour être enfin vu et connu. «Ici vous pouvez trouver un tas de peintres, beaucoup plus que chez «nous». Et c'est avec eux que vour pourriez vous présenter et avoir un succès qui vous promettrait la possibilité d'une exposition individuelle.» - avait-il écrit sans douter de son succès.[3] Il avait besoin de prouver son talent comme son autobiographie* de cette époque le montre bien. Dans cette autobiographie il a insisté sur le fait que son art n'était pas expressionniste et a cherché à mettre en relief les différences. Les critiques viennois l'ont associé à l'expressionnisme et c'est ce qui l'a poussé à prouver qu'ils jugeaient sur les apparences. Dans ses écrits postérieurs, il voyait clairement que les qualificatifs «impressionniste» et «expressionniste» avaient perdu leur force après la guerre et il recherchait un élan nouveau pour que ses œuvres soient revalorisées.[5]

Son souhait s'est enfin réalisé en avril 1921 quand il a eu une exposition à la Galerie Möller.[6] Il attendait beaucoup de l'écho berlinois mais sa déception fut grande à cause du retard des articles dans les journaux qui ne commençaient à paraître que fin mai. Et sa déception s'est transformée en colère en les lisant parce que les journaux ne parlaient que des premiers pas d'un débutant qui aurait un certain talent.[7]

Les doutes le tourmentaient: ai-je du talent? - se demande-t-il dans ces lignes pleines d'amertume écrites à Béla Révész: «j'ai beaucoup souffert et j'ai tiré une conclusion: la seule issue dans la vie, c'est d'accepter et de supporter... .»[8] II ne pouvait plus travailler dans cet état dépressif. Il avait besoin de consolation pour en sortir: «il n'y avait que deux personnes qui s'intéressaient à moi dans le seul but de profiter au maximum de mon travail. Il ne me restait plus qu'accepter l'un des deux.» Sa rencontre avec Brassai' l'a beaucoup aidé à sortir de cette crise et les deux hommes sont devenus très amis.

Selon Brassaï ils se sont rencontrés pour la première fois en hiver mais il n'en parle dans ses lettres adressées à ses parents qu'à partir de mai. En juillet il raconte que Tihanyi «avec tous ses petits problèmes et plaintes» vient chez lui et que pour l'aider il l'a présenté à beaucoup d'artistes, collectionneurs et critiques d'art.[9] Il semble qu'à la fin de l'été il est à nouveau en forme et que malgré une inflammation aux yeux il s'est lancé dans le travail avec beaucoup de zèle.[10] Il s'est mis de nouveau à peindre et il a fait deux portraits de Brassai'. Il a fait faire des photographies de son atelier et de ses œuvres et il les a envoyés à Paris à «l'Esprit Nouveau» et à Moscou à Kandinsky qui tous deux s'intéressaient à son art.[11] Il a eu quelques occasions d'exposer à Stockholm et à Berlin avec Pechstein, Pascin et Schmidt-Rottlufi.[12] Il ne lui restait plus qu'à surmonter les difficultés financières afin de s'affirmer et de réfuter les mauvaises critiques.

A la fin de l'année ses affaires allaient mieux. Voici quelques lignes de Brassai':

«Les peintres indépendants peuvent déjà gagner leur vie plus facilement comme le font par exemple les hongrois Kernstok, Berény, Czóbel, Tihanyi etc.: ils arrivent à vivre de leurs propres ressources sans soutien quelconque. Tihanyi vient juste de vendre deux tableaux pour environ 20 mille Marks et son autoportrait se négocie pour 10 mille Marks, prix qu'il ne veut point baisser.»[13]

Même si nous pensons que Brassaï a bien embelli sa vie berlinoise pour rassurer ses parents, ces lignes prouvent que Tihanyi a enfin trouvé des acquéreurs pour ses tableaux. L'année 1922 commençait donc à l'abri du besoin, ce que l'on ressent bien en lisant ces lignes:

«Ce sont mes tableaux qui parleront de moi, même s'ils sont si peu nombreux. Les conditions sont assez bonnes.»[14] Cette confiance en lui l'a engagé encore plus dans l'exil. C'est pendant ces quelques mois qu'il a le plus écrit à ce sujet et qu'il a commencé à s'intéresser plus intensément aux choses qu'il a laissées dans son pays: en cherchant un éditeur pour «Les nouvelles» de Józsi Jenő Tersánszky et en s'abonnant au périodique Független Szemle d'Iván Hevesy, critique d'art. Il devenait de plus en plus actif. Il ne se plaignait que du froid de Berlin. Quand Brassai a quitté Tihanyi en avril 1922 pour aller à Brasov parce qu'il ne trouvait ni existence ni espoir dans la capitale allemande, il a laissé son ami réconforté et sur le chemin du succès. «Il restera à Berlin assuré de son avenir. Il vient de vendre deux tableaux pour 40 mille Marks et il en vendra tant qu'il voudra» - écrivait-il à son sujet.[15]

On retrouve cette même confiance dans les lettres de Tihanyi. Il n'a jamais suivi de si près le travail de ses contemporains qu'à ce moment-là, allant même jusqu'à mépriser Kokoschka pour renforcer son sentiment de supériorité.

Enfin il n'est plus à la merci de personne et c'est lui qui va pouvoir aider le peintre László Péri.[16] Il a même un tableau à l'exposition collective à Glaspalast.[17] Mais vers la fin de l'été il se cabre devant les difficultés. Sa générosité ne donne pas de résultats. L'absence de Brassai' est de plus en plus pénible. L'inflation galopante l'accable.

«C'est un pays étrange. Ailleurs une telle inflation ferait beaucoup plus de bruit, comme nous l'avons vu à Vienne. Mais ici c'est l'abondance. L'État est stable, il n'y a pas de chômage, le déficit extérieur n'est pas réglé. L'État ne se fait pas beaucoup de souci. Un pauvre diable comme moi qui n'est même pas mis à l'index doit se débrouiller parmi tant de spéculateurs et enjamber les zéros pour faire son prix. En fin de compte c'est horrible et cela sera sanglant un joun> a-t-il écrit.[18]

Par des temps pareils il avait des pressentiments malgré les quelques commandes qu'il a eues. Il acceptait tous les travaux. Il était sollicité par Sándor Barta pour le débat du périodique d'art l'«Homme pendu» paru en langue hongroise à Vienne.[19]

Durant l'hiver de 1922-1923 il s'était plaint du froid dans ses lettres et du problème de chauffage, mais aussi du fait qu'il ne se sentait pas bien dans le milieu artistique. Ses amis de Hongrie lui avaient rendu visite comme la femme de l'écrivain et critique d'art György Bölöni, un membre des «Huit», Bertalan Pór, et le peintre Aurél Bernáth et plus tard au printemps le peintre-poète Madame Anna Lesznai et Róbert Berény - qui était aussi membre des «Huit» -; mais il aurait été plus important pour lui d'approfondir ses liens avec l'art allemand. Il s'est formé une opinion sur Sturm en disant que László Moholy-Nagy n'était pas si èminent. Il qualifiait László Péri de monotone et répétitif et classait les œuvres de Károly Kernstok exposées à Kosice comme des «navets» alors qu'il était lui-même membre des «Huit» sous la direction de Kernstok.[20]

L'inflation et la situation politique poussaient plusieurs artistes de nouveau à l'émigration vers Paris quoique l'opinion publique berlinoise considéra la situation meilleure au Danemark, en Suède ou même au Brésil. Paris est devenu le nouveau centre de l'art pour les étrangers et le fils du sculpteur Kernstok ainsi que Bölöni et ses amis s'y sont installés. En juin, Tihanyi ne pensait pas encore à suivre ces artistes et espérait trouver un atelier chauffé où il aurait pu travailler même en hiver. Le sculpteur Béni Ferenczy a ainsi cité les paroles de son ami et a décrit les circonstances de sa vie: «Tihanyi se vante en disant que ce n'est pas de son art qu'il vit mais de la spéculation à la Bourse - tu comprends? (sic!)» parce qu'aujourd'hui l'art n'a pas de raison d'être et je suis bien content d'avoir fait ce que j'ai déjà peint» - lui aussi se contente de ses réussites.»[21] Il enviait Bölöni et ses amis:

«Je suis heureux pour vous qui voyez tant de beauté et de lumière. Votre sincérité est la preuve de votre générosité amicale parce qu'ici il n'existe point

le plus petit rayonnement de lumière ou de soleil. Il pleut tout le temps, toute la journée et tous les jours. Ce qui change ce sont les prix et le dollar. Le dollar vaut aujourd'hui 150.000 Marks, sinon... Les gens parlent des millions encaissés chaque jour. Ce qui m'étonne c'est qu'il ne se passe rien après tout cela.»[22]

Il pouvait se plaindre à ses amis sans retenue mais il n'écrivait à ses proches restés à la maison qu'en leur donnant de bonnes nouvelles. Comme il n'y en avait pas beaucoup il n'écrivait presque plus qu'à ses amis.

«Ça me réconforte peu ce que j'ai lu dans votre périodique, qu'il pleut chez vous comme ici mais je pense qu'il ne fait pas aussi froid qu'ici. On chauffe déjà chez les bourgeois (je me suis rendu chez les Dióssy avant leur départ) comme chez les prolétaires... Il nous semble que le soleil s'éteint - et moi je n'ai même pas un morceau de charbon - Je n'ose pas acheter des chemises parce que leur prix est au-dessus de 500.000 Marks» ainsi énumérait-il ses difficultés.»[23]

Il attendait impatiemment les nouvelles des Bölöni en espérant qu'ils avaient réussi à le faire connaître sur le sol français. «Avez-vous rencontré Brummer et puis-je espérer que les Français comprennent mieux que les Allemands que je serais un peintre excellent si je peignais?» - s'informait-il.[24] Il n'avait pas l'air de comprendre la deuxième question qu'il s'est posée mais plus tard cela est devenu une obsession. «Pourrait-on après avoir fait connaître mes œuvres d'après mes photos en vendre quelques-unes pour des francs français pour que je puisse moi-même aller à Paris?» demandait-il.

Il fut de plus en plus tenté à cause de l'admiration de Kernstok et des nouvelles des Bölöni d'aller à Paris à la fin de l'été. Dans ses lettres il n'en parle pas encore d'une manière concrète mais ses raisons sont nombreuses.

«Dans mes projets je m'éloigne de Berlin, je vais à Paris. Dans l'activité artistique je suis inerte depuis des années. Pour recommencer, Paris me semble plus prometteur que Berlin. En constatant ce fait je n'hésiterais pas à prendre une décision et je ne reculerais pas devant les nouvelles difficultés. Pour l'instant ce projet demeure incertain et chaotique pour moi» - peut-on lire dans une lettre adressée à Ödön Mihályi au mois d'août.»[25]

D'après ses lettres, le point de vue artistique est secondaire par rapport aux considérations financières. Il écrit aux Bölöni: «Tu peux imaginer la folie de S qui fait sauter aux billions le coût de la vie quotidienne.»[26] Il détaille cette même chose à Mihályi:

«C'est la pure folie au change, on perd autant que l'on gagne, le sol brûle sous nos pieds et l'air est aussi chaud au-dessus de notre tête - bien sûr au sens figuré - mais le pire c'est le froid, insupportable qui me fera fuir. Mais ça ne concerne pas tout le monde... On ne peut pas savoir ce qui nous arrivera mais

je suis certain qu'il n'y aura pas de changement jusqu'à une guerre prochaine. Ça me ferait partir pour un certain temps mais je ne crois pas tellement qu'elle ne me retrouve pas là où je serai.»[27]

Tihanyi a prévu un séjour de six mois mais l'argent lui manquait encore. «J'ai besoin de quelques billets de 100 S parce que je n'en ai que 50-60 S» - le compte rendu d'été en parlait.[28] Dans ses lettres il ne parle pas de la nature des ressources mais on sait qu'il était invité par Ödön Mihályi et par l'avocat, le Dr Virgil Ciaclan, à Kosice et Oradea avec Pór et Berényi pour trouver de l'argent. Il a refusé cette invitation en disant: «Je ne pense pas qu'il me faille aller jusque là pour un peu d'argent.»[29] En automne il a fait une lithographie sur le portrait d'Itóka, la femme de Bölöni pour éventuellement la vendre. Une fois l'argent nécessaire collecté il a eu un autre problème: celui du visa. Les autorités françaises délivraient difficilement un visa aux ressortissants hongrois contrairement à ce qu'ils faisaient pour les Allemands. Tihanyi a supplié Bölöni de lui trouver un prétexte ou une invitation à une exposition pour que les Français ne lui refusent pas le visa. Finalement l'aide est arrivée grâce à l'intervention de Madame Dióssy qui a réussi à obtenir une lettre de recommandation de «l'Ambassade du Royaume de Hongrie au Consulat français». Tihanyi a pu ainsi aller à Paris au début de novembre 1923.[30]

En quittant Berlin il avait l'impression d'être sorti d'une cave sombre pour retrouver la lumière du jour. Il critiquait Berlin de façon obsessive en noircissant tous ses souvenirs. Il faisait plus beau à Paris, les femmes étaient plus belles, la mode plus esthétique, sans parler des coutumes et naturellement tout était bon marché et accessible à tous.

«Quand je revois cette scène de famille cauchemardesque: celle d'autour d'une grande table dans un salon berlinois d'un appartement luxueux où on apporte un plat argenté chargé d'un hareng pas trop garni à ceux qui sont assis en grappe et buvant du thé pas très mauvais sans sucre, je constate qu'ici, une même table s'écroulerait sous le poids d'aliments abondants et même les miettes d'une telle table pourraient nourrir ces Allemands affamés.» - a-t-il écrit à Tersànszky après son arrivée.[31]

Pendant des semaines il vivait dans l'enchantement de Paris et une sorte de soulagement l'a poussé au travail. Il a dessiné des portraits, et est allé prendre contact avec les marchands de tableaux. Mais vite il a eu ses premières déceptions: un certain Dr Reichel restait toujours introuvable.

Mais sa vie redevient comme celle de Berlin. Il veut se justifier de nouveau et il pense que cela sera possible seulement par une exposition. Ce n'est qu'aux Français qu'il veut démontrer son talent mais aussi aux Allemands qui sont disqualifiés dans ses lettres. A cause de cette exposition prochaine il a retardé son retour à Berlin. Mais en juin il n'était plus possible de rester, son loyer

n'étant pas réglé depuis un certain temps. Il dit au-revoir à Bölöni et à Brassaï, ces deux bons amis, en pleurant et il est décidé à revenir dès que possible. Il ne pense pas à un retour définitif, c'est seulement l'exposition qui le ferait revenir.

Il est arrivé à Berlin angoissé par les mauvais souvenirs et même ses meilleurs moments lui semblaient sombres. Que pouvait-il donc espérer de l'avenir? Il se plaint beaucoup dans ses lettres. Il compare Berlin à Paris et naturellement il choisit cette dernière pour ses nouveaux espoirs de succès et de reconnaissance. «Il est bien souhaitable mon départ de Berlin... C'est au retour que je me suis rendu compte que Berlin est détestable et horriblement cher... Tous mes projets sont maintenant à Paris» - écrivait-il à Mihályi peu après son arrivée.[32] «Je ne supporte plus le coût de la vie à Berlin et j'ai décidé de m'installer définitivement à Paris, et mon retour n'a fait que me confirmer dans cette décision» écrivait-il aux Parisiens.[33] Mais pour la maison il a formulé sa lettre avec beaucoup plus de modération et sur la fiche officielle il était plus prudent. Il a écrit aux peintres hongrois à Berlin qu'il irait à Paris pour un certain temps et éventuellement il s'y installerait. «J'étais à Paris de novembre dernier jusqu'en juin 1924 où je retournerai pour un long séjour et peut-être je m'y installerais définitivement.»[34] Il n'a plus tenu en secret, donc, sa décision devant ses amis du pays natal et plus tard il les a rassurés sur son caractère définitif en expliquant que l'inflation à Berlin lui était insupportable.

«Malgré les problèmes, mon séjour à Paris a été agréable. Ma joie n'était éclipsée vers les dernières semaines que par la pensée de Berlin. A la fin de juin c'était le dernier délai pour le départ et après il ne me restait plus que le bon souvenir. Ici rien n'est bon, rien n'est beau et tout coûte plus cher. Je ne peux rien acheter bon marché parce que je n'ai pas d'argent. On dit que personne n'en a mais ce n'est pas vrai. Je voudrais partir etje devrais partir. En automne je dois être à Paris, pas pour l'amour mais par besoin. Ici je ne peux plus rien faire. La chance m'aidera pour vivre ici mais je ne peux pas me séparer de mes biens et de mon atelier. Tout doit s'arranger tant bien que mal en deux ou trois semaines. Je suis seul et je suis étranger. Je ne peux compter que sur moi-même. L'ennui que je ne connaissais pas auparavant me tue maintenant. Pas de cinéma: le billet le moins cher coûte un demi MM (mauvais mark)... je vais en finir, de cette vie berlinoise et je vous en rendrai compte dès que ce sera terminé ici, chez les Boches.»[35]

Il n'est rentré donc à Berlin que pour vendre son mobilier et tout liquider. Voici sa lettre écrite en août à Mihályi:

«Je n'attends que mon départ. Je n'ai pas d'argent mais il m'est impossible d'attendre d'en avoir. Alors que j'en ai eu toujours un peu quand ça allait mal. Néanmoins je veux vivre à Paris et moi, je sais pourquoi - pas uniquement

pour les agréments. Mais laisser tomber mon atelier me semble impossible et ce serait peut-être une fatalité pour moi.»[36]

Il était incapable de se séparer de ses meubles et de son atelier et son départ est devenu de plus en plus incertain: «Ici rien ne va, même pour les autres. Mais l'avenir est tellement sans issue et aller à Paris sans argent et sans espoir me bouleverse complètement.»

<Jusqu'à maintenant, après deux mois d'attente pour l'atelier il n'y a eu qu'un seul candidat assez antipathique, et en plus, il ne voulait me donner que la moitié de la somme exigée. Je n'ai pas confiance en lui après son entretien avec la concierge. Je devrais liquider tout, payer le transport de mes meubles avec une grande partie des 200 Marks et à Paris je devrais penser au retour pour la liquidation totale. Dans une circonstance pareille je n'écris à personne. Même à la maison on n'est pas au courant de mon lieu de séjour» - écrit-il dans une de ses lettres.[37]

Il a perdu le contact avec ses amis berlinois. Ainsi il a écrit à Mihályi: «Je ne peux écrire que du mal de Berlin. Aujourd'hui c'est la ville la plus chère, la plus ennuyeuse et la plus passive de l'Europe. Mes concitoyens hongrois se plaisent ici. Aucun parmi eux ne m'apporte la joie.»[38]

Il les a quand-même rencontrés mais ne disait que du mal d'eux.[39] Il restait plutôt entre les quatre murs de son atelier en attendant l'amélioration de son sort. Pour profiter de cette inertie il rêvassait sur ses projets dont aucun n'était lié à Berlin. L'image qu'il a créée à Vienne sur l'Allemagne était irréversiblement ternie même par rapport aux années les plus désespérées de Paris.

La vie berlinoise lui semblait invivable principalement pour des raisons financières tandis que son attirance envers Paris venait d'une motivation plutôt artistique.

En 1924 les rapports de force entre les différents courants artistiques sont devenus tels que Tihanyi s'est trouvé loin des occasions favorables. Il s'est éloigné du constructivisme, de Bauhaus, de Neue Sachlichkeit et même de Sturm qui était le plus proche de son âme. Il n'a jamais tiré profit de ses relations avec les amis hongrois pour s'approcher de ces cercles fermés, d'une part parce qu'il était convaincu que Sturm est devenu décadent, d'autre part parce qu'il avait quelques réserves vis-à-vis de Herwarth Waiden dont la morale était douteuse - selon lui. Il n'y a qu'une seule lettre dans laquelle il fait allusion à leur rapport et c'est justement en le niant.

«Herwarth Waiden va se rendre à [Buda]pest pour une conférence. Demain il viendra chez moi pour faire ma connaissance, parce qu'il ne veut pas être ignorant si jamais on lui demande quelque chose sur moi, mais j'ai peur de Sturm et ce sera bien d'aller à Paris avant l'orage» - avait-il écrit en novembre 1923.[40] De toute façon il était déjà trop tard pour qu'un tel entretien lui apporte quelque chose.

Un an plus tard au deuxième semestre de 1924 après les impressions parisiennes il ne pouvait plus penser à percer dans le monde berlinois. Ce qu'il voulait à Berlin c'était éviter les dépenses inutiles et gagner de l'argent pour qu'il ait suffisamment d'économies pour sa vie parisienne. Comme il n'a pas réussi à gagner de l'argent c'était pour lui une raison de plus pour s'installer définitivement à Paris où au moins il aurait pu espérer quelques expositions et succès.

Ses premières impressions sur Paris étaient très intenses et abondantes dans ses lettres dont nous avons déjà parlé à propos de Berlin. Au fil des années sa vie s'est embourbée dans la grisaille parisienne mais il est resté fidèle à cette ville.

Les premières nouvelles parisiennes datent de la fin de l'année 1923 et du début de l'année 1924. Il a fait le résumé de ses premières impressions à ses amis Mihályi et Tersánszky:

«Le voyage était dur et pénible et je suis arrivé soulagé. Je peux dire sans répéter le schéma romantique que ma joie s'accumulait jusqu'à l'état d'extase que me provoquait l'effet d'être à Paris. Vie lumineuse et brillante d'après tant d'années grises passées en Allemagne. Paris t'offre à bon marché tout ce que tu désires de sensationnel» - peut-on lire sur la carte postale adressée à Tersánszky.[41]

La lettre suivante est plus détaillée:

«Cher Józsi je ne pourrais rien ajouter à ce que tes amis écrivains et poètes ont écrit sur Paris, sinon quelques points d'exclamation de plus, après le nom de cette ville et mes impressions que je vais te raconter maintenant. Je ne suis pas poète et je n'ai pas besoin d'une faculté de clairvoyance pour sentir et faire sentir l'effet étrange que provoque Paris sur mon physique. La vie parisienne a une influence magique sur moi que tu ne pourrais comprendre qu'après avoir passé quelques années en Allemagne comme *moi chez les Allemands.* Il y a là aussi une grande culture et un grand esprit mais ils se manifestent autrement. Ici tout est beaucoup plus sympathique. Elle est indicible, cette manière française par rapport à celle des Allemands qui me semble affreusement brutale. L'apparence de cet esprit pour le monde visible est aussi très différente. Ici, dans cette ville, la surface habitée est 6-7 fois plus dense. Cette densité de la vie m'emporte et cette force vitale entre en moi. Peut-être c'est cela qui me rajeunit mais, en tout cas, on dit généralement que l'on se sent plus jeune ici. Il faut y compter mes souvenirs d'il y a 12 ans. Rien n'est changé depuis et j'ai l'impression de pouvoir reprendre ma vie là où je l'ai quittée il y a 12 ans. La dernière fois que j'y suis venu c'était le printemps et cela me manque beaucoup parce que le printemps ici a une particularité - disent les étrangers - mais les Parisiens - les Français? - vivent toujours au printemps. Les femmes s'habillent élégamment avec leur manteau de fourrure et les

hommes avec leur écharpe négligemment jetée autour de leur cou, comme si le mauvais temps n'y changeait rien. Même en hiver quand il pleut il fait incomparablement plus doux qu'à Berlin. Et les femmes n'ont pas pris cette habitude affreuse de s'envelopper dans de longs sacs à grain comme les Allemandes. Il serait dommage de cacher leurs jolis pieds au bout desquels se balancent leurs beaux souliers au-dessous des tables du café - je pense toujours qu'elles vont les perdre. A propos du café: il y a partout des petites tables en bois entourées de divans en cuir où les gens sont pressés les uns contre les autres et quand quelqu'un arrive il met son manteau là où il trouve de la place sur une sorte de porte-bagages perché au bout d'un tuyau en cuivre. Rien n'est rigoureux, rien n'est carré comme chez les Allemands. Même les Anglais et les Américains en grand nombre n'y changent rien quoiqu'ils aient gardé leur particularité et leur coutume et qu'ils vivent à part. Mais le plus spectaculaire c'est la rue. Plus elle est étroite, plus elle est en pente plus il y a de monde, d'omnibus et de voitures. Les gens se pressent et se dépêchent tous dans ces rues dont la largeur dépasse à peine la moitié de la rue Dob et partout à tout moment devant les immeubles il y a des petits magasins avec plein de bonnes choses étalées sur le trottoir sous la pluie dans le froid. Tu ne peux pas regarder un tel spectacle sans être touché, sans avoir envie de regarder et d'avoir tout ce qui est à manger et à boire. De la voiture la plus chère jusqu'au grand lit de famille tout est comme s'il y avait un grand déménagement comme si tout était en mouvement et en effervescence. Cela ne donne pas un aspect oriental à la ville mais, c'est plutôt comme chez les Italiens sans leur oisiveté et leur vacarme. Mais parlons de ma gourmandise: malgré mes précautions j'ai eu quelques dérèglements tellement j'ai mangé et bu. La force de la nouveauté a fait son travail sans soucis d'argent car tout est moins cher ici.»[42]

Tihanyi n'a jamais décrit Berlin - tel qu'il l'a fait pour Paris dans cette lettre. Pour mesurer son ravissement lisons quelques lignes d'une lettre de son contemporain le peintre József Nemes Lampérth qui se souvient de Berlin:

«Je ne suis point enchanté de Berlin qui me semble comme un immense succédané robuste, vaste, envahissant. Au point de vue de l'architecture il n'y a rien de noble, rien qui toucherait le cœur. La ville - peut-on dire - est une urbanisation moderne et pratique. Tout est carré ou arrondi au compas. Les rues les immeubles sont uniformisés. Voici le grand Berlin.

Au début j'avais beaucoup de mal à m'habituer à cette froideur et à cette rigidité dont la quantité est surprenante. On sent et on voit que tout est ordonné par la précision d'un esprit technocrate rigide et inflexible. C'est dans ce pays d'excellents architectes et d'ingénieurs que je me suis rendu compte de l'importance de ce que l'on appelle généralement «le cœur», - qui veut dire chaleur, force d'esprit. Parce que c'est ça qui me manque.»[43]

Il a passé les premiers mois en contemplation et raconte ses souvenirs:

«Depuis la première seconde j'étais envahi d'un bonheur dont j'étais privé à Berlin. J'avais une sorte de «fièvre-de-Paris», ineffaçable à celui qui était déjà venu trois fois à cet endroit. Ce scintillement, cette agitation est extraordinaire. La particularité des places des rues, l'élégance des femmes sont séparément et ensemble l'essence de cet esprit français qui est totalement opposé à celui de l'Allemagne que j'avais douloureusement subi pendant trois ans.»[4]*

Cette excitation du nouveau venu était cette fois plus modérée qu'à son arrivée à Berlin, mais son attente était très intense. Les déceptions ne tardèrent pas, elles l'ont envahi plus vite qu'à Berlin. Cela vint bien évidemment de la vie artistique.

«Je supporte moins le plaisir de la vue comme dans le cas du Louvre - je t'avoue - je sais que c'est un blasphème - mais je veux rester sincère - qu'il ne me procure plus aucun plaisir: bien au contraire je sens l'odeur du mort entre ses murs. Le nouveau arrivé dans cette crypte c'est Daumier maintenant.

Ce serait une gloire douteuse d'y entrer vivant tellement est triste un tel dépôt de tableaux. Nous sommes dans le vif du sujet parce que pour moi c'est une question capitale: où serai-je pendu ou seront pendus mes tableaux? D'après mes débuts, l'avenir ne promet pas de bon augure. Quoique mes premières informations ne soient pas si loin de la réalité. Sinon je serais un voyageur de luxe pour toutes ces peines et d'argent dans le seul but de me faire plaisir. Maintenant que je suis là et que je vois ce que je vois, je constate la quantité de la qualité médiocre. Toutes ces pacotilles mélangées de toutes cultures sans esthétique, sans avenir sont tristes et nulles. Rien que mes quelques années actives qui ont produit quelque chose de viable et les collections que j'ai malgré le silence délibéré (dont la nature intentionnelle signifie déjà quelque chose) valent la peine de croire qu'un jour je pourrai me produire dans un milieu parisien adéquat et digne de mes œuvres. C'est pourtant ce chemin qui y mène qui demeure pour moi justement introuvable. Les quelques marchands qui pourraient les apprécier n'y trouvent pas d'intérêt. Je me suis rendu chez Khanweiler. Après avoir vu mes photographies il m'a dit qu'il ne travaille qu'avec 3-4 «habitués» depuis des années. Il n'aspire pas du tout au partage de ma gloire éventuelle» - écrivait-il à Tersánszky un mois après son arrivée.[45]

En février il écrit une lettre à Mihályi, plus sombre que celle qu'il avait écrite en décembre à Tersánszky:

«C'est que l'art est la surface de la vie pourrie d'une bourgeoisie servile qui dans son immoralité se dégrade malgré les transfusions sanguines de la civilisation. Les œuvres fabriquées à la chaîne puent le cadavre pourri et le

sperme stérile que l'on a vomi. Nombreux sont les commerçants de renom qui satisfont le besoin des snobs. Ceux qui ont proclamé la révolution de l'esprit il y a 15 ans, sont maintenant les gérants des grandes usines d'art. Dans une telle circonstance je perds tout espoir. Mon ambition et toute ma force pour me battre ne sont pas suffisants contre ce monde et pour un art plus vrai, plus humain. Dans cet état de découragement et de gaucherie je suis moi-même étonné d'avoir le courage d'aller chez quelques commerçants d'art. Quelquefois je suis tellement incompris et mal reçu que je montre même pas mes photos. Ailleurs j'ai eu un accueil favorable et j'ai réussi à impressionner mon interlocuteur mais je me suis vite arrêté à cause des objections qui m'étaient faites en réclamant des tableaux de petite taille.»[46]

En mars il eut quelques rayons d'espérance: la galerie de Léonce Rosenberg lui a proposé une exposition.[47] La date proposée n'était pas la meilleure mais pour lui ce n'était pas un obstacle. L'important c'était de l'accepter. Quelques mois plus tard la galerie de Paul Guillaume a pris la place de la galerie Rosenberg mais pour lui cela n'a pas changé grand-chose.[48]

Après avoir décidé de rester définitivement en France il lui a fallu se mettre au travail et gagner sa vie. Il n'avait plus le temps de flâner et d'admirer la ville, encore moins de temps pour le reste. A partir de 1926 les difficultés de la vie quotidienne l'ont obligé de concentrer ses énergies sur son travail.[49] Peu à peu il a perdu le contact avec ses amis. Il pouvait écrire sur Paris ou sur Berlin des récits à Tersánszky parce qu'il ne connaissait pas ces villes mais de 1924-1925 leur correspondance a pris fin. Il pouvait toujours écrire à Mihályi, mais répéter les première impressions après tant d'années écoulées n'avait plus de sens.

«Je ne vis que pour le moment présent. J'ai gâché toute ma vie et mon talent. C'est encore peut-être la dernière minute que je serai sauvé. Pour continuer ma carrière dans les années à venir peut-être j'ai encore assez de force morale et physique. Pour cela il me faut du temps et de l'argent. Mais je n'ai pas le temps d'attendre. J'ai vécu des années et des mois de privations mais aujourd'hui j'ai l'impression de n'avoir rien fait, de n'avoir vécu que dans la misère et dans l'inertie, ... je me suis forcé à économiser un capital pour me permettre de vivre et de travailler et maintenant mon plus grand problème c'est de gagner mon pain de tous les jours. Je n'ai même pas à manger! Je suis seul! Les gens m'évitent ouvertement ou sans le montrer, pourtant je n'ai jamais été à la charge de personne. Ça ne serait pas une solution de me suicider mais la faim et la misère pourront changer ma vie en quelques jours ou le hasard peut-être. Mais du hasard il n'y en a plus» - a-t-il écrit en 1931 à son ami Virgil Ciaclan à Oradea.[50]

Sa situation financière pendant son exil était précaire et lui a fait connaître la misère mais de temps en temps il a réussi à vendre ses tableaux et il a eu

toujours l'aide de ses parents.[51] Il n'a pas refusé les habits usés de son ami Alexander Korda mais il n'a jamais suivi le conseil de son ami le sculpteur Márk Vedres qui lui a dit un jour qu'il serait millionnaire s'il ne demandait qu'un franc à tous ses amis.[52] Il en avait tellement (sic) à Paris.

A son enterrement au cimetière du Père Lachaise devant la tombe N° **10.271** selon les témoins il y avait environ 250 personnes pour lui rendre hommage.[53] Les discours étaient tenus par Robert Desnos et le comte Michel Károlyi. Les comptes rendus de l'enterrement insistaient sur le caractère symbolique des paroles. C'était donc Robert Desnos qui disait adieu au nom des Parisiens et des amis artistes qui l'entouraient au Dôme et qui étaient souvent ses modèles.[54]

La présence du comte Michel Károlyi était en soi un événement; il était le symbole de l'émigration hongroise et de la révolution perdue. Ferenc Mosonyi et Oszkár Robert s'en souviennent ainsi:

«Je suis venu pour te dire adieu à toi qui étais un homme brave et un peintre de talent, tu n'acceptais le compromis ni dans ta vie ni dans ton art et tu as préféré quitter ton pays pour vivre en exil sur un sol étranger ici à Paris. Tu as refusé de vivre dans la prison-patrie pour travailler et créer dans la liberté. Tu es mort sans jamais rentrer dans notre Hongrie libre. Nous te comprenons parce que nous vivons la même vie que tu as vécue et nous avons le même sort que toi: nous avons quitté la Hongrie à jamais. Une fumée monte de tes cendres sur laquelle s'envolent maintenant tes projets, tes intentions, tout ce que tu voulais faire et réaliser. Tes rêves s'en vont maintenant comme les nôtres. Notre passé et notre avenir se sont envolés vers le néant comme toute notre vie.»[55]

La grande question du discours de Károlyi était: «Allons-nous tous mourir dans la déchéance en exil?» il attendait la réponse de ses auditeurs. En sortant du cimetière nombreux étaient ceux qui, résignés, brisés répondaient par une question. Mais d'autres se sont dit: «Ave Tihanyi! nous ne mourrons pas ici! Nous voulons rentrer et vivre chez nous!» - c'est ce qu'on lit dans le compte rendu d'un journaliste. Károlyi en exil n'a jamais montré le moindre désespoir ou amertume. Mais à l'occasion de l'enterrement de son ami le peintre Lajos Tihanyi dans le silence qui a suivi sa question il n'a pas pu retenir son émotion et il a éclaté en sanglots.[56] Henry Miller et Brassai' sont restés debout pendant des heures dans la rue pour rendre hommage à leur ami,[57] Márk Vedres et Henri Nouveau ont écrit des nécrologies après l'enterrement.[58]

Ses amis ont gardé pendant des années le mobilier de Tihanyi. C'est son neveu le photographe Ervin Marton, Brassaï et Jacques de la Fregonnière qui ont fait déménager ses tableaux de 59 de rue Froidevaux et qui les ont gardés pendant la guerre. En 1970 cet héritage a été offert à l'Etat hongrois. Avant d'être rapatriés les tableaux furent exposés pour la dernière fois dans le bâtiment de l'Institut Hongrois à Paris. L'Etat hongrois a offert trois de ces tableaux au

Musée National d'Art Moderne pour que Paris n'oublie pas l'un des plus grands peintres hongrois, l'illustre représentant de l'histoire de l'art moderne.[59]

Notes

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1. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, septembre 1920. Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum (Musée Littéraire Petőfi) PIM V 2293/189/3.
2. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 22 septembre 1920. PIM V 2293/189/4.
3. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 7 novembre 1920. PIM V 2293/189/7.
4. L'autobiographie a été jointe à la lettre à Antal Németh. Berlin, 17 juillet 1924. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Művészettörténeti Intézete (Institut d'Histoire de l'Art, Académie des Sciences de Hongrie) M.D.K.C.I.-10/1059.
5. Lajos Tihanyi, «Révolution culturelle,» *ÉK,* 20 mars 1923: 9.
6. Cité dans le quotidien Műbarát. Voir: «L'exposition de Lajos Tihanyi à la Galerie Möller,» *Műbarát,* 1921,1: 152.
7. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 23 mai 1921. PIM V 2293/189/10.
8. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Béla Révész. Berlin, 8 juin 1921. PIM V 4709/59.
9. Brassaï, *Előhívás. Lettres (1920-1940)* (Bucarest: 1980) 34-41.
10. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 4 octobre 1921. PIM V 2293/189/11.
11. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 4 octobre 1921. (Ce jour-là il a envoyé une autre lettre à Ödön Mihályi.) PIM V 2293/189/12.
12. Cité dans le questionnaire demandé par Andor Németh.
13. Brassai, 41. Les portraits de Brassai sont toujours introuvables sauf celui du legs de Tihanyi.
14. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à István Hevesy. Berlin, janvier 1922. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Kézirattára (Archives d'Académie des Sciences de Hongrie) Ms 4512/175.
15. Brassai, 53.
16. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 27 mai 1922 et 10 juin. PIM V 2293/189/20-21.
17. Il a noté ces expositions dans sa biographie comme dans celle envoyée à Antal Németh. Les catalogues de ces expositions demeurent introuvables, ainsi notre connaissance reste limitée sur ces événements.
18. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 28 août 1922. PIM V 2293/189/25.
19. Lajos Tihanyi: Révolution Culturelle.
20. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 16 janvier 1923 et 1er février 1923. PIM V 2293/189/27-28.
21. Lettre de Béni Ferenczy â János Wilde. Potsdam, 24 juillet 1923. Magyar Nemzeti Galéria Archívuma (Galerie Nationale Hongroise) MNG 20151/79.
22. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi â György Bölöni. Berlin, 18 juin 1923. PIM V 4132/349/2.
23. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à György Bölöni. Berlin, 21 juin 1923. PIM V 4132/349/3.
24. C'est à József Brummer, commerçant d'art vivant à Paris, d'origine hongroise qu'il s'intéressait. Brummer, riche commerçant d'art plastique africain, était aussi celui qui a fait connaître Henri Rousseau.
25. Berlin, 22 août 1923. PIM V 2293/189/31.

26. Berlin, 4 novembre 1923. PIM V 4132/349/6.
27. Berlin, 11 novembre 1923. PIM V 2293/189/32.
28. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 22 août 1923. PIM V 2293/189/31.
29. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 22 août 1923. PIM V 2293/189/31.
30. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Madame Bölöni. Berlin, 27 octobre 1923. PIM V 4132/35/4.
31. Paris, 7 décembre 1923. Legs de Gustav T. Sid en, Londres.
32. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 25 juin 1924. PIM V 2293/189/38-39.
33. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à György Bölöni. Berlin, 4 juin 1924. PIM V 4132/349/8.
34. Lettre adressée à Antal Németh.
35. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Irén Molnár. Berlin, 10 juillet 1924. Legs de Gustav T. Siden, Londres.
36. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 5 août 1924. PIM V 2293/189/40.
37. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 3 septembre 1924. PIM V 2293/189/43.
38. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi â Ödön Mihályi. Berlin, 25 juin 1924. PIM V 2293/189/38-39.
39. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à György Bölöni. Berlin, sans date. PIM V 4132/349/9.
40. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à György Bölöni. Berlin, 4 novembre 1923. PIM V 4132/349/6.
4L Paris, 25 novembre 1923. PIM V 4330/167/68.
42. Paris, 7 décembre 1923. Legs de Gustav T. Siden, Londres.
43. Lettre de Lajos Nemes Lampérth à Artúr Elek. Berlin, 23 février 1920. Par Béla Horváth. Almanach de M.D.K. 1956-58.
44. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Paris, 12 février 1924. PIM V 2293/189/35.
45. Le 7 Décembre 1923. Legs de Gustav T. Siden, Londres. Tihanyi n'a pas compris Daumier ni ses contemporains. Il écrit dans un essai commandé par un musée: «Les musées ne sont pas des entrepôts mais des archives et tout produit intellectuel retiré ne peut servir qu'au spirituel pas comme dans l'intelligentsia bourgeoise qui en a perverti les valeurs. C'est par leur travail que les musées sont devenus un lieu pourri. Ce sont leurs statues en bronze ou en pierre qui défigurent nos rues et qui détruisent notre sens d'esthétique.» MNG Archives 18842/73. Voir sur Kahnweiler: Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler marchand, éditeur, écrivain. Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 22 novembre 1984-28 janvier 1985.
46. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Paris, 12 février 1924. PIM V 2293/189/35.
47. Lettre de Lajos Tihanyi à Ödön Mihályi. Paris, 12 mars 1924. PIM V 2293/189/36. Tihanyi dans ses lettres analyse les causes de sa chute. On ne sait pas comment sa relation avec Rosenberg a évolué mais dans le «Bulletin de l'effort moderne» (premier numéro paru en janvier 1924) de Rosenberg il n'est pas mentionné tandis qu'un de ses voisins, le sculpteur hongrois József Csák y a eu deux reproductions parues dans ce bulletin.
48. A notre connaissance l'exposition n'a pas eu lieu. Voire: Colette Giraudon: Paul Guillaume et les peintres du XX" siècle. De l'art nègre à l'avant-garde. La Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris, 1993.
49. Nous avons encore des notices et des lettres sur les difficultés de sa vie mais sans données nouvelles. Voire: Lettre de Tihanyi à György Bölöni. Paris, 6 septembre 1926. MNG 18800/73.
50. Paris, 26 mai 1931. MNG 23279/1991.
51. A Paris il a vendu de nombreux tableaux aux Français et aux étrangers dont certains sont dans un lieu inconnu.
52. Márk Vedres de Lajos Tihanyi. Paris, 17 juin 1938. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Művészettörténeti Intézete (Institut d'Histoire de l'Art, Académie des Sciences de Hongrie).
53. C'était les amis de Tihanyi qui se sont chargés de l'enterrement. Ils ont payé la location de l'emplacement et probablement ce sont eux qui ont fait le renouvellement en 1946. En 1988 quand la location a expiré il n'y avait plus personne en vie parmi ses amis proches qui auraient pu payer le renouvellement. Brassai et Jacques de la Fregonnière étaient déjà morts. Tihanyi n'a donc plus de sépulcre au cimetière du Père Lachaise.

54. Ses portraits les plus célèbres sont de Tristan Tzara, divan Goll, de Vincent Huidobro, de Miguel de Unamuno, de Marinetti. D'après ses lettres et les lettres de ses amis ainsi que des photographies d'André Kertész ses plus proches amis étaient Picasso, Miro, Kokoschka, Mondrian, Michel Seuphor, Jan Sliwinsky, Georges Antheil, Adolph Loos, Gleizes, Brancusi etc. Voir: André Kertész: Ma France. Patrimoine photographique, Paris 1989; Valéria Majoros, "Des Contemporains de Lajos Tihanyi I -II," *Ars Hungarica,* (1991/2): 211-221, (1992/1): 99-115.
55. Oszkár Robert: Tihanyi. Ember, 2 juillet 1938. Voir: Ferenc Mosonyi, "Adieux de Montparnasse à son vieil ami le charmant bohème," *Magyar Nap,* 21 juin 1938. *Szabad Szó,* 25 juin 1938.
56. Tibor Hajdú, *Mihály Károlyi.* Biographie politique, (Budapest, 1968) 464.
57. Les mémoires de Henry Miller. Voir: *Revue de la Médecine* No. 2, Noël (1950) 50.
58. Lettre de Henri Nouveau (Henrik Neugeboren) à Ernő Kállai. Paris, 23 juin 1938. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Művészettörténeti Intézete (Institut d'Histoire de l'Art, Académie des Sciences de Hongrie) MDK-C-I-11/123.
59. Les tableaux sont les suivants: La rue de la Glacière, 1925. Inv.: AM 4515 p. Peinture abstraite, 1933. Inv.: AM 4516 P. Peinture abstraite, 1934. Inv.: AM 4517 P.

LUGOSI IN HOLLYWOOD: A HUNGARIAN ACTOR'S RISE AND FALL AS A MOVIE STAR

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Béla Lugosi, the actor most identified with the role of Count Dracula, the Transylvanian vampire immortalized in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* and in countless stage and screen adaptations, fled Hungary in 1919 to escape almost certain punishment and perhaps death for his brief and somewhat naïve involvement with the socialist movement that swept the country immediately after World War I. He left Europe two years later to seek the promise of a stage career and wealth offered in the United States.

Fame and fortune he did find in the late 1920s with his portrayal of Dracula in the Broadway production of the popular Hamilton Deane-John L. Balderston version of the Stoker novel, and his star rose even further when he starred in the 1931 Hollywood film drawn from the novel and the play. Unfortunately, it would be the pinnacle of his professional career, and his stardom in the American film capital, would be brief. Years of roles in atrocious films and the ever-present shadow of Dracula would follow, culminating in near-unemployability in the years preceding his death in 1956.

While a number of Lugosi's countrymen, such as Paul Lukas and Victor Varconi, also emigrated to Hollywood and at first received starring roles as suave Continental types, they were eventually committed to character roles for the rest of their careers. Lugosi, however found to his everlasting regret that Dracula put him in a particular niche - as a star of horror films, with the resultant typecasting barring him from the varied roles that Lukas, for example, would enjoy as a supporting player for several decades. By the time Lugosi got around to making one of those classically bad movies he was bound to do, *Voodoo Man* (1944), his screen persona had been irrevocably set. At the end of the film, the screenwriter-hero of the story comes up with a novel suggestion as the lead for the script he's written. "Why don't you get that horror star... uh, Béla Lugosi? It's right up his alley."[1]

In spite of this, Lugosi has endured in filmgoers' minds much longer than his more successful contemporaries. The revival of interest in the classic horror

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films Lugosi made in the 1930s via television distribution vaulted him back into viewer appreciation, sometimes for the "camp" value of his passionate acting style, but more often for his unique personality and presence, "the indéniable force of his simple presence on screen, which, supported by studio publicity, made him into perhaps the only great movie villain whose existence as a villain seemed so tangible and consistent," film historian Gary Collins noted.[2]

The man Lugosi always considered his rival in the horror film arena, the British-born, unassuming and understated Boris Karloff, would enjoy new popularity for more than a decade after young people were exposed to his and Lugosi's films on TV in the late 1950s. Lugosi died before the revival occurred, robbed of the professional vindication he desperately sought in his later years, the final outrage in a career that became another casualty of the Hollywood mill.

"Always it is the same," Lugosi resignedly told a British interviewer in 1951 while staging a London revival of *Dracula.* "When a film company is in the red they come to me and say, 'Okay, so we make a horror film.* And so that is what we do. It is what I will always do."[3]

Lugosi's treatment by film and stage producers later in his life was even more demoralizing given his status in the Hungarian theatrical community in the first two decades of the 20th century. While biographer Arthur Lennig argues that Lugosi was not considered a "great" actor at this stage of his career,[4] he was a busy and at times popular thespian, essaying everything from Shakespeare to commercial comedy and melodrama.

Béla Ferenc Dezső Blasko was born on October 20, 1882 at Lugos, on the Temesvár River, in the Bánát region that was at the time part of Hungary, and later, Rumania.[5] Lugosi adopted the name of his hometown when he decided to embark on a professional acting career shortly after the turn of the century. The son of a baker who later turned to banking, Lugosi, an average if indifferent student, at first apprenticed to a locksmith but was drawn to the stage, and joined a theatrical troupe in Lugos in 1901. "In Hungary," he grandly told an interviewer later in life, "acting is a career for which one fits himself as earnestly and studiously as one studies for a degree in medicine, law or philosophy. In Hungary acting is a profession. In America it is a decision."[6]

Legend - one perpetrated by either the publicity-hungry actor or through his willing cooperation with an equally sensation-bent press agent, particularly following his success in *Dracula* - has Lugosi making his debut in Lugos as no less than the male lead in *Romeo and Juliet,* although Lennig's exhaustive research of Hungarian theatrical history while preparing his biography of Lugosi has effectively debunked the claim. The truth is that Lugosi's early stage career has been lost in the mists of time, and in all likelihood the aspiring thespian essayed small roles in the first few years of his stage period. Lennig's

research goes back to the 1903-4 theatrical season in Temesvár, when Lugosi was employed at the Franz Joseph Theater, working under the direction of Ignác Krecsányi. Krecsányi, one of the most noted theatrical technicians of his time, assigned Lugosi to small parts in his productions, but no doubt had some influence in transforming the eager young man into a serious actor. Working in repertory, Lugosi learned his craft by switching from heavy drama one night, to light comedy the following evening, and even singing in an operetta staged later in the week.[7]

Lugosi stayed only a season in Temesvár, and for several years lived a somewhat nomadic existence with other companies in other cities. Buoyed mainly by his dedication to the profession, the insecurities and small wages to be found as a provincial actor gave Lugosi cause to wonder about the actor's lot, but, seeking to improve his own situation by becoming a better actor, Lugosi found that his efforts were bearing fruit. By the time he settled in Debrecen in 1908, he began winning leading roles, such as Danilo in *The Merry Widow,* Armand *inThe Lady of the Camellias,* Adam in *The Tragedy of Man,* and significant parts in Shakespeare. In 1910 his growing reputation in the provinces gave him employment in Szeged, debuting, for real this time, as Romeo, leading to more work in Shakespeare and popular entertainments of the time, such as an adaptation of *Anna Karenina.* Not surprisingly, his trouping won him fans and publicity, and a Szeged theatrical journalist gushed over Lugosi's Romeo: "He grabs the strings of the heart and stretches them to the breaking point."[8]

With this experience to recommend him, Lugosi took the next step up - in 1911 he joined the Theater of Hungary in Budapest, and was again rewarded with leading roles. But finding himself in the nation's capital among more accomplished actors reminded him of his lackadaisical attitude toward school in Lugos, and he set about to improve himself by enrolling in acting school and sharpening his knowledge of the world. With a reputation as a romantic star, Lugosi had become enamored of night life, and in Budapest he found more diversions than he had previously indulged in the provinces. At the same time, exposure to the country's political and cultural center placed him among more knowledgeable and politically active members of the profession. Although known during this period as a bit of a loner, more interested in chasing women and finding new ways of squandering his small wages, Lugosi could not have avoided discussions among his peers about the state of Hungarian theater, a stratified environment of managers, directors, stars, supporting players and technicians, and the inevitable dissatisfaction one or all of these groups would have with each other. At the same time, Lugosi was aware of his position - somehow, in spite of his experience, he was still an actor from

the provinces, not quite the same or as exalted as those who had begun their careers in Budapest with the "best" actors and directors.

In early 1913 Lugosi made his first appearance with the National Theater of Hungary. While his work with companies in Szeged and Debrecen had made him accustomed to leading roles, he had to accept smaller parts at the nation's primary stage showcase, because in the order of things, the established stars and long-standing members of the company were afforded the significant roles. The new face on the scene, now in his 30s, would have to be patient if he were to rise within the ranks. Lugosi accepted this situation, perhaps not willingly, but reminded himself that he was among the leaders in Hungary's theatrical scene.[9]

Following service in World War I - in which he was wounded and discharged after service in Serbia and Russia[10] - Lugosi returned to the National Theater and starting in 1917 supplemented his income with a number of impressive roles in early Hungarian films. The theatrical training he underwent stressed giving his all to roles, and Lugosi himself preferred showy, flamboyant characterizations. If playing a passionate lead was not in the immediate future at the National Theater, they were his in the burgeoning film industry in Budapest. Acting under the name of Arisztid Olt - not so much a conceit on his part to separate his film career from his stage work, but actually to help make his films more attractive and less Hungarian-sounding in other European markets - Lugosi worked for the Star and Phoenix film companies, appearing in numerous romances and melodramas between 1917 and 1919. Significantly, in view of his later position as a star of horror films, he had the lead in *The King of Life* (1918), an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray.*[11] In his later Hollywood career, the theatricalism Lugosi brought to his roles became the object of scorn from critics and impatient audiences, but his tireless, emotional trouping in some of his worst pictures provided them with a distinction they hardly deserved. "To his other roles," film historian Carlos Clarens observed, "he brought a kind of cornball, demented poetry, and total conviction."[12]

Such flamboyance carried over into his private life as well, and what money he earned in Budapest was quickly spent. The first of his five marriages was to a banker's daughter as an apparent means of resolving his debts.[13] This, coupled with his lack of progress at the National Theater, drew him into the maelstrom of Hungarian politics following the abdication of King Charles in November 1918. Although previously uncommitted on national issues, Lugosi appears to have viewed the developing situation as advantageous for the acting profession. The idea of throwing over the established order in the theater and making all actors and technicians equals in the pursuit of their art, as

socialistic or even Bolshevik as it sounded at the time, had an appeal for one who had essentially spent nearly two decades trying to get to the top of his profession. With the characteristic enthusiasm he brought to his other endeavors, he threw himself into the cause, and with the brief rise of the Károlyi regime, Lugosi launched the Free Organization of Theater Employees to improve "the moral, economic and cultural level of the actor's society."[1]*

Aside from this organizing activity, Lugosi sat on the committee of the Free Organization of Theater Employees. As Lennig relates, an opposing organization, the Budapest Theater Society, sought to seize control of the movement and demanded Lugosi's expulsion. Lugosi's group instead joined workers from the Opera House to form the arts section of the Hungarian Civil Service Workers and successfully recruited many from the National Theater to participate. In keeping with the growing instability within the government, this association was dissolved, and Lugosi and friends formed the National Trade Union of Actors.[15] As can be seen, Lugosi was willing to do anything to promote the dream of a national actors' union, either unaware or unconcerned about the consequences so long as the goal was reached. Such naivete may be the cause behind his support for the infamous Béla Kun after the collapse of the Károlyi government and put him further at odds not only with the theatrical establishment, but with his young bride's staid family.

So convinced was Lugosi of a change in the actor's lot, he penned an emotional piece for a Budapest journal in which he berated the "former ruling class" for keeping "the community of actors in ignorance by means of various lies, corrupted it morally and materially, and finally scorned and despised it - for what resulted from its own vices. The actor, subsisting on starvation wages and demoralized, was often driven, albeit reluctantly, to place himself at the disposal of the former ruling classes. Martyrdom was the price of enthusiasm for acting."[16]

Expressing some of the slight he felt for being an actor from the country kept in small roles in the National Theater, Lugosi further fanned the flames in a speech of the time calling for an end to the apparent class ranking of actors. "The actor working in the provinces should not perceive it as luck if he gets to Budapest," he said, "and the actor who goes to Budapest should not feel it a degradation if he has to work in the provinces."[17]

These statements and others placed Lugosi in peril after Kun's Communist-influenced reign was deposed by Miklós Horthy's more conservative administration. Imprisonment and the deaths of a number of Kun supporters forced Lugosi to flee to Vienna in the summer of 1919, and later to Berlin. Asked about the reason for his departure in an early 1930s film short, Lugosi responded tersely, and somewhat sheepishly: "Political reasons... I found myself on the wrong side."[18]

With his brief and impulsive trip into activism resulting in a major upheaval of his life, Lugosi returned to his previous indifference to politics - so much so that by 1931, when he became an American citizen, he renounced both the governments of Hungary and Rumania because he wasn't sure which was in charge of his hometown at the time.[19] Throughout the remainder of his life, Lugosi would be nostalgic about Hungary, but after successfully establishing himself within the Hollywood community in the early 1930s, any desire to return home was never acted upon. With the Communist domination of the country in the post-World War II era, his homeland would be forever closed to him. A later associate of Lugosi's who worked with him in his final films claimed the Hungarian Communists offered Lugosi a cultural minister's post if he would return, but Lugosi declined because he was afraid "they'd send him to a gulag." Whether or not this actually happened to Lugosi has never been confirmed.[20]

Leaving Vienna, Lugosi spent two dispiriting years in Berlin in which he worked primarily in the busy German cinema, including a role as the butler in *Der Januskopf* (1920), a version of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* directed by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, who one year later would helm the first known version of a popular British horror novel called *Dracula* under the title *Nosferatu.* He would soon pick up better acting opportunities in German film, and one of his more significant roles came in an authentic-looking Teutonic adaptation of James Fenimore Cooper's epic of America's closing colonial days, *The Deerslayer* (1922).[21]

But with limited theatrical opportunities and the chaotic social and political climate of postwar Berlin, Germany held little promise for Lugosi, who decided in spite of the fact he couldn't speak English that his best opportunity would be in the United States. Working his way across the Atlantic on a steamer, he eventually arrived in New York, determined not to let the language barrier prevent him from a career. Perserverance paid off in 1922 when he landed his first lead in a New York play, a romantic Apache dancer in *The Red Poppy.* His English skills hardly improved, he learned the role phonetically but carried off the stunt so convincingly he soon found himself established as a working actor.[22]

For the next few years his career paralleled that of Budapest and Berlin - stage work punctuated by an occasional film role while production was still partly based in New York. While his discomfort with the language - and unwillingness to learn more than a basic understanding of it - limited him to Continental parts for awhile, he did break into some typically flashy major roles as a sheik in *Arabesque* (1925) and a Greek bandit leader in *The Devil in the Cheese* (1926). In the summer of 1927, after reportedly being suggested to

producer Horace Liveright, he read for the role of Dracula in Liveright's upcoming production of the London stage hit.[23]

In spite of the notoriety the title inspires when heard, the novel *Dracula,* published in 1897, was never a financial bonanza for its author, theatrical manager and thriller novelist Bram Stoker (1847-1912).[24] It did, however, remain continually in print, and it was only after some convincing that British regional stage entrepreneur Hamilton Deane convinced Stoker's widow to sanction a dramatic version. The aforementioned *Nosferatu* - widely considered a masterpiece of silent cinema - had enraged Mrs. Stoker, not so much because the film turned the renamed Dracula into a metaphor for pestilence and destruction, but because the film's producers, including Murnau, ignored obtaining the book's rights from her.[25]

Stoker's original work, a rambling, verbose and hopelessly Victorian effort, dealt with the arrival in England of an aristocratic vampire, an Anglicization of the Hungarian word *wampyr,* describing an "undead" creature that lived by night off the blood of the living, his attempts to infect the novel's leading characters, and his subsequent destruction by them and an all-knowing Dutch expert on the occult, Professor Van Helsing.

The vampire had been a fixture of western literature and theater since the early 19th century, but no one work, aside from J. Sheridan LeFanu's famed novella *Carmilla* (1871), defined the vampire in the public mind as Dracula. While the majority of the novel's background came from research and his own imagination, Stoker did base his character in part on the notorious Wallachian *voivode* Vlad Tepes (1431-76), whose relentless bloodletting during his adult career made him not just part of the historical record of Hungary, but a part of local superstition, which for years insisted that his evil influence reached out from beyond the grave. Vlad's father was known as Dracul (dragon), and in his day Vlad became known as Dracula, son of the dragon. This name, coupled with the location of Vlad's atrocities being the far-off, mysterious and exotic-sounding region of Transylvania, became, in Stoker's novel, the identifying characteristics for the most well-known vampire character in literature, the stage and film.[26]

Deane's version of the novel did profitable business in British regional theaters, but he did not attempt a London production until early 1927. While critical reviews were hostile, the public flocked to the play. Among those in the audience was Liveright, a flamboyant American publisher and producer who knew Deane's version would be laughed off the boards in New York as it stood, but with revision, could have potential. Purchasing the rights from Deane and Mrs. Stoker, Liveright assigned London-based playwright and correspondent John L. Balderston to the rewrite, which would eventually carry

both his and Deane's names as co-authors. Lugosi, already somewhat known as a specialist in foreign types, was chosen for the role.[27]

Dracula was Lugosi's longest-lasting theatrical vehicle - and the beginning of the end of his career as versatile actor. Over the next two years, more people than he ever imagined saw him as the demonic count, first in the original New York run and later on the road. While in the play his appearances are few, Lugosi made them count with an unusual concentration on the role, an absorption which caused him, in his own words, to work at a "fever pitch... I sat in my dressing room and took on, as nearly as possible, the actual attributes of this horrible vampire, Dracula... I was under a veritable spell which I dared not break. If I stepped out of my character for a moment... my hold on the audience lost its force."[28]

The effort, however, paid off in excellent business for the play, raves from the critics and sudden notoriety for Lugosi, already a proven character actor but largely unknown to many audiences. Caught up in the publicity machine surrounding the show, Lugosi boasted that most of his fan mail came from women due to a certain romantic flavor - as well as the intensity - he brought to the role. "Women wrote me letters... of a horrible hunger. Asking me if I had done the play because I was in reality that sort of Thing," he gushed in one interview.[29] The play had been accompanied by a number of publicity gimmicks and Lugosi wasn't above joining in the hoopla if it would increase business for the show.[30]

Dracula eventually toured the West Coast and in 1928 Lugosi made his first appearance in a Hollywood film. While American film production had started in the New York area at the turn of the century and remained based there for quite some time, the suburb of Los Angeles known as Hollywood had throughout the 1910s and 1920s replaced New York as the nation's film capital.[31] Lugosi's first American film, *The Silent Command* (1923), and several subsequent films, were produced in New York during lulls between theatrical engagements. Sunny California seemed an unlikely place to set the shadowy, fog-shrouded atmospherics of *Dracula* - a film adaptation had been discussed as early as 1927 - but art direction, visual expertise and all of the other categories of what became known as "movie magic" were sufficiently developed by the late 1920s to make the Rocky Mountains resemble Transylvania, and a studio lot a dark London street.

Lugosi's reputation as the stage Dracula translated into some meaty parts at the major studios, and with the introduction of sound to films at the time he arrived in Hollywood, his stock was actually boosted, for his heavy accent was suitable for Continental parts as well as ethnic characterizations. Overall, his unique, portentous voice, coupled with a preference for ominous pauses in

dialogue, "created," as Carlos Clarens noted, "a barrier of unfamiliarity (and something too ambiguous to be charm) that was as effective in its way as (Lon) Chaney's silence before the Sound Era."[32]

But Lugosi's subsequent stardom in the Universal Pictures production of *Dracula* was not assured. In fact, Lugosi spent a good part of 1929-30 campaigning for the role against such studio considerations as Chaney, the German actor Conrad Veidt and the equally theatrical Ian Keith.[33] Universal's reasoning appeared to be that Lugosi, although famous for the role on stage, was not known to most film audiences. But after several candidates were ruled out or uninterested, the studio decided at the eleventh hour that Lugosi was their man. Feeling the bite of the worsening economic depression, Universal could only offer $500 per week; but after working diligently to land the screen role, Lugosi was not about to allow it to go someone else.[34] He accepted the money, swallowed the slight of being chosen practically at the last minute, and forged ahead to create what became his signature role in Hollywood.

The release of *Dracula* in February 1931 vaulted Lugosi into stardom and with it the promise of becoming as exalted as Chaney in essaying screen grotesques. *Dracula* initiated the first cycle of all-out horror films in America, in which the supernatural was accepted, not explained away in the closing reel as the work of human villains. In that position, Lugosi stood on the brink of solidifying his place. But the heady atmosphere and sex symbol flavor surrounding his success as Dracula only boosted his belief that the studios should view him as a new romantic star, not a monster. Universal, however, which sought to promote Lugosi, had an entirely different idea about his screen image.

To satisfy his expenses and craving for the good life, Lugosi played more small roles between the completion *of Dracula's* filming in the fall of 1930 and its premiere. Appropriately, one of his next jobs allowed him significant billing in *Black Camel* (1931), the first Charlie Chan detective thriller that starred Warner Oland. Flushed with the profits from *Dracula,* Universal planned to star Lugosi in a long-planned version of *Frankenstein*.*[5] Lugosi was agreeable at first and did a test reel, but when he learned the role of the Monster called for no dialogue and an elaborate, disfiguring makeup job, he rejected the part, even sarcastically suggesting that the studio get an extra player for the role.[36] Lugosi preferred strong, emotional roles to emphasize his Continentalism, but none were in the offing just yet. By the fall, he accepted the lead in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932), while *Frankenstein* forged ahead with a previously-unknown character man, Boris Karloff, in the pivotal role of the artificial being.[37]

Frankenstein was released first to audience and critical raves, while *Murders,* severely compromised by dozens of script changes and a reduced budget,[38]

followed it into theaters a few months later to a generally ho-hum reaction. As the mad scientist who was nowhere to be found in Edgar Allan Poe's original story, Lugosi got the showy kind of role he desired and pulled out all the stops for one of his more distinctive performances. But Karloff, who had none of Lugosi's romantic pretensions, and who was frankly hungrier than Lugosi, saw the potential for a winning characterization as Frankenstein's Monster, accepted the makeup rigors and delivered a performance of stunning simplicity that captured audience attention and sympathy. Lugosi's Dr. Mirakle in *Murders* is unique, but the mad scientist was already becoming something of a cliche, and most critics felt his film was not much above basic melodrama. More than a decade later, without the options he previously had and humbled by the studio system, Lugosi would consent to play the Monster in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943) - and his performance, reduced from its original length due to post-preview shortening of the film, would be listed as one of the least effective portrayals of Frankenstein's creation on record. (Lugosi's Monster had dialogue in the original version, but all of those scenes were cut.)[39]

Through this, Lugosi's star potential had faded within a year. His name would always be good for marquee value, but through a combination of his own inflexibility and the studios' rather simple-minded approach to using him, he was soon to find himself in a rut - a well-paying, at first, but unsatisfying tangent to his career as either a villain or lead in a horror film.

At the same time, Lugosi exercised little judgment in selection of roles. A job was a job and a salary, he felt, so in 1932 marking the first step of his gradual descent into low-budget production he accepted the lead in an independently-made effort, *White Zombie.*[*0] Lugosi reportedly accepted S500 for the part, thereby reducing his bargaining power within the film community. *Dracula* expert David J. Skal noted that Lugosi, never a good manager of his own finances and possessed of a weaker business sense, had already proven how easy he was to buy on small terms when, in effort to please Universal in the *pre-Dracula* stage, he had offered his services free in preparing the Hungarian-language version of *The Last Performance* (1929).[41] Lugosi may have viewed the action as a grand gesture on his part, but Universal - and subsequently, other studios - just saw another anxious actor in need of a job, resulting in the nearly-insulting salary he received for *Dracula.* (According to Skal, Horace Liveright got Lugosi for the stage *Dracula* for less money than he offered to Raymond Huntley, the Dracula of the London production.)*[2]

White Zombie was universally dismissed upon release, but has gained a solid cult reputation over the years.[43] The producers used their money wisely, crafting a more expensive-looking production than it really was, and got the most out of their miniscule investment in the star. As a powerful Haitian

zombie master, radiating charm and diabolism in equal amounts for an unforgettable portrayal Lugosi towers over the amateurish acting of the romantic leads in what is probably his most accomplished screen performance. *White Zombie* represented a case in which Lugosi's aggressively old-fashioned acting style and conviction meshed perfectly with the stylized intent and look of the film.[44]

For the first few years of his Hollywood existence, Lugosi nursed hopes he could break the horror film mold, and there was certainly cause for the belief. He did an excellent job in a rare comic role in the W. C. Fields vehicle *International House* (1933) and was a nicely underplayed red herring in a low-budget mystery, *The Death Kiss* (1933), which reunited him with two of his co-stars from *Dracula,* David Manners and Edward Van Sloan. During that year he also appeared again as a suspected villain in his last Broadway show, *Murder at the Vanities.**[5]

But the horror boom initiated by Universal was in full swing, prompting the studio to reap another financial bonanza when it cast Lugosi and Karl off in the first of seven films they did together. The first three in the set - *The Black Cat* (1934), *The Raven* (1935) and *The Invisible Ray* (1936) are the best. In the first and third, Lugosi is quite restrained, playing slightly heroic roles to KarlofTs villain, but in *The Raven* the tables were turned, with Lugosi as an out-and-out madman obsessed with Edgar Allan Poe and Karloff as his pathetic victim/assistant. *The Raven,* however, is for a number of reasons not considered a good film, Lugosi's overripe performance being chief among them. Director Louis Friedlander allowed Lugosi his head, and at times his acting is embarrassing.

German émigré Edgar G. Ulmer, who directed Lugosi and Karloff in *The Black Cat* and evidently exercised more control over his actors, pointed out the differences in the acting styles of the stars: "My biggest job was to keep (Karloff) in the part, because he laughed at himself. Not the Hungarian, of course.... You had to cut away from Lugosi continuously, to cut him down."[46]

By the mid-1930s the identification with horror films was set in stone for Lugosi, and when public taste moved away from them, Lugosi found himself hard-pressed to find any work outside of an occasional stage performance in the Los Angeles area. For more than a year he was unemployed until Universal once again whetted audiences' appetite for shock with *Són of Frankenstein* (1939), KarlofTs third and last portrayal of the Monster, and provided Lugosi with one of his best non-Dracula parts as Ygor, the mad shepherd who uses the Monster for his own evil ends. Aside from Dracula, Ygor is considered to be one of Lugosi's best performances, every bit as sinister as a bearded, scraggly societal reject as he was as the more refined

vampiric nobleman. As the Monster's "friend" who prods the new generation Dr. Frankenstein (Basil Rathbone) into resurrecting the creature, Lugosi came close to stealing the film from such veteran scenery chewers as Rathbone and Lionel Atwill. While Ygor is killed in the finale, Universal, with its typical logic and reckoning on audiences' short memories, brought him back for another sequel, *Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942), in which he was as effective as earlier.

The long layoff saw a renewed Lugosi, who tackled the role with a great deal of color, but a Lugosi who had become older, less leading man-like. At that stage Lugosi would have been thankful for character roles, but all he was offered were more horror films.[47] Lugosi had made a British film, *The Phantom Ship* (1936), which contained some thriller elements in explaining the mystery of the *Marie Celeste,* the vessel discovered adrift in 1872 with its crew and passengers vanished, and when he returned in 1939 to film *Dark Eyes of London* (released in the U.S. a year later as *The Human Monster),* he found himself in an Edgar Wallace mystery transformed into a scare picture designed to rival anything Hollywood could produce.

Although he was billed highly with Karloff in *Black Friday* (1940), Lugosi's role in the proceedings was cut down to almost nothing, and his last appearance with Karloff was in *The Body Snatcher* (1945), again in a minor part despite sharing marquee space with the man he had grown to resent over the years for usurping his brief position as the top man in horror pictures. While KarlofFs career improved and remained financially solvent, Lugosi slowly sank into obscurity and near-bankruptcy. In the 1940s, to keep his head above water, Lugosi toured in the comedy *Arsenic and Old Lace,* further aggravating his sore feelings toward Karloff: the story, and its main running joke, turned on the Jonathan Brewster character played by Lugosi resembling Karloff, who had starred in the original Broadway production.*[8] (It should be noted that the resentment was not mutual on the genial KarlofPs part.)

While the major studios turned their backs on Lugosi, he found that the smaller companies were eager for his services as a horror star. In late 1940 he dusted off his mad scientist characterization for *The Devil Bat* at Producers Releasing Corporation, the newest and the least for the "poverty row" firms supplying second features for neighborhood and rural theaters. That winter, he accepted an offer from the legendarily prolific and incredibly cheap producer Sam Katzman to star in a series of films for Katzman's unit at Monogram Pictures.[49] The short-term outlook at least guaranteed employment and exposure to Lugosi; the long-term consequence was that his career was further debased by lending his name to some of the most laughable excuses for horror films to ever emanate from Hollywood.

Starting with *The Invisible Ghost* (1941), an outlandish yarn about a well-respected community figure turned into a fiendish killer by the hypnotic

control of his supposedly dead wife, each of the Katzman films became more ridiculous than the one before, culminating in *The Ape Man* (1943), arguably one of his worst films, and ending with a non-related sequel, *Return of the Ape Man* (1944).

In spite of the disadvantages, Lugosi continued to ply his craft as best he knew, and his performances in even the worst of Katzman's pictures at least offer some consolation. In *Black Dragons* (1942), as a Nazi plastic surgeon avenging himself on the Japanese agents he has transformed into Americans, and *Bowery at Midnight* (1942), playing a psychology professor doubling as a criminal mastermind, Lugosi had accustomed himself to the dismal surroundings enough to give his roles some style, but his emoting in *The Ape Man,* as the result of his character's failed experiments in heredity, is embarrassing to behold. Lugosi is honestly trying in this film to achieve some pathos as the title character, but the overall absurdity of the situation and the film itself defeat him at every turn. Lugosi, bitterly recalling his days as a star in the more artistically-inclined Hungarian film community, often wondered why he had gotten himself involved with such tawdry efforts. But the Katzman films, and a well-received touring revival of *Dracula* in 1943,[50] kept the actor solvent during the war years. The one exception to this unhappy trend was Columbia's *Return of the Vampire* (1944), in which inspired perhaps by the improved production values and better script Lugosi shone as a Dracula-type.

Lugosi's first and only color film, *Scared to Death* (1947), also proved to be the last gasp of the horror revival that had lasted nearly a decade. And again, Lugosi faced the specter of joblessness and financial insecurity. He moved to New York, where he toured in summer stock presentations of *Dracula,* and found his hopes raised again when Universal announced Dracula would return to the screen, albeit in the comedy *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948).[51] Again, however, Universal wasn't interested in using Lugosi and was reportedly leaning toward Ian Keith, one of the actors with whom Lugosi had vied for the original screen version of Dracula.[52]

Only through the continual lobbying of his agent, Don Marlowe, did Lugosi don the evening suit and cape for what would be his final screen appearance as Dracula.[53] By then it did not matter that the character was being used for laughs by Abbott and Costello, the most popular comic team of the 1940s. It represented another chance for Lugosi to shine in a major studio product, to prove that he was capable of better things. Heavy makeup obscured what the years had done to the one-time romantic lead of Hungarian regional theater, but it did not stop him from crafting an excellent performance. His seriousness contrasted perfectly with the antics of the film's heroes, and *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* won Lugosi new accolades from critics and audiences.[54]

The film also boosted Abbott and Costello's sagging fortunes at the box office, and as films with a horror theme had done many times before, kept Universal in operation.[55] But Lugosi's role in this success was ignored, because the film failed to launch a new wave of horror pictures, and because Lugosi's identification with Dracula, mad scientists and lurking red herrings had rendered him all but useless in a Hollywood that, like the world itself after the war, had changed forever.

In the remaining eight years of his life, Lugosi would appear in other movies but would never obtain a decent, challenging role. The need to keep working, and to support a drug dependence that began with treatment for sciatica,[56] forced him to accept whatever was offered. When money was tight, he did personal appearances and cabaret acts, but often for comic relief because a proper appreciation of his talents and past accomplishments had not yet taken root. As he later commented, he was reduced to "freak status,"[57] and the blow to his disintegrating pride became more than he could bear.

Why then, with his training and unique presence, did Lugosi become a nonentity? Many of his contemporaries noted that he never fully understood English, and even in Hollywood he felt only at home among his Hungarian friends.[58] Skal reported that Lugosi's initial experience in *The Red Poppy* - learning the role phonetically - was a habit he indulged for years, and while in rehearsal for *Dracula* he had to be directed in French.[59] (Lugosi was also fluent in German.) By the time sound films were established, Lugosi had improved his English to the point that he told an interviewer he was learning American slang. But evidently not enough to overcome the rapid-fire dialogue delivery of some of his U.S. co-stars, or the embarrassment when he was upstaged by such comics as Milton Berle and Red Skelton in radio and television sketches during the 1940s and '50s.[60]

"Poor old Béla," Karloff sighed in his later years, "it was a strange thing. He was really a shy, sensitive, talented man who had a fine career on the classical stage in Europe. But he made a fatal mistake. He never took the trouble to learn our language... He had real problems with speech, and difficulty interpreting his lines."[61]

Secondly, Lugosi's staunchly theatrical acting style, which did much to improve the stale artistic values of the Katzman pictures, had become even more outdated than it had already been in the 1930s. Lugosi had, however, proved that he was capable of a restrained performance with his serious scientist role in *The Invisible Ray,* and he was more convincing as a family man and pillar of the community than as the dazed killer he became when he fell under the spell of *The Invisible Ghost,* his first film for Katzman. But in a Hollywood seeking more naturalism for its productions, casting the man

known the world over as Dracula to a cheery, paternalistic character role just wouldn't work for fear that audiences would not accept him in such a guise, thus undermining whatever credibility the film sought with filmgoers. Because of this, in some of his later films - the British-made *Old Mother Riley Meets the Vampire* (1952) and the preposterous *Bela Lugosi Meets a Brooklyn Gorilla* (1952) - he was forced to lampoon his screen character. And all of it went back more than two decades to the moment when he first stepped onstage as Dracula.

Plagued by the identification with the role, Lugosi was long past resigning himself to the part. Because of Dracula, "I make a living," he told a television interviewer in 1952 when he returned from a less-than-triumphant revival of the play in London. During the late 1940s he continued with the role in summer stock productions, his dislike of the role growing stronger each time.[62] But aside from the personal appearances and nightclub work, *Dracula* was all that he was being offered, and in spite of his feelings about the role, he did nurse hopes of a comeback in a major screen version of the novel and play.[63]

It was at this juncture that Lugosi began his association with Edward D. Wood Jr., a financially-strapped but boundlessly ambitious independent film-maker who had worshipped Lugosi since his youth and who was more than delighted to cast the frequently-available and desperate actor in Wood's first feature film, *Glen or Glenda* (1952).

A passionate plea for tolerance of transvestitism - a personal project for Wood, who was in reality a cross-dresser - *Glen or Glenda's* main plot didn't revolve around Lugosi. Rather, in keeping with Wood's conception of the role as "a spirit, a god, a lord, a puppeteer who is pulling the strings on everyone's life."[6]* Lugosi was cast as a scientist whose mostly delirious commentary on the proceedings was inserted at odd moments throughout the film.

Since his death in 1978, a cult following has grown up around Wood in spite of the condemnation his career earned from contemporary film critics and historians for making some of the worst movies ever put on celluloid, and his life is the subject of an American film biography from Tim Burton, director of the recent *Batman* films. The devotion to Wood's films stems from an affection for the almost charming awfulness of all aspects of his productions - the flowery dialogue, the amateurish acting of his casts, and the persistently low production values, placed in sharp relief by Wood's own fervent belief, to those familiar with his career, that he was creating screen art. As a writer, producer and director of exploitation films, frequently in the horror mode, his career was limited to a single decade, but during that time the six films that have won him a kind of perverse acclaim were made - three of them with Lugosi, essentially the only "movie star" with whom he was acquainted, both professionally and personally.[65]

Wood remained one of Lugosi's closest friends for the next few years, and while Wood was unable to use the actor as often as he would have liked (mainly because it took Wood at least a year to raise the money for his latest production), he kept Lugosi posted on all of his plans. "Béla Lugosi was always a big part of things,*' Charles Anderson, one of Wood's later colleagues, noted. "Ed was the last director Lugosi worked with. Ed used to drive him around to this place on La Brea Avenue to get paraldehyde. Lugosi was in bad shape by this time. He had gotten past the point of being affected by liquor, so he had to drink paraldehyde. Lugosi and Ed were very interesting to work with as a pair."[60]

Among other projects Wood planned, but never realized, were a television series with Lugosi as the star, as well as numerous film projects incorporating unconnected footage of the actor shot by Wood whenever Lugosi needed money. Wood even rewrote Lugosi's material for an appearance on Red Skelton's TV comedy show and helped stage a cabaret act for him in Las Vegas.[67] Eventually, Wood got up the funding for another film and then cast Lugosi in his ultimate mad scientist role in *Bride of the Monster* (1955), which, in spite of his declining health and the overall air of cheapness, contains his last grand performance in a film.

Scorned for his theories about the creation of atomic supermen, Lugosi's Dr. Vornoff has secreted himself in a "forsaken jungle hell" - actually a swamp outside Los Angeles - to perfect the idea. When urged by an emissary of his unnamed homeland to return and present his findings to its apparently Communist overlords, Vornoff delivers an impassioned speech about being driven from home and family, forced to live like an animal and to have borne the contempt of his colleauges for his daring beliefs.[68] While Wood was ostensibly re-working the standard soliloquy in which the mad scientist justifies his actions, he hit upon some autobiographical currents in Lugosi that drew an emotional response from his star. In the film Lugosi delivers the speech with a mesmerizing force, and Lugosi liked the speech so well that oblivious to the public spectacle he created he would unexpectedly, and repeatedly, recite it in public.[69]

"We had to wait for a red light at the corner of Hollywood and Vine," Wood recalled. "He just stopped dead. All of a sudden in this big, booming voice, the likes of which I hadn't heard in years, he suddenly goes into the speech... And he did the whole thing on the corner. A crowd gathered and they applauded him at the end."[70]

Working with Wood was not the path to financial security for Lugosi, whose drug dependency had worsened over the years and sapped his salary, savings and unemployment insurance. Not long after finishing *Bride of the Monster,* Lugosi braved a storm of tabloid headlines and negative publicity to

commit himself to a California state mental hospital for treatment of his problem.[71] The indignity of going public with what was a forbidden and unsavory subject at that time in American society would have broken a lesser man, and had he allowed himself to weaken, Lugosi would have joined the ranks of other film personalities whose lives and careers were destroyed by substance abuse.

However, a strong will - backed by a persistent fear of death - took Lugosi from an emaciated victim to an exuberant recovery over a three-month period. In spite of all of the setbacks, Lugosi maintained his belief that stardom and acclaim would return. He grandly announced his intention to work again upon his release from the hospital, and told the story of his recovery to any newspaper or magazine that would listen. (Lugosi knew well the value of publicity of any kind to boost his career).[72] At the same time he married for the fifth and last time, his young bride a disciple, like Wood, of his classic screen performances. Lennig, who had met Lugosi as a teenager, recalled that the marriage made the front page of one of the major New York dailies.[73]

Producers Aubrey Schenck and Howard W. Koch were intrigued enough with the rejuvenated Lugosi to cast him in their production *The Black Sleep* (1956) - another horror film, low-budget by most Hollywood standards but miles above Wood's efforts, and backed with a more substantial cast that included Basil Rathbone, Akim Tamiroff, John Carradine and Lon Chaney Jr., as well as Tor Johnson, the professional wrestler who frequently played monsters in Wood's films. But a return to a more mainstream film did not bode well for Lugosi, who had an inconsequential role as a mute servant to Rathbone's mad scientist. Echoing his frustration of 25 years before when offered *Frankenstein,* Lugosi pleaded for some dialogue, so to placate him director Reginald LeBorg shot some speaking sequences for Lugosi. These, however, did not appear in the final print. A revealing publicity photo shot on the set shows LeBorg placing a reassuring hand on an obviously petulant Lugosi's arm while the other actors, with more to do in the film, remained in character.[7]*

Lugosi's relationship with Wood remained strong - Wood even accompanied Lugosi and his new wife Hope on their honeymoon as their driver.[75] When Wood had raised some money to shoot a project tentatively titled *Tomb of the Vampire,* Lugosi accepted. About the same time, Wood handed his star a script for a short film he planned to shoot for a possible television sale called *The Final Curtain.* Both were firmly rooted in Lugosi's screen persona, and Wood planned to use some earlier footage of Lugosi in his Dracula cape. However, the deal for *Tomb of the Vampire,* like many of Wood's projects, fell through and the perpetually improvident filmmaker had to search out funding from other sources.[76]

Lugosi, convinced the tide was finally turning in his favor, directed his attention to *The Final Curtain* and was reading the script in his apartment when he quietly died on August 16, 1956. Ironically, Wood found the backing to make his film, but used the money and Lugosi footage - as was his habit - to craft an entirely different production. Finally finding a distributor for what he considered his magnum opus, Wood released *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (the original title was *Graverobbers from Outer Space)* in 1959. It went on to be universally regarded as the worst movie ever made.[77] Billed as "the great Bela Lugosi's last performance," Lugosi's participation in *Plan 9* is limited to the old silent footage of his lurking in and out of a doorway and a cemetery, while an all-too-obvious double with a cape drawn over his face completed the other scenes. *{The Final Curtain* would be filmed with another actor in the role intended for Lugosi. Unable to sell it, Wood again cannibalized its footage for another one of his films, 1958's *Night of the Ghouls.)*[18]

To those who had followed the last years of his life, it was perhaps fitting that Lugosi was buried in his Dracula costume, for in death his true character and the screen persona he cultivated became one. And others thought that the downward spiral of his career, ending with his final "appearance" in an Ed Wood film, was the inevitable result of missed opportunities and unwise decisions. As a dedicated actor whose only goal was to continue working in the profession that had sustained him since Hungary, it did not matter to Lugosi what he did, so long as he was working. And in the years to follow, Lugosi's career would be assessed not critically, but with appreciation and devotion from a rising number of fans who enjoyed his emoting in the darkened auditoriums of American and overseas theaters.

One year after Lugosi's death, a package of classic horror films, including his major performances in *Dracula* and opposite Karloff, were sold to television stations as *Shock Theater.* Unexpectedly, an entirely new audience of youngsters - and more than a few adults - reveled in the well-crafted thrills to be found in each movie. Film magazines entered the market catering directly to that interest, and while the facts were not always straight - serious film scholarship of Lugosi's and KarlofPs careers would not gain any legitimacy until the latter 1960s - they fed the growing interest about the man who was Dracula. The disappointments, the slights, and the awful movies that plagued Lugosi were forgotten, and retrospectives of his unique position in American film appreciated what Gary Collins called "the larger-than-life quality which was very much in keeping with the basic spirit of the films themselves."[79]

Although the "fanzines" kept readers "informed" with numerous accurate and sometimes blatantly incorrect accounts of his life and career, the 1970s saw two full-length biographies of Lugosi published.[80] Even Ed Wood, reduced in

his last years to writing and directing pornography, was working on a memoir of his relationship with the man with whom he had worked so closely, spurred not so much by Lennig's work being the first to hit the bookstores, but the author's hostile reaction to Wood's films.[81] (Robert Cremer, another Lugosi biographer, noted that he had done several interviews with the frequently-inebriated Wood for his book in the 1970s. On what was to be their last meeting, Wood apparently became violent over Cremer's progress, "because he felt he was the person who should be writing it." Wood's manuscript on his years with Lugosi was lost after his death.)[82]

Béla Lugosi, a Hungarian expatriate whose talents were not appreciated in his new country during his lifetime, eventually rose above the short-lived "movie star" label to become an indelible icon in film history. Perhaps, in his own emotional manner when he organized his fellow actors in Budapest in 1919, he was being prophetic when he claimed that "martyrdom was the price for the enthusiasm of acting."

Notes

1. *Voodoo Man* (Monogram Pictures, 1944), screenplay by Robert Charles; quoted in Kevin E. Kelly, "The American Horror Film," unpublished mss., 1974, 70; also in Arthur Lennig, *The Count: The Life and Times of Bêla 'Dracula' Lugosi* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 266, hereafter referred to as Lennig.
2. Gary Collins, "The Meanest Man in the Movies," in Ted Sennett (ed.), *The Movie Buff's Book* (New York: Pyramic Books, 1975), 20.
3. Harry Ludlam, *A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Br am Stoker* (London: W. Foulsham & Co., 1962), 175, quoted in Lennig, 297.
4. Lennig, 35.
5. Lennig, 25-30; also Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula: A True History of Dracula and Vampire Legends* (New York: Warner Paperback Library, 1973), 160.
6. Lennig, 29-30.
7. Lennig, 31.
8. Lennig, 33-34.
9. Lennig, 35-36.
10. Lennig, 37.
11. Lennig, 39^2.
12. Carlos Clarens, *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film* (NewYork: Capricorn Books, 1968), 62.
13. Lennig, 38.
14. Béla Lugosi, "History of the Formation of Our Trade Union," *Színészek Lapja,* May 1, 1919, quoted in Lennig, 43.
15. Lennig, 43-44.
16. Béla Lugosi, "Love the Actor," *Színészek Lapja,* May 15, 1919, quoted in Lennig, 45.
17. Lennig, 44.
18. Unidentified short subject interview, circa 1933.

19. Lennig, 112-113.
20. Interview with John Andrews in Rudolph Grey, *Nightmare of Ecstasy: The Life and Art of Edward D. Wood Jr.* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 1992), 69.
21. Lennig, 46-47.
22. Lennig, 51.
23. Lennig, 57-60.
24. David J. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 38-39.
25. Skal, 43-44.
26. McNally and Florescu, *In Search of Dracula,* 31-78, also in Bob Black, "Son of the Dragon," *Military History,* June 1989, 12-13. Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula,* was an attempt to tie some of the background of Vlad the Impaler to the fictional Dracula.
27. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic,* 73-81.
28. Universal press book for *Dracula,* 1931, quoted in Lennig, 70.
29. Gladys Hall, "The Feminine Love of Horror," *Motion Picture Classic,* January 1931, quoted in Lennig, 71.
30. Skal, 85-87. The most infamous of the publicity gimmicks associated with the show was the nurse in attendance at every performance to minister to the faint-hearted. The idea was carried over from Deane's London production.
31. Christopher Finch and Linda Rosenkrantz, *Gone Hollywood* (Garden City, N. Y: Doubleday, 1979), 1-3.
32. Clarens, *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film,* 62.
33. Skal, 112-113.
34. Skal, 124-125.
35. Lennig, 115.
36. Skal, 82.
37. Skal, 184.
38. Lennig, 117-118.
39. Lennig, 255-256.
40. Lennig, 126.
41. Skal, 120.
42. Hamilton Deane and John L. Balderston, *Dracula: The Ultimate, Illustrated Edition of the World-Famous Vampire Play,* edited and annotated by David J. Skal (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), xiv.
43. Lennig, 127.
44. William K. Everson, *Classics of the Horror Film* (Secaucus, N. J.: Citadel Press, 1974), 85. The film was also a reported favorite of Lugosi's.
45. Lennig, 159.
46. Peter Bogdanovich, "Edgar G. Ulmer," in Charles Flynn and Todd McCarthy (eds), *Kings of the Bs* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1975), 389.
47. Lennig, 209-212.
48. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic,* 187.
49. Lennig, 234-236.
50. Deane and Balderston, *Dracula,* 135.
51. Lennig, 282-283.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Lennig, 284.
54. Lennig, 288.

55. Jim Mulholland, *The Abbott and Costello Book* (New York: Popular Library, 1975), **140.** The pattern had been seen before at Universal when Lugosi's *Dracula* kept the company in the red in 1931. A double feature pairing *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* in the summer of 1938 also pulled Universal out of financial trouble and led to the production of *Son of Frankenstein* later that year. Coincidentally, Abbott and Costello's first feature as a starring team, *Buck Privates* (1941), and several of their subsequent films maintained the studio's solvency.
56. Lennig, 274.
57. Lennig, 294.
58. Lennig, 51.
59. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic,* 81-32.
60. Lennig, 293.
61. Richard Bojarski and Kenneth Beale, *The Films of Boris Karloff* (Secaucus, N. J.: Citadel Press, 1974), 23.
62. Skal, 187.
63. Charles Beaumont, *Remember? Remember?* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), quoted in Kelly, "The American Horror Film," 70.
64. Grey, *Nightmare of Ecstasy,* 40.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Harry and Michael Medvéd, *The Golden Turkey Awards* (New York: Berkley Books, 1981), 260.
67. Grey, 201, 103.
68. *Bride of the Monster* (Rolling M Productions/Banner Films, 1955), screenplay by Edward D. Wood Jr. and Alex Gordon, quoted in Lennig, 307.
69. Interview with Paul Marco for *The Incredibly Strange Film Show,* The Discovery Channel, March 1991.
70. Grey, 70.
71. Lennig, 308-311.
72. Lennig, 311.
73. Lennig, 312.
74. Michael B. Druxman, *Basil Rathbone: His Life and Films* (South Brunswick, N. J., and London: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1975), 329.
75. Grey, **104.**
76. Lennig, 315; Grey, 109.
77. Medvéd and Medvéd, *The Golden Turkey Awards,* 307. *Plan 9* was the overwhelming choice as the worst film of all time in the authors' informal poll of the late 1970s.
78. Grey, 206.
79. Collins, 'The Meanest Man in the Movies," 19.
80. The other biography was Robert Cremer's *The Man Behind the Cape* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1977).
81. Grey, 127. "He was just a little *boyl"* Wood exclaimed of Lennig's relationship with Lugosi through correspondence and occasional meetings in the 1940s. "I lived with the *man\"*
82. Grey, 122.

THE *AGON* OF IRONY AND SATIRE IN GYÖRGY VITÉZ'S *MISSA AGNOSTICA*

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I begin with examples:

„Ne grimaszolj angyali doktor úr szakmai apologéta!"
[Don't make faces angelic doctor professional apologist!]
„Hallod-e tarzusi nyavalyatörős?"
[You hear that, epileptic from Tarsus?]
„Oh Celanói Kámzsás Tamás mit tanácsolsz?"
[Oh Cowledup Thomas of Celano what d'you recommend?]
„Történész úr: hol volt az udvari bolond helye a Miasszonyunk templomában?"
[Sir Art Historian: where stood the court jester in the Church of Our Lady?]
„Tejóságos Nagyúristen nem unod még?"
[My Lord God haven't you had enough yet?]

And a few more:

„T. Gy. tanár úr (szóselehetrólafiam / semmimóka!)"
[Professor Gy. T. (outofthequeslionmyboy / nofoolingaround!]
„ön holnap bevonul az áldottak seregébe"
[Tomorrow you will report to the army of the blessed]
„(Nem tudod tezsvír, - Krisztus magyar vót!
Magyar bárány biza! Nagy nemzetiszín masni a nyakában -)"
[Hey brother, dont ya know Christ was Hungarian
Yessiree a Hungarian lamb! With a big tricolor bow on his neck -].

Missa agnostica is a text full of voices. Predominant among them, of course, is the voice of the narrator, speaking out of the poem, apostrophizing and addressing a great number of figures dead and alive, imaginary and real, using a variant of the *parabasis* of the old [Greek] comedy where the tight inward structure of the play is interrupted, its own limits transgressed, and the chorus turns directly to the audience in the name of the poet. The limits in Vitéz's poem, as in a play or happening inviting audience participation, are transgressed also from the outside; hence the inclusion of voices spoken by others,

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some addressing the narrator, others commenting on some utterance, others just heckling or shouting cat-calls. Poetry is not heard; it is overheard, wrote John Stuart Mill. Mill appears not only to have had an inkling of the dialogic nature of poetry, but also voiding proleptically the charge of monologism and univocity laid against it by Bakhtin. The chorus in *Missa agnostica* is mostly replaced by the narrator who is dialogical within his own discourse, at times assuming the postmodern/old comic persona of the *eiron,* the crafty dissembler, the trickster, drawing in and playing off against one another the heterogeneous voices heard and overheard, including the voice of his own double. The crisscrossing plurality of voices, the transgression of fictive boundary lines from either side creates a multilingual auditorium, or more correctly, a cathedral with the *eiron* celebrating a *grey,* not a black, mass, in which *eironeia,* in Latin the *irónia* of a coexistence-in-poliphony, will be dominant if not endemic. (It will have some bearing on what follows that in 1797 Friedrich Schlegel gave a definition of irony as "a permanent parabasis," a nonstop series of intrusions in ever shifting juxtapositions.)

Missa agnostica, of course, is no auditorium, and a cathedral only in the realm of the imagination. It is first and foremost *writing,* the conglomeration of voices a series of allusions, quotations, paraphrases cited and recited, transgressing its porous discursive frontiers. What kind of writing is it, though? Since it literally includes within its frontiers the Latin mass, it is in a sense a commentary; but precisely because the Latin text becomes, as set in the midst of other writings, just another text, the customary relation between primary and secondary text is annulled. *Missa agnostica* appears to be generically unclassifiable; if this is the case, and as one critic put it, genre is "a family of texts," *Missa agnostica* is a literary orphan. Can such an orphan be defined as permanent parabasis, in other words, does its irony truly constitute a sovereign *mode?* And if so, how can the poem be situated in the literary tradition from which it inescapably springs?

The following conjectures will throw light on some of these problems, and leave others in darkness. In the group of poets who succeeded in producing significant work after leaving Hungary in the wake of the crushed revolution of 1956, sometimes labelled "the generation of 56," György Vitéz is unique in that his work from the middle seventies onwards has become a composite field of voices/texts. However, in creating an endlessly oscillating poliphony of independent fragments, he has also introduced thematic/ideological elements that flow counter to unrestricted linguistic flux. Thus, on the one hand, Vitéz's experimentation with language and form has proliferated to such an extent that these later texts bear little or no resemblance to some of his earlier verse, and no resemblance whatsoever to any of the strands of modern Hungarian

poetry, be it that of Füst, Babits, Kassák, Attila József, Weöres, Pilinszky, or Juhász. In making word play, free association, and intertextual juxtapositions the main building blocks of his poems, Vitéz appears to have escaped not only the formal models of his precursors, but through the irony of his puns and allusions he has eliminated the moral earnestness and seriousness that has been obligatory in Hungarian poetry since the romantic period. On the other hand, in becoming conscious of his distance from the tradition of seriousness that still today demands that the poet assume the role of national spokesman - to show the way to the Promised Land, as Petőfi had prescribed - Vitéz's avant-garde pieces are often made to serve as vehicles of scathing criticism directed both at an outmoded poetic attitude and at the backwardness of the culture that fosters it. *Missa agnostica,* written between 1974 and 1976, published as a single volume in 1979, exhibits all aspects of this duality in its being just such a composite of random freeplay *and* a critique of Christianity in general as well as a particular attack on the most sacrosanct and stubborn streak in Hungarian cultural life, what the poem calls "the Christian Hungarian military theology" (18).[1]

Is Bakhtin right, then? Is ironic poliphony and dialogism in *Missa agnostica* a front, as it were, for monologic control characteristic of all poetry? Does critique *ab ovo* reduce freeplay to gravity? Or conversely, does linguistic freeplay render criticism ineffective, especially in our literature where the comic mode has alway been sharply separated from the serious treatment of serious subjects? It could be argued that the gadfly is, after all, a traditional persona in Hungarian poetry, whose barrage of invective would only be weakened by linguistic play; or, that behind the disjointed verbal surface of Vitéz's neo-dadaist punning there lurks a conventional moralist whose diatribes sound very much like those of his predecessors he is supposed to have discarded; that far from escaping his precursors, Vitéz's closest relative would be Ady (echoed, incidentally, a number of times in the *Missa)* who directed his attacks on nearly the same seats of mendacity, posturing, hypocrisy, ossified self-delusion, and Asian provincialism as did Vitéz, except that unlike Vitéz, Ady always knew how and when to put a stop to his parabases; his invective had always managed to unscramble and rechannel his ironies. Ady knew (no agnostic, he) the law of genre: the prophetic or vatic stance demands undiluted seriousness. Verbal play is acceptable only when the writer has dispensed with the intention of saying something of importance or of saying anything at all. (When content has been given the day off - to cite Tibor Papp.)

So would go conventional interpretive wisdom, not only that of László Németh - no negligible straw man even in today's Hungarian literary criticism - but also of Matthew Arnold, or even Horace and Aristotle. Would

pre/poststructuralist non-wisdom, with a wary eye on umbrellas and sewing machines, or with an ear attuned to the ripple of ironic counterpoint, fare any differently? To reiterate, *Missa agnostica* is a new kind of writing - text - in Derrida's words, "a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself'[2] overrunning all traditional boundaries, which would then make irrelevant any search for meaning through authorial intention, unities, genres, parts, and their "appropriate" diction. In a free-flowing dialogic text meaning is produced at the intersection or collision of intertexts, at the very seam where parabases and quotations intrude. It is here that irony is released, not the traditional trope of saying one thing and meaning another, but something more like Schlegel's "irony of ironies" or Baudelaire's *"folie lucide"*[3] where all historical traces become text and thus relativized, and the e/ron's double nature shows its split into an empirical (naive) "self and his textual (knowing) "self." The self-knowledge of this "self is that of *docta ignorantia,* or agnostic *gnosis;* and there is no escape from the vertigo of this "redoubling" (Baudelaire's phrase) of human fallenness and contingency. Now in *Missa agnostica,* however, onto a scene of what looks like playful nihilism or nihilistic play of the ironist intrudes the voice or textual representation of the *saeva indignatio* lacerating the heart of Vitéz, the sensitive observer of suffering and injustice, driving into the polyphony of ironic *dédoublement* a univocal force that would tend to reorganize the random fragments much like a magnet does a heap of iron filings. This force is satire; and the satirist, as we know from Horace and Juvenal to Swift and beyond, differs, among other things, from the ironist in that he seeks to escape the aporia of the latter's predicament (the state of *agnosis* in the "prisonhouse of language") by appealing to some ethical or other metaphysical ground that transcends language. It is this ground, or metanarrative, that is supposed to authorize the assault on human viciousness and depravity; from this point on, the play is *not* the thing at all.

Vitéz appears to be no exception; in *Missa agnostica* he delivers his salvos at the perceived anomalies of institutional Christianity and Hungarian nationalism from the standpoint of virtue, the path of right conduct, ultimately finding legitimation in the charity of Jesus. Yet it is my view that while the satire of the *Missa* is real enough, the ironies of its intertextual play in the end overwhelm and absorb it. The process of absorption, however, will not leave the assemblage of ironies in the poem unaffected. It will be my main concern in what follows to examine the *agon* between groundless irony and metaphysically grounded satire, in which Vitéz's critique of theology and politics is both implicated and transformed.

The text-originating intertext in *Missa agnostica (hypotexte* or *architexte,* in Genette's terms) is, of course, the Tridentine ordinary mass, or rather its parts

traditionally set to music by composers (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei), to which Vitéz has added the Introitus and the Ite missa est. In each part he quotes the full Latin text, provides a translation, and with the aid of free association, the primary intertext sets off random series of other intertexts as well as bits of personal reminiscences, allusions to family and world history, on occasion supplemented by such literary devices as sharply focussed images, sonnets, lists, catalogues, and musical forms adapted to poetry. The over-all effect of heterogeneous textual matter appended to the Latin mass is not unlike that of Duchamp's moustachioed Mona Lisa. Like "L.H.O.O.Q." Vitéz's profane exegesis literally defaces the sacred original by aestheticising it: the Latin mass is treated as just another language game, as a human invention serving particular social and historical needs, devoid of transcendental appeal or authority. This analogy is only partly accurate, for the satirist is not a prankster, or if so, he is a prankster with a purpose. The disfigured mass is still a kind of mass, as the oxymoronic title indicates. There may also be other, less obvious factors at play. Just as underneath the moustache there remains an image of Leonardo's masterpiece, the target of Duchamp's ridicule (but also that of his envy and desire), so in the commentary of Vitéz's *Missa,* ostensibly governed by the linguistic freeplay of a positive grammatology, there remains a theodicy, albeit a negative one.

This tension would ultimately make the *Missa* a deconstructive/satirical re-enactment of the catholic mass by an agnostic who yearns for the certainty *of gnosis.* (The assigning of the term "deconstruction" to the *Missa* as a whole is made advisedly, using it in its strictest sense as a writing-specific critique of metaphysical systems working from within those systems. As Derrida has put it, "The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures." Remaining on, and working from, the inside, however, has its drawbacks. Derrida is aware of this when he writes, "Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure ... the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work" [24].) Because it is both disfigurement and satire, *Missa agnostica* of necessity "operates from the inside," from within the structures of the mass and Christianity, and of the Hungarian language. As grammatologist, in his exegesis Vitéz re-reads, de- and re-constructs, disrupts, scrambles, and decenters the mass through deformation (and defamation) of language, yet language remains for him, as it were, the last refuge: "az ének véd; éltet a jóslat; a betű őrt áll" [the song protects; the prophecy giveth life; the letter stands on guard] (20). Some five years before embarking on *Missa agnostica,*

Vitéz had summarized his ethics in the exemplary *Politikai vers* [Political Poem] in the line: "A tisztesség útjáról nem lehet letérni" [One cannot turn off the road of virtue {honor, decency, righteousness}].

With all the de/reconstrive play going on simultaneously, the narrative in the Introitus remains on the whole ironic, mixed at times with pathos, relating how the speaker's entrance to the altar of God is blocked by the church's institutional trappings; and the Kyrie, aside from an increase in parabases and prosopopeia, is taken up by a chorus of women and a fugue. In both parts the narrator depicts himself as one caught in a painful predicament: in an allusion to Jesus's driving the money changers and traders from the temple, he pleads, "Ne zavarj el színed elől Uram, / nem vagyok galambok árusa; én repdesek a kalickában" [10] [Do not drive me from thy sight o Lord, I'm no dealer in pigeons; it's me fluttering inside the cage]; and he validates his poetic undertaking by the admission, "dalolok mert sikoltanék különben" [15] [I sing or else I'd scream].

Irony is invaded by satire in the Gloria, the part on which most of my reading will focus. The first thirty or so lines run as follows:

1 *Gloria in excelsis Deo*
A sárkányt leszúrták a táboritákat
kardélre hányták, a mórokkal, -
(súgjál hamar mi történt a mórokkal Saragossában)
5 mi történt a zsidókkal Yorkban, Frankfurtban
máglyánpirított Szervél Mihállyal Genfben
Leydeni Jánossal Münsterben (és mit tett Leydeni János
Münsterrel ugyancsak a Nagyúristen dicsőségére).
Nincs olyan kitaposott hitványság, mészárlás, csirkefogás
10 lelki heréltek, agyalágyak, vérszőlőtaposó lúdtalpasok
diszkrét belső Grand-Guignol színpada, a központi idegrendszer
méregfacsarta antinómiás anatómiája
amit nem az Isten-Prokrusztesz dicsőségére szabna valaki.
Alig volt olyan iszonyat, békalencsés, kidülledt szemű gyalázat
15 embermészárló masina, kés, szurony, kukoricagránát
gépágyú nehéztank zuhanóbombázó
amit Űr szolgája meg nem áldott volna
(In hoc signo vinces
Itt írd alá Vince!)
20 (Ne grimaszolj angyali doktor úr szakmai apologéta!)
Tíz éves voltam! a nagy kacsaúsztató előtt
fölállt a zászlóalj. Páncéljárművek, teherautók, motorbiciklik
német uraságoktól levetett fegyverek. Jött ám a páter
(igazi csatapap suttogta anyám meghatottan
25 golyózáporban adja föl az utolsó kenetet!)
Meg is áldott minden löveget, golyószórót, közbakát, őrmestert

fekele csövek álián remegtek a szenteltvíz csöppjei
lobogott a márjászászló (tudhattam volna hogy a Szűzanya
különösen a magyar nehézpuskát kedveli, az isteni kisded pedig
elsősorban a gránátrobbanásoknak örül).
(Nincs is szebb ám a keresztény magyar katonai teológiánál.)
[17-18]
[Gloria in excelsis deo
The dragon was slain, the Taborites
were put to the sword, the Moors
(help me quick what happened to the Moors at Saragosa)
what happened to the Jews in York, Frankfurt
to Michael Servetus roasted alive in Geneva
to John of Leyden in Münster (and what did John of Leyden do
with Münster likewise for the greater glory of God).
There is no worn-out wickedness, massacre, trickery
no discreet inner Grand-Guignol stage of mental eunuchs, morons, flatfoots,
no poison-squeezed antinómián anatomy of the central nervous system
that somebody would not cut to the glory of God-Procrustes.
There have hardly been horrors, bug-eyed degradation
contraptions for human slaughter, knives, bayonets, hand-grenades
machine guns, heavy tanks, dive bombers
that would not receive the blessing of a servant of the Lord
(In hoc signo vinces
You sign right here Vincent!)
(Don't you make faces angehe doctor professional apologist!)
I was ten years old! the batallion lined up
before the big duck pond. Armored vehicles, trucks, motorcycles
weapons discarded by German overlords. Then came the padre
(a real battle priest whispered my mother deeply moved
he gives the last rites in a hail of bullets!)
Sure enough he blessed every cannon, machine gun, private, sergeant
on chins of black gun barrels trembled drops of holy water
the Flag of Mary blew in the wind. (I should have known that the Virgin Mother
especially favors Hungarian heavy guns, while the Holy Infant
primarily gets pleasure from the blast of grenades).
(There is nothing finer than the Christian Hungarian military theology.)]

Immediately juxtaposed to "Glory to God in the highest" comes the jumbled list of events (lines 2-8), the first component of the intertextual cluster, for which the quasi-dramatic frame is what looks like an imaginary history class. Layered within the voice of the ill-prepared student who mixes myth and fact (St. George's slaying of the dragon is the first thing that comes to his mind! George = György [Vitéz] "warrior/hero," would-be slayer of the dragons of imposture and sanctimony?), asking for help from an imaginary classmate, there is the questioning voice that distills the essence from all the atrocities committed by both Catholics and Protestants. (The bad student may

also typify obtuseness and compacency regarding the discrepancies within religion and conceivably include the *hypocrite lecteur,* as if to warn: *de te fabula narratur.)* The specific examples, taken mainly from the 16th century (age of reformation, counter-reformation, religious wars, conversions and reconversions) serve to illustrate the general "history lesson" announced by the "teacher" suddenly coming to center stage. It is the voice of the satirist reducing complex issues to a single judgment; the tone is properly stern and apodictic, the diatribes full of scorn and (ultimately) righteous indignation. The Anabaptists are singled out because they were the first victims of both Catholic and Protestant persecution (in Zurich, with Zwingli's consent, they were put to death by drowning in 1525),[4] yet only seven years later, after capturing the city of Münster and establishing a brief "heaven on earth," they in turn butchered their enemies. (Vitéz's comment in the Kyrie on this vicious circle is apposite: "ülni nem tud a püfölt ember / (de ölni!)" [12] [the flogged man can't sit still / but can he kill!]). Similarly, the Spanish physician-turned-reformer Servetus (author of the *Restitution of Christianity,* a book that drove Calvin to near apoplexy) was burned at the stake in Geneva after Calvin had denounced him to the secular authorities as a heretic. Servetus had gone beyond most reformers by denying the holy trinity, calling it a "three-headed Cerberus"[5] which Vitéz echoes in the Credo by citing a certain Canon F. who "in a state of inebriation" had called the Holy Ghost "trousers with three legs" [32]. Servetus reappears shortly thereafter when Vitéz comments on one of the Credo's murkier passages about the holy spirit *"qui expatre filioque procedit"* [32] which was singled out by Servetus as having no scriptural foundation (similarly to Erasmus's proof that the *Comma Johanneum* had been injected into the First Epistle of John after Nicea).[6]

Vitéz's intertextual ironies operate by juxtaposing and overlapping historical data, leaving them in unresolved tension; it is their *content,* the hair-splitting dogmatism coupled with unspeakable cruelties that arouses the satirist's anger, which lies at the core of the diatribes (lines 9-13 and 14-17). In accounting for the horrors of intolerance and fanaticism, Vitéz is no sentimentalist â la Rousseau; he appears closer to Swift's Christian conservatism according to which the human being is not a sovereign *animal rationale,* but an *animal rationis capax,* i.e., an animal only *capable* of reason. Human nature is corrupt and so is reason; it can only fulfill its capacity by relying on divine guidance. The exercise of reason alone is tantamount to pride, the object of Swift's most vicious rebuke (cf. end of Book IV of *Gulliver's Travels).* Inferring from the allusions in the diatribes, Vitéz would only go so far as to imply that evil is not metaphysical in origin, the result of some mysterious sin of disobedience but the outcome of the contradictions in the human

nervous system that are equally inscrutable. (The play on "antinómián" telescopes the three meanings of "contradictory," "saved by faith alone," and "anti-law"). But then why the anger and rage, one may ask, coming from a poet who is also a practising psychologist, if what we are dealing with here can be attributed to mental illness (the sexual obsessions of an Augustine, or the hangups of "that mad dog," "the epileptic from Tarsus," as Vitéz calls St. Paul [13])? Because, for one, behavior is not only predetermined by genetics and upbringing but, as Vitéz the behaviorist holds, it is also governed by its consequences. There is a vast difference between the harmless schizophrenic who claims to be Jesus and the zealot who claims to have been "sent" by Jesus to preach and proselytize. The former remains on the margins of society, powerless to foist his "inner theatre" on the world, whereas the latter can (and will) exploit and capitalize on human fear, and inevitably appealing to divine authority will offer his shoddy wares as "glad tidings" promising certain salvation or perdition. It is they who fashion God into a Procrustes, the interdicts and taboos being reflections of their own pathology, an externalization of their inner chamber of horrors much like the theatre of Grand-Guignol. The primary sense of the Grand-Guignol allusion is to evoke a scene of primitive, hence effective, cruelty, but it also implies artificiality, vulgarity; "popular art" as pandering to the basest instincts.

The second part of the diatribe (lines 14-17), rhetorically a parallelism of the first part, extends the initial actions of the fanatical founders of Christianity to the plane where they in actual fact "parallel" and interwine with the temporal powers. One of the reasons for the success and survhal of the Christian church has been a willingness to divest itself of its initial anti-social and apocalyptic tendencies, and after achieving the status of state religion, to act as ideological mainstay and instrument of legitimation for all subsequent secular powers, becoming in the process itself a secular power. In spite of pious lip-service to some of Jesus's teachings, the church never offered a socio-economic model that would have endangered the hegemony of either feudalism or capitalism; in fact, it repeatedly performed the state's dirty work by exterminating potential and real enemies threatening the status quo. In the "Sanctus" Vitéz cites Simon de Montfort and his crusade against the Albigensians, whose puritan beliefs and life style were an early form of Protestantism; he could also have cited Luther's cynical betrayal in 1525 of the German peasants as an example of expediency and opportunism. (In effect, Luther blessed the weapons of the nobles who then crushed the peasants, as had the Hungarian lords the revolt of Dózsa a decade earlier.)

To Vitéz's catalogue of the modern weaponry blessed by servants of the Lord comes the sudden juxtaposition of "In hoc signo vinces." The Emperor

Constantine's dream to which the quotation refers - the appearance of the cross with the words, "In this sign shalt thou conquer," i.e., he is vouchsafed a victory if he converts to the faith of the crucified Christ! - is one of the first transcendentally justified calls to slaughter in the history of Christianity, and so already a travesty of the "Prince of Peace," and most likely a forged interpolation to boot. The intertext is not allowed to do its seductive work, but is further parodied by the bogus transliteration "You sign right here Vincent" as if spoken by a con-man in the final stages of coaxing a sucker into making a deal. The Latin maxim is minimized, its "original sacred" content is profanized by turning it into a phony translation which is both like and unlike the original, thereby robbing the original of its originality. The unsympathetic reader (the imaginary "angelic doctor" named in the parabasis) is dialogically included and silenced in the text; and while the not-so-unsympathetic reader's own expectations of being set straight through satire are seemingly satisfied - "of course" he/she would know line 19 is not a translation of line 18; and yet, "in a way," reading it satirically, it is, ("all transcendental authorization is [like] a con game") - they are also thwarted since the heteroglossic-ironic intrusion is "only" language whose "authority" rests purely on the homophonic possibilities of signifiers. The odd couplet is made up of free-floating fragments of chance collision and also, due to their new-found proximity, chance collusion. Linguistic authorization is also a con-game, an illusion, especially one based on a shaky and only potentially satiric suggestion emerging from the random fact of a random juxtaposition; and so line (and reader) redouble-revert into irony. Despite proximity and appearance, it is not a similarity of dissimilars that is opened up by the juxtaposition, but *difference*, the accidental randomness of arbitrary entities that do not belong together except in language; and language, its performative power notwithstanding, cannot and does not perform miracles in the "real" world. But what is the reality of the "real" apart from language?

The fact that the insatiable human hunger for power has always needed a transcendental justification, and that institutional religion, particularly Christianity, has throughout history been only too obliging in providing In hoc signo-like legitimation to all and sundry does not make that legitimation any more substantial since its ground is language. In lines 21-31 Vitéz attempts to "bring in the »real«" as if to buttress the generalities of the diatribe by offering a piece of "lived experience" in the autobiographical episode from the period of World War II: as the son of a field commander, he had witnessed just such an act of legitimation when the chaplain blessed the guns and men of the armoured batallion. The passage appears to remain fully in the ironic mode; and the image, "On chins of black gun barrels trembled drops of holy water,"

while neutral, is exact and powerful enough to qualify as the ironic vortex of the "Christian Hungarian military theology."

But the narrative is more (and less) than an instance of pure empirical validation, a one-to-one copy of experience in the "real" world. Step by step, Christianity's self-legitimating metalanguage governs and orders the entire process, set off by the Constantinian device. The instruments of slaughter are blessed by a representative of Christ on earth, the chaplain himself being a mere instrument, for "in fact" it is Christ who does the blessing. The act of blessing is one of making something profane into something holy, to "sanctify" it. In the case of weapons and warriors being so sanctified, they are absolved a priori of transgression against God's commandments,becoming de facto "Christ's warriors," their war a holy war. Benediction is always accompanied by the gesture of making the cross, so the soldiers also appear to be vouchsafed a sign leading them to victory. *In hoc signe- vincetis.* The irony thus consists not so much in the true-to-life observation and memory of Vitéz at age ten, caught in an actual war, but in its textual image being an intertextual emblem, allegorically juxtaposed to its emblematic antecedent, which is none other than the crusades. Again, not the "real" crusades of history, but as they have become aestheticized in the ideological self-affirmation of all subsequent nobility (and non-nobility like the good preacher Billy Graham), as a floating signifer, a metaphor in language, an emblem of transcendental legitimation. The banner of the Virgin Mary fluttering above the freshly blessed weapons is also a métonymie emblem of similar flags flown by Hungarian "crusaders" *("kuruc"* initially meant "crusader") against the Turkish "infidel" in the 16th and 17th centuries and the Austrian "infidel" subsequently. (Cf. the *Kuruc* song, "Két pogány közt, egy hazáért omlik ki vére" {the *kuruc* warrior {"vitéz"} sheds his blood for one country, caught between two infidels]. The traditional battle cry of Hungarian soldiers fighting the Turks was "Jesus".) "Our side" is *semper fidelis* to the Cross of Jesus, to God, to the Virgin, to faith itself; the other side is always infidel. (Vitéz will gleefully relate in the Credo and the Sanctus how all rival camps, especially during the thirty Years' War, had claimed the Lord to be on their side, presenting the absurdity in a concrete image: "Egyik táborból a másikba ugrál a Legfelsőbb Hadúr / tébolyult akrobata, - cigánykereket hány a fölbolydult Univerzumban" [41] [The Heavenly Commander-in-Chief leaps from camp to camp / mad acrobat, - throwing cartwheels in the universal upheaval].) Hitler's war, in which the Hungarian forces participated, had all the earmarks of a crusade, down to the belt buckles of the Wehrmacht soldiers inscribed with *"'Gott mit uns."*

In this reading, the ironic succession (not progress!) of emblematic traces in the discourse of Christianity as shown by the *Missa* simultaneously shows

up the bankruptcy of the "Christian Hungarian military theology" and Christianity *in toto* as fiction inseparable from language, its "truth" indeed a "mobile army of metaphors and metonymies" whose fictional nature has been forgotten, as Nietzsche had said of truth in general. The ironist, mission accomplished, would press matters no further but return to his language games, knowing that... Knowing what? "I should have known," says the narrator after weapons and warriors had been properly blessed, "that the Virgin Mother / especially favors Hungarian heavy guns, while the Holy Infant / primarily gets pleasure from the blast of grenades" (lines 28-30). This would, of course, be an instance of obvious, heavy, "regular" irony, the trope of meaning the opposite of what is said, made absurd by the excess of satire. I should have known *but I didn't,* says the *eiron;* I was a non-knower, an agnostic even then; I saw through my mother's sentimentalizing (nay, near-sexual excitement) over the padre and the padre's phony benediction as copy of a tribal ritual, a par excellence instance of tribalism itself. What I *did know* was that poor ignorant men were about to be led to the slaughter.

But what happens if we follow a literal reading of the sentence? As Paul de Man had tirelessly demonstrated, an identical syntactal pattern can engender two meanings that are mutually exclusive. The literal meaning of "I should have known" implies not a painful triumph of the kind of *agnosis* that unmasks illusions, but the rueful recognition of a loss - the loss of being at home within the warm and secure fold of the tribe and of God. His *agnosis,* whether he knew it at the time or not, was contained by the *gnosis* of the illusory nature of the triad, which in that very instant made him into an outsider and an ironist, which comes to the same thing. He became for ever exiled from that realm where sign and referent, emblem and world composed an indissoluble union. The self that "knew" the Virgin's partiality to the guns of the Hungarians would be a "naive" self only from the vantage point of the self that "did not know." The irony of ironies consists precisely in a knowledge of the split consciousness of the *eiron,* the second self coming to a *gnosis* (in hindsight) of what it "should have known" if it had not always already been split from that first (naive, historical) self so that it could have remained in the safety of a whole and "rounded" world, instead of inhabiting the arbitrary universe of language, meandering, like Lukács's novelistic hero, in a state of transcendental homelessness.

The literal meaning of "I should have known" is inescapably tinged with nostalgia, and opens the way to the legitimating ground of satire. It can perhaps now be seen that the satiric parabases emanate from the second self *as if it were in the state of the first,* hoping to arrest the unending to-and-fro

movement of ironic play. (Despite appearances, the *agon* of irony and satire is not a replay of the conflict of the "unhappy consciousness"; for one, language plays no role in Hegel's scheme; for another, there is no *Geist* in sight to underwrite the struggle.) The appeal of the de-ironized voice is primarily to Jesus, "standing," as it were, untouched behind the havoc of Christian centuries, whose "presence" calls forth the satirist's ire:

A Te szentségeddel	[With your holiness
a Te uraságoddal	with your domination
a Te testetlen trónoddal	with your ethereal throne
nincs nekem bánatom,	I have no quarrel
nincsen lázongásom.	I have no dispute
Csak a rikoltozó	Only with the shrieking
hőkölő pózoló	clamoring posturing
füstölőlengető	censer-wielding
díszdicsőítőkkel, satb.	glory-glorifiers, etc.]

The emblems of illusion, the armies of mendacious metaphors wielded by Christians appear to cover up the "real" Jesus, making the road to his unsullied presence near impenetrable. But he is "really" *there;* and if we ask, just exactly where *there* is, the narrator provides unambiguous answer. Jesus is to be known from the "deepest, most secret core of our heart" ("szívünk legtitkosabb zugából" [20]). Are we back with Pascal, and the heart's reasons which reason knows nothing about? Possibly; although the narrator alludes more often to the *behavior and psychology* of the historical Jesus rather than to his "ethereal throne," and also to those who resemble Jesus in their active life as distinct from the glorifiers and hypocrites. In the Gloria, after *Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris, Amen,* comes this series of rapid juxtapositions:

> -Sz. Sz. atya pofoz, hajat húz-
> dicsőség-térdeltet- Jézus nem pofozott-
> őt ütötték-nem térdeltetett-tćrdelt-mégis,
> az Atyaúristen dicsőségében-Szént Ferenc nem húzta
> a gyermekek haját-az állatok is kezére simultak [24]
> [-Father Sz. Sz. slaps face, pulls hair-
> makes one kneel for glory-Jesus slapped no one
> they beat him-made no one kneel-he knelt—still,
> in the glory of God the Father-St. Francis didn't pull
> children's hair-his hand tamed even animals].

The behavior of Jesus (and St. Francis) is thus an example set for humans to imitate. One should begin by not beating up on children; but since the

narrator-satirist has very little faith in human nature, he more and more appeals to Jesus for some actual intervention, especially to give aid to children in pain. At the end of the Agnus Dei, in the long list appended to *Dona nobis pacem* [give us peace]: "[adj békét] a színes képernyőn éhkoppot nyelő bengal csecsemőnek / (neki különösen)" [45] [{give peace} to the starving Bengali infant on the TV screen / to him especially]. How should Jesus do this? First, he should make faith in him more accessible:

ó szentséges Jézus	[O holy Jesus
de komplikált vagy	you're so complicated
pedig hányat ismerek	yet I know so many
akik körülülnének	who'd gather around you
meg is hallgatnának	and would listen to you
Császealjszemű gyerekek	Children with huge eyes
öregek remegő fehér bajusz [27]	old men trembling white moustache]

And what would the simplified Son of Man say to children and old people? Vitéz appears to be echoing the sentiments of the great reformers of the 16th century - whom he ridiculed with such relish - who wanted to simplify the road to salvation by doing away with the seemingly superfluous dogmas, doctrines, and liturgical excesses accumulating around the medieval church. *Sola fides, sola scriptum, sola gratia* - according to Luther, this trinity is all a Christian needs; and the Anabaptists created a whole way of life out of scripture. A passage near the end of the Gloria seems to indicate something more specific than a return to Luther, Zwingli, or Menno Simons. The theme of suffering children is repeated as the narrator again addresses Jesus directly:

Jesus Anguillo (kolumbiai névrokonod) köldöke vánnyadt
" " elhagyott gyermek [...]
képe a jólkomponált italhirdetés mellett sírdogál az Időújságban. (Time Magazin)
"J. A. a te szeretedet igényli" (az olvasóét?) (szentolvasóét?)
J. C, a Te dicsőséged J. A. köldökében vagyon
ahol a világ tengelye fordul. (Revolutio.) [24]
[Jesus Anguillo (your namesake in Columbia) has a shrivelled navel
" " is an abandoned child [...]
his picture whimpering beside the well-designed liquor ad in Time Magazine.
"J. A. needs your love" (the reader's?) (untransl. pun)
J. C, your glory is to be found in J. A.'s navel
where the axis of the world revolves. (Revolutio.)]

Here again, the text could be made to support two readings. If taken as seriously addressed to Jesus by a believer, then it is a reprimand to the Savior

for allowing children to suffer. His true glory is in the alleviation of such needless suffering, for if Providence has anything to do at all with this world, and if Jesus' death and resurrection have any meaning whatsoever, then children should not be made to endure pain. As part of the Holy Trinity, Jesus the Christ should be able to manage at least this much. According to another reading, the reprimand is more ominous if the historical references of the intertext are considered more fully. The image of the whimpering child from the third world set in the glossy pages of an American magazine is replete with irony, and is another con job - an allegorical emblem pictorially citing "Suffer the little children to come to me," in the hopes of softening tough capitalist hearts and opening wallets. But instead of being directed at Jesus (wherever he may be), the warning seems to imply that unless poverty and hunger are eliminated in the world by human beings (publishers, advertisers, and readers of *Time* magazine alike), Jesus and the religion named after him will be powerless to stop millions of desperate Indios and Bengalis from revolting, or, even though made up of vacuous fictions and a host of metaphors, they may inspire such a *revolutio.*

But if Vitéz appears to be toying with some form of liberation theology based on Jesus's good actions, on human solidarity, Schweitzer-like altrůism and the like, such attempts are undone by the ironies of his text directed at others with similar motives (the bleeding-heart liberals of "good will" displacing their *mauvaise conscience* to some nebulous xenophilia of the "wretched of the earth"). Vitéz's sátire goes soft at this point, since he is not a satirist but an ironist at heart; the suffering of little children elicits prayer and pathos and not the satirist's toughness (cf. Swift's modest proposal when confronting the starving children of Ireland). What really remains is some lip service to the gentleness of Jesus (forgetting that Jesus has little meaning if his divinity is disregarded), but it is half-hearted and unable to countermand the corrosive work of irony. Since most of the appeals to Jesus are phrased in the conditional, they seem to indicate the impatience of a disillusioned perfectionist when surveying the way of the world. Give up peace, says the voice in the Agnus Dei, but after this plea comes the word of the ironic agnostic: *Leave* us in peace. For:

> ...áfium ellen nem orvosság a béke,
> bendős éhségen zsoltár nem segít;
> kapkodunk hát kardunkhoz eszelősen
> de a markolat helyén is penge nőtt. [45]
> [peace is no remedy for poison
> psalm is no help for starving bellies
> we reach for our sword in desperation
> but the hilt, too, has become a blade]

The intertext at first appears to underline the "liberation-theological" impatience with doctrine and no action. "Peace is no remedy for poison" alludes to the great 17th century poet and warrior, Count Miklós Zrínyi and his tract on military strategy, *A török áfium ellen való orvosság* [A remedy for the Turkish poison], and its famous motto proclaiming the antidote: "Fegyver, fegyver, fegyver kívántatik és jó vitézi resolutio" [We need arms, arms, arms, and strong military resolve]. But the resolution of Vitéz cannot advocate a resorting to arms: our very weapons would turn on us if we tried to use them on others. Zrínyi 's example is also an ironic reminder of the kind of resolve that is no longer possible, for such a stance is part and parcel of that whole and "rounded world" available solely to the "naive", undivided consciousness, the world the ironist had renounced the moment he knew he did not know.

With the ground of the satire becoming itself groundless - in any event, the example and teaching of Jesus are enclosed within "scripture," a writing - the narrative returns to irony, but just as satiric parabases had earlier on invaded and perhaps "toned down" ironic poliphony, so in the final parts of the poem a new component enters, what may paradoxically be termed "post-ironic irony", somewhat analogous to what Paul de Man had named the "stance of wisdom."[7] The ending of the Agnus Dei quoted above, but more explicitly the final part. Ite missa est, no longer harbor a nostalgia for lost wholeness, for a recuperation of the mode of being Kierkegaard had called "the knight of faith." The "post-ironic ironic" consciousness cannot and will not renounce irony, but it moves to adjust it to make visible the ultimate end of its play, and all play, through the restful contemplation of death. The Ite missa est begins with a pun, or rather the literal translation of "Tridentine" ("three-toothed") - "Menjetek: vége a háromfogú misének" [Go, the three-toothed mass is over] - and it continues to sustain the metaphor of the three teeth sinking into different substances. But the play is also a recapitulation of the entire agnostic mass, the effects of the Latin mass on itself, and through it, the effect of Christianity on the narrative subject. The progression of the actions of the "teeth" - "Az első fog valódi húsba tépett"; "Lelket őröl a második fog"; "A harmadik fog bölcsességfog" [The first tooth tore into real flesh; The second tooth grinds the soul; The third tooth is wisdom tooth] - is not fortuitous, but recalls, first, the psychology of the church fathers and the units making up the total human being (somatic, psychic, pneumatic) and closely allied with it, the levels or layers of interpretation applicable to scripture. According to Origen, "Just as the human being consists of body, soul, and spirit, so does Holy Scripture, which God had inspired for man's salvation."[8] In spite of adhering to the order of the (submerged) religious intertext, which being a parody, still invites an ironic reading, the final lines turn the play against itself and affirms an order that contains both *gnosis* and *agnosis:*

A harmadik fog bölcsességfog
állkapcsunkban későn virágzik
(fogósdit játszunk acélfogóval)
és zsibbadunk. Elegáns injekcióval
már az örökös fájdalom partja se látszik.
[The third tooth is wisdom tooth
it blooms late in our jaw
(we play catch with steel pliers)
and go numb. An elegant needle
makes invisible the shores of eternal pain].

The figurai language is very compact, but it is not needlessly cryptic, nor is it a full return to irony. The play of catch is the play of life and death; only we humans know what is at stake in this play, yet we still play on. The "elegant needle" is properly both literal and allegorical: the former is the needle of good and easy death; the latter, the injection of some artful evasion of death such as good writing that momentarily dissolves the true world of pain and sorrow. But being in the "stance of wisdom," the post-ironic subject now knows literal and figurai to be one, and is able to stand both inside and outside, for it, as de Man writes, "however painful, sees things as they actually are."[9] If *Missa agnostica* is an "orphan" text, as postulated above, it is because its narrating subject accepts his own orphanhood, acknowledging as distant kin only the Kierkegaardian "knight of infinite resignation." But orphans, like the Jesus Anguillos of the world with whom the narrator has shown solidarity, can also play; the whimpering picture is not the whole picture. Play is available to the adult orphan as well, especially as he had orphaned himself when he chose to follow the road of his *docta ignorantia* wherever it took him. The entry of post-ironic irony does not inject a lugubrious tone into Vitéz' text; quite the contrary: as in Yeats' *Lapis Lazuli,* the gaiety and enormous tragic fun *of free play* still transfigures all that dread. And the agnostic mass still remains a mass, celebrating the rites of play against ennui and bad faith, while quietly acknowledging the "shores of eternal pain" as its ultimately impassable bounderies.

Notes

1. References throughout this paper are to *Missa agnostica* (Paris: Magyar Műhely, 1979). The poem also appears in Vitéz's collected poems, *Az újtatos manó imája* (Szombathely: Életünk könyvek, 1991) 125-164.
2. Jacques Derrida, "Living *on/Border Lines"* in Harold Bloom, *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York, 1979), 83.

3. See Baudelaire's "De l'essence de rire," in *Curiosités esthétiques* (Paris, 1962); Schlegel, "Athenaeum Fragment" no. 116.1 am indebted for these references to the article by Paul de Man, noted below.
4. See Eugene F. Rice, *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1970), 155 and ff.
5. *Ibid.*, 156.
6. *Ibid.*, 71.
7. "The Rhetoric of Temporality" in *Blindness and Insight* (Minneapolis, 1983), 224.
8. *De principiis*, 4. 2. 4.
9. De Man, *op. cit.*, 224.

MURDER IN THE MOUNTAINS

Translated by PATRICK THURSFIELD
from Miklós Bánffy's novel *Megszámláltattál* ["They were counted..."]

Tanger,
Morocco

Miklós BáníTy's Transylvanian Trilogy was originally published by Erdélyi Szépmíves Céh at Kolozsvár. The three volumes, *Megszámláltattál* (1934), *"...és hijjával találtattál"* (1937) and *Darabokra szaggattatol* (1940) have now been translated into English by Patrick Thursfield and Katalin Bánffy-Jelen, the author's daughter, under the titles of *"They were counted..."*, *"They were found wanting..."*, and *"They were divided..."*. One of the principal sub plots concerns the efforts of the trilogy's hero, one Count Bálint Abády (who, like BáníTy himself, was both a wealthy Transylvanian landowner and high profile politician) to alleviate the lot of a group of Roumanian peasants living in the mountains of the Kalotaszeg. Abády succeeds in his mission only in the third book of the trilogy, but the following extracts from *They were counted...* relate how the interest of the Hungarian aristocrat was aroused by what was happening in a remote province where the Abády forest holdings were situated.

Megszámláltattál... was republished in Budapest by Helikon Kiadó in 1982 and the whole trilogy in the autumn of 1993.

These extracts begin when Bálint Abády has gone to visit his forests for the first time. He is 26 and the year is 1904.....

*

The camp was well situated, with a low stone wall forming a semi-circle under an outcrop of rock. In the centre a pillar made of a tree trunk supported a roof thickly covered by fir boughs. Below, beds of more fir boughs neatly tied together were ready for the rugs that would be thrown over them. Firewood, long dry branches, had been laid against the entire length of the stone wall. When lit these would have to be fed all night so that those inside the shelter would not freeze to death...

Darkness fell and Zutor handed out the bread, bacon and onions that were to be their evening meal. The men, knowing their station in life, settled near the fire a little distant from the place accorded to the master; and when Zutor gave out the large tin cups generously filled with brandy, they all drank noisily, with much clearing of throats, thereby following the custom of the mountains and showing their appreciation that so little water had been added to the spirit.

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Bálint soon got into his sleeping bag and almost at once fell into a deep sleep, due partly to his tiredness but also to the fact that everyone slept well in the sharp mountain air. At about eleven, however, he woke up, conscious that around the campfire his party was entertaining visitors. Three men had joined the group, as is the custom in the mountains where men will walk three hours and more if they see a campfire where they can come and talk the night away exchanging news and discussing their problems.

As everyone thought that the *mariasza* was asleep, they talked freely without restraint. They spoke in Roumanian, and one of the visitors, an old shrivelled man squatting on his haunches, who was facing Bálint, was recounting a long and mournful tale of injustice concerning a house, money, lambs, loans and interest, and cheese. The words *'domnu no tar'* occurred frequently and there was some reference to the Roumanian priest at Gyurkuca. Even more frequently he repeated a name, Rusz Pántyilimon, and each time he did so he spat contemptuously into the fire.

Bálint raised himself onto his elbow trying to hear what was being said, but even though he could remember a few words of Roumanian from his childhood, he could not grasp the details of the old man's tale of woe. He understood, all the same, that the others commiserated with him and nodded their heads in sympathy.

At one moment Zsukucsó got up from where he was sitting to stir the dying embers of the fire with his axe-handle. When all was arranged to his satisfaction, he threw some new dry branches onto the top and, as the flames sprang up, he noticed that Bálint was awake. Quickly he turned away and said something to the others who fell silent.

Two days later Bálint Abády and his companions were on their way home...

The valley was narrow but so thickly wooded that no view of the other side was possible from the road until they came to a place where the strong winds had cut a wide swathe in the forest. On the opposite side of the valley a few small peasant houses could be seen and, about a quarter of a mile above them, a square stone house with a roof of tiles rather than the stone shingles usual in the mountains. The windows were heavily barred and the plot of land on which the house stood was surrounded by high stone walls now almost submerged by snow drifts. Even from across the valley Bálint could hear the barking of three ferocious guard-dogs.

"What on earth is that strange building?" asked Bálint. Zutor replied:

"It belongs to a man called Rusz Pántyilimon. He decided to move out here."

Bálint remembered the name and looked at the house with renewed interest.

"Why did he build such a fortress?"

"Well your Lordship, I can't really say... but perhaps he is afraid... of the people."

"Afraid? For what reason?"

"Why, because... well, he's afraid, that's all."

Bálint would have none of these evasions and ordered Zutor to tell the truth. The story was this. Rusz, a Roumanian, had been a school teacher somewhere in Erdőhát and there had been some trouble which cost him his job. Some people said he had tried to corrupt small boys. To get completely away, he had come up here to the mountains in the Retyicel country where his mother had been born. Soon he set up as a money-lender... and now he was a rich man.

"How did he start if he had no money?"

"People say it was the popa who provided the money, and they split the profits!"

"And the popa? Where did he get the money?"

Zutor hesitated again. Then he replied:

"Well, your Lordship... people say that he's an agent of the 'Unita* Bank and funded by them."

Bálint tried to remember the snatches of conversation he had heard round the campfire.

"Does Notary Simó have anything to do with all this?"

Honey Zutor looked around to see if they were overheard. Krisán Györgye and young Stefan were some distance ahead clearing their way of fallen branches and the others were still far behind them with the pack horses. Sure that no-one could hear what he was saying the forester went on:

"People do say that the notary's mixed up in it. They say that he writes the loan contracts... and that what he reads out of them is not what is written on the paper!... that's what they say... But your Lordship, you can't believe everything you hear... these are ignorant foolish people!" He seemed to regret that he had gone so far because he quickly added: "Your Lordship ordered me to relate what people say... it's not me who says all this. I don't believe a word of it... no... not a word!"

Bálint understood Honey's fears and, shaking his head at him, said reassuringly:

"Don't worry! Nothing you have said will go any further!"

Some months later Abády, having found out much more about the dishonesty and peculations of his forest manager Nyiressy, who had never been properly supervised during the long years of Abády's minority, and of the rascally notary Gaston Simó, returned to the mountains...

On Bálint's last day he returned to camp in the evening to discover four men waiting to see him. They, too, came from the Retyice district but their little settlement, Pejkoja by name, had been built some six or seven kilometres from the village in a remote corner on the northern boundary of the Abády properties. They had come to see Count Abády. The news that the *mariasza* had

refused to enter the *domnu* director's house, despite the fact that the great judge and the all-powerful notary had been there, had spread through the mountains like wildfire. It was everywhere told that this was not all but that the Lord had also interrupted the great man's feast, removed two of the *gyorniks* who were serving them and then, to their great shame, had camped barely five hundred paces away. This fascinating and important news had, naturally, become much embellished during the retelling. It was related with great relish how the *"Grôfu"* - the Count - had publicly upbraided the hated notary and turned his back on the judge. What sort of mighty nobleman could he be, they asked themselves, who would dare act like this with such powerful and important people? And they told how even the arrogant notary himself had risen at dawn and, despite the manner in which he had been insulted the night before, waited outside his tent until the *mariasza* should awake. Not only this, but when the Count had emerged from his tent the notary had humbled himself in full sight of all the others. Oh! it must be a mighty Lord indeed who could perform such wonders!

All this news had reached the men of Pejkoja within twenty-four hours, and at once the men of the village met together to discuss what they should do, for they were all in great trouble. The problem was this: the money-lender Rusz Pántyilimon had taken the village to court and sent the bailiffs to collect a debt he claimed from them. If they did not pay up, all they possessed would be sold at public auction. Everyone in the village had a share in this debt, which had somehow inexplicably grown to an astronomical sum from of a simple loan of 200 crowns made to two villagers four years earlier. The story was this: the two men had borrowed 200 crowns but, simple, illiterate peasants that they were, somehow they had signed for 400. In six months the sum had increased to 700 crowns and, as the debt grew and grew, the other villagers had come forward to give their guarantees for its repayment, for everything they owned was held in common and was so entered into the land registry - 67 Hungarian acres of grazing land, 16 houses and a small saw-mill. All of the village families therefore were forced to band together to defend their community inheritance, and this is why they were all now involved. By the time Bálint came to the mountains, the money lender was claiming some 3,000 crowns. To repay such a sum would mean that everything they owned would have to be sold and all the families made homeless. And all this for a paltry loan of 200 crowns. It was the grossest injustice.

For five days the men of the village met and talked and finally decided to do what the village elder, Juon Lung aluj Maftye advised. This man, now well over sixty years of age, had known well Bálint's maternal grandfather, the elder Count Tamás, and for many years had managed all the communal property of the village, always going to Dénestornya for advice as Count

Abády, to whom they had formerly owed allegiance as serfs, still took a fatherly interest in everyone who lived and worked on his properties. Besides he was also the county court judge. Old Juon Maftye therefore proposed that they should now go to the young *mariasza,* ask for his help and tell him of their complaints, for there was no doubt that, just like his grandfather before him, he was a mighty man who would do what was right. After much discussion this proposal was accepted, though by no means unanimously. There were those among them who merely complained, without themselves offering a solution; there were others who were swayed by the much respected head man and who put their faith in an approach to the young count; and there were those who declared that this was not the right way to go about it and that the only final solution was to be found 'one night'! What was to be done on that night was not specified, but everyone understood what wasmeant by that little phrase- *"lanoptye"*-namely that "one night" people should go to Rusz Pántyilimon's house... but what they should do there - burn the records, beat the rascal to death or merely give him a good scare - was never said. Such things were better not discussed. After all the talk, however, they took Juon Maftye's advice, and it was agreed that the old man himself, with two others should seek out the *mariasza* at his camp and tell him of their troubles. The other two men who went with him were Nikolaj Lung, who was nicknamed 'Cselmnyik' - Tiny - because he was so huge, and the head man's grandson, Kula, who had somehow hustled himself a little education. The latter was scarcely more than a boy, but he came along not only to help his grandfather but also because he had met the *mariasza* on his visit the previous February. On their way to Bálint's camp they had been joined by a fourth man, who was ironically called 'Turturika' - Little Dove. It was he who had so strongly urged *"la noptye "*. Bálint found these four men seated round the camp-fire when he returned from his tour of inspection with Honey. He at once asked them when they had supped and offered them slices of bacon and draughts of mountain brandy and invited them to come to his tent, which stood a little way apart from the *gyorniks'* shelter. He did this because they would be able to speak more freely away from the men who came from other districts. Bálint made one exception: he told Honey to be present, not only because the men of Pejkoja respected him but also because Bálint, though his Roumanian had greatly improved, felt it would be better to have someone with him who could translate if necessary.

The old man presented the villager's case. He spoke at length, but cogently with much detail and, after Bálint had posed several questions and received their answers, Maftye explained exactly what they wanted him to do. In short, the petition to the lord was that he should intervene, summon the wicked money-lender and forbid him to do any further harm to the respectable people of Pejkoja. In exchange they offered the sum of 800 crowns to Rusz to settle

the debt. This great sum they had managed to scrape up but further they could not go, not now or ever. Bálint tried in vain to explain that in these times he no longer possessed such powers as they attributed to him and that there was no way he could force Pántyilimon to do anything he did not wish. The old man did not believe him. For him the *mariasza* was all-powerful, and if he did not do something, it was because he did not wish it. The *Excellenciasza* Abády, his grandfather, said the old man with dignity, would not have let them down; he would have stood by them in their trouble! Bálint was touched by their faith and in the end agreed that he would do what he could. In saying this he was swayed by the fact that the Little Dove who had hitherto remained silent, suddenly broke into the discussions saying angrily:

"Didn't I tell you all this would be no use? There's only one answer - *la noptye...V*>

"What an evil face that man has," thought Bálint, looking hard at the bearded Turturika, "I certainly wouldn't like to be at his mercy!"

In the end everyone went to sleep and long before dawn the men from Pejkoja had disappeared back into the forest from which they had come.

*

Abády broke camp at first light and, long before the bells of the little wooden church at Retyice had rung their midday peal, Bálint's party had arrived at the foot of the mountains on whose lower slopes the village had been built. They rode slowly through the village until they reached the last house. This was the fortress-like building that Bálint had seen from the other side of the valley on his previous visit. It stood completely isolated far away from the others. Bálint's little caravan stopped outside a massive oak door, which clearly led into a courtyard in front of the main building. Bálint waited a little behind the others while the *gyorniks,* led by Krisán Györgye, hurried up to the front door and started knocking fiercely. From inside could be heard the furious barking of the three guard-dogs, and they set up such a clamour that even Krisán had to bellow at the top of his voice if anyone was to hear him. Krisán stayed at the door, hammering hard against the great oak beams and shouting as if his lungs would burst. Inside the house and compound nothing stirred except the dogs. It was as if they alone inhabited the house. Nothing else moved. The veranda of the house, which was visible from the road, was deserted and there was no sign of life behind the iron grills covering all the windows. "Perhaps this Rusz isn't at home!" said Bálint to Krisán. At this moment, above the cruel line of broken glass protecting the top of the great stone outer wall there appeared the head of a young boy.

"What do you want?" he asked timidly.

"The *mariasza* wants to see *Domnu* Rusz. Open the doors for his Lordship or I'll break them down," shouted Krisán Györgye, and he swung his great axe above his head and let out a stream of curses.

The boy had disappeared, and in a few seconds one of the doors was opened. Bálint rode in while the dogs were kept at bay by the *gyorniks'* long staves and by the stones hurled at them. As soon as Bálint reached the foot of the steps leading up to the entrance of the house, a tall, narrow-shouldered man appeared on the veranda. Abády looked him over carefully. The man's face was completely hairless and covered in wrinkles like that of an old woman. He had tiny eyes and his hair was longer than was then usual. He wore a grey suit of city clothes with the tails of his shirt hanging loose from under his jacket, which gave him a surprisingly broad-hipped look. At the sight of Abády he started bowing obsequiously and wringing his hands. "So this is the wicked and terrible monster feared by everyone!" thought Bálint. "So this is Rusz Pántyilimon!"

"Why are you here? What do you want of me?" asked Rusz in a frightened voice.

"Rusz Pántyilimon!" said Bálint sternly, "I wish to speak with you!"

He dismounted and, going up the steps, was nervously shown by Rusz into a living-room, which opened off one end of the veranda. Rusz kept turning as they went, looking back suspiciously at the grim faces of the mountain men that formed Baunt's band *oïgyorniks.* Honey sat down on the top step and the others remained below. When Rusz saw this he realised that all was well as long as Honey stayed where he was. Then he followed Bálint nervously indoors. The men in the forecourt were still discussing the Pejkoja affair, just as they had been the previous night and all through that morning's trek. Once again there was no general agreement. Zsukucíó and the two younger *gyorniks* believed that, although no-one stood a chance against Rusz as long as he was supported by the *domnu notar* and the *parintye* - the popa - they still hoped for a miracle if the *mariasza* should intervene. Krisán Györgye, himself a violent man, held that *la noptye* was the only practicable solution; while Juanye Vomului remained silent. He, as a well-to-do and respectable man, had been unwise enough the previous evening to suggest that those who incurred debts ought to be man enough to settle them. This had caused such an uproar that he had shut his mouth and hardly opened it since.

The room that Bálint was ushered into was small and airless. Bálint sat down at once on a bench above which hung a holy icon and took out his notes. Speaking deliberately and dispassionately he went through the history of the affair as it had been reported to him by the village people. He then told Rusz of their offer - "...which" he said firmly, "...I find fair and reasonable!"

Standing in front of him and shifting his weight restlessly from one long spindly leg to the other, Pántyilimon listened to what Bálint had to say. At the

same time he moved his head like a horse with the habit of 'weaving*. It was not clear whether this was the result of panic, fright or excitement, or whether it was a habitual nervous tic. When Bálint had finished, he hesitated a few seconds before replying and, when he did so, seemed to have difficulty in getting out the words, "Can't be done, please; can't be done!" "Can't? Very well then, we must think of something else!" said Bálint, forcing as much menace as he could into his tone. "I shall hire a lawyer and fight you myself. I shall make the case my own. According to the law you have no right, no right at all, to the sum you are claiming. You are limited to receiving back the original loan plus 8% annual interest - not a penny more. I shall instruct my lawyers to insist that your behaviour to these people constitutes a criminal offence, which, you may like to know, carries a penalty of two years' imprisonment!"

"Can't be done, please; can't be done!" was all that Rusz managed to get out as he stood squirming in front of Bálint.

"Yes, it can be done! What you are doing is no less than a felony - extorting between three and four hundred percent! How could you?"

"Please! It isn't all true, and it isn't only me. Please! I too have to pay dear to get money... it's very expensive!"

"And from whom do you get it, may I ask?"

The former teacher was still weaving about, but now there was a hint of a smile buried in his wrinkled face. He did not answer the question but went on,

"Expensive money, very expensive... and much losses, very much... his Lordship not know how it is on mountain. Land register book is never in order, many men there only in grandfather's name still. People here like that; one day here, one day not here. They go away and I see no more, never. Money not paid, man gone. Cannot do anything. I pay, I lose much money... I have to... much loss, always loss..." and he went on in his broken Hungarian repeating the same feeble arguments and reiterating that it wasn't his money, and that as he only had a tiny profit from the whole affair there was nothing he could do.

"Well, then, go to your principals! Let them relent!" interrupted Bálint.

"Can't be done, please; can't be done!"

"All right then, but I warn you of two things. The first warning is both for you and for your charming associates; I shall prosecute this case as if it were my own. The second is for you alone. Since I have come to the mountains, I have found out how desperate these people are and how much they hate you. It is my duty to warn you of this. From now on you hold your fate in your own hands!"

Pántyilimon shrugged his shoulders: "I know, please, bad people, bad people... bad... bad..."

Bálint left the room while the money-lender stood aside bowing and wringing his hands. He descended the steps rapidly, jumped onto his horse and road swiftly away followed by Honey and the *gyorniks.* The huge oak entrance gates swung shut behind them, and the dogs could still be heard barking as they rode swiftly down the hill, through the village, and back to their road.

*

On the train back to Kolozsvár Bálint thought over the whole affair and found himself more and more annoyed by the part that he had allowed himself to play. He had done it again. Once more he had become personally involved.

He should never have promised his help to the men of Pejkoja, but weakly he had allowed himself to be carried away by the old man's talk of his grandfather and by his fear of what the evil-faced Turturika might do if they all decided upon *la noptye.* And now he had gotten right into the middle of their fight with the money-lender, and what had begun as disinterested mediation had ended in personal involvement. Now, if he did not succeed in winning the case for the people of Pejkoja, his own prestige would suffer in the eyes of the mountain people. The case would not be easy. He never doubted the identity of Rusz's silent anonymous partners. These were obviously the Roumanian priest from Gyurkuca and the notary Gaszton Simó. Between them they would not miss a trick, however dishonest, to see that Rusz was exonerated. In their own world they wielded great power, and they had the unutterable advantage of being always there, on the spot where they could frighten people and put pressure on them in a hundred different ways. Whereas he, Bálint, could only occasionally come among them. During his rare visits they put their trust in him, but if he were not there what would happen...? Obviously he would have to find a lawyer who was not only prepared to accept the case but who would himself be trusted by the people of the mountain.

Bálint thought for a long time until at last inspiration came to him: Aurél Timisán. He was the perfect candidate; he was a lawyer and a Roumanian who sat in parliament to defend the interests of his fellow Roumanians. The peasants would respect him and do as he said, and he might even be able to influence the popa himself. Of all people surely Aurél Timisán had more chance than any of settling this affair properly - maybe even without taking it to court. He was generally known to be an honest man. Bálint congratulated himself and decided to visit him as soon as possible, telling himself that the old radical was sure to agree to help, for it was entirely a question of protecting impoverished Roumanians. After several telephone calls in the morning Bálint managed to make an appointment to see Timisán in the early afternoon. The

old man received him in his smoking room. "This is an honour indeed!" said Timisan with an ironic smile under his huge white moustaches. "His lordship dares to visit me, who spent a year in the prison at Vác! See! There is proof, on the wall behind you!" and he pointed to a large photograph in a heavy frame which portrayed a group of eight men. Bálint's host was easily recognised from the great sweep of his moustaches, though of course they were then still black. Bálint asked about the others and was told that they were all his fellow defendants in the famous 'Memorandum' trial. "And who is this?" asked Abády, pointing to a man seated at the centre of the group who had not been identified by the lawyer. "Ah" said Timisan, "he was the governor of the prison. He was very good to us and so we - at least that's how we put it then - decided to pay him this honour!"

The two men sat down facing each other in large armchairs upholstered in that Paisley-printed velveteen that was then all the vogue in well-to-do middle-class homes. "I did not come to continue our last discussion," said Bálint, "but I should be grateful, Mr. Deputy, for your advice and help in a legal dispute in which I am interested. It concerns the welfare of a group of Roumanian peasants, and therefore I am hoping that you will be interested." He then took out his notes and told the whole story, ending up with Rusz's rejection of the offer made by the men of Pejkoja. He added that expense was no object and that he, Bálint, would guarantee to see the matter through to the end.

Timisan heard him out in silence. Then he looked up; but instead of asking any question pertinent to the story Bálint had related, he asked,

"Tell me, why does your Lordship mind what happens to these people?"

Bálint was so surprised that for a moment he did not know what to say. It was so much a part of his nature, and upbringing, that he should do what he could to protect those in need that he was unable, at such short notice, to put his motives into words. At last he said:

"It's so appallingly unjust! This sort of thing should not be allowed! I understand, Mr. Deputy, that you advise the Unitá Bank, which, through the popa Timbus, supplies this Rusz with the money he lends out. Surely if the bank gets to know how their funds are being misused, they'll issue a warning so that the money-lenders will be forced to give up this sort of extortion, and we'll be able to rescue their unfortunate victims!" Timisan explained, rather as if he were giving a public lecture, that the bank was only concerned to receive regularly the interest on the money that it lent out. If their loans were correctly amortised, what was done with the money was not their affair. Timisan spoke for some time, coolly and professionally.

"But, Mr. Deputy, doesn't it shame you personally when you hear of cases like this? These are your own people and they are being ruined. You represent them in parliament, you speak about their 'rights'. Surely you will defend them?"

"That is politics."

"Politics? Politics have nothing to do with this. Here we have some poor mountain people who need help!"

"That too!" the old deputy smiled, "Just so!" He paused again and thought for a moment before going on: "Your Lordship is full of goodwill and you honour me with your visit. You will understand that I am not often honoured by visits from Hungarian noblemen!" He laughed dryly, then went on: "...and because of this I shall give your Lordship an explanation. Centuries ago this country was conquered by the swords of your ancestors and so the great Hungarian-owned estates were formed. In these days we have to find other means of getting what we want. We need a wealthy middle class and up until now this class does not exist. Most of the Roumanian intellectuals like myself are the sons of poor Roumanian priests who were the only ones among us to be properly educated. Do you see that picture? It is of my father who was dean of Páncélcsah." He pointed to the wall where, over the souvenir of the prison at Vác, there hung an almost lifesize portrait in oils of a venerable popa with a huge beard: it looked as if it had been copied from a photograph. Timisán went on:

"We are all equal, and we have no means. We have therefore decided that, no matter how, we must create a wealthy middle class. And that is what we are doing. Our bank furnishes the original funds and, apart from other businesses, it lends money to certain people we believe can be trusted firstly to build up their own fortunes and then to use those fortunes for political purposes. Naturally these people have to deal with - you would say exploit - poor Roumanian peasants and that is only natural because they have no-one else to exploit! Were there no victims when your marauding ancestors over-ran our country? Well, it's the same today, but the difference is that you did it on horseback and wearing coats of mail! So much for glory! Hail to the conquering hero! Perhaps it was all more picturesque in those days, more decorative, more 'noble'!" and he gave an ironic note to the word 'noble* before laughing wryly. "But we are more modest. We are modern people, simple and grey and not decorative at all!" The cold cruel glint that had lit up his eyes as he spoke now faded. "I have never said anything like this to anyone before - and you won't hear it from any-one else. If any of your Hungarians raised the matter, we'd deny it, naturally; but then you are not likely to, for Hungarians only think in political terms!"

Timisán laughed again. It was not a pleasant sound. Then he said:

"Your Lordship will understand from what I have said that I can be of no help to you and, if you will forgive the presumption, I would advise your Lordship not to bother with such matters!"

Bálint rose from his chair and shook hands automatically. He was perturbed and upset by what he had just heard. Now the old man spoke again, his voice full of compassion, fatherly, concerned as if he himself were moved.

"I tell you all this because I am an old man with much experience. And I am filled with pity for your goodwill... which is so very rare..." He walked to the door to show Bálint out.

"Thank you for your visit," he said.

...Up in the mountains it had been snowing hard for two days. Almasko was already blanketed in snow, as was the whole Kalotaszeg district. The wolves started to appear. As soon as this become known to Honey, he cut up some goat meat and poisoned it with strychnine, threaded the pieces on lengths of wire and going to the edge of the forests, tied them to low boughs of pine and juniper. He covered the whole region and making sure that it was placed wherever the presence of wolves had been reported, in the woods beside the waterfall in the district of Sztenyisara and in the country around Pejkoja; everywhere that the wolves were known to gather. That night, his work finished, Honey returned to his forester's hut in Scrind.

That night, too, a band of silent men left their houses in Pejkoja. They were all dressed alike, in felt jackets, rough peasant's boots and black sheepskin hats. Each man, as always, carried an axe and a long wooden staff. One of them also carried something else, something that hung on long wires, red and chunky, like an outsize bouquet held upside down. Without making a sound they moved quickly with sure movements of men used to the ways of the forest through the heavily falling snow.

Although it was pitch dark and the paths were covered, they found their way unerringly. For a long time they walked down to the valley of the Szaka and then up onto the crest of the mountain on the far side. Finally they left the forests and emerged by the peak below which Bálint's caravan had formed on leaving Rusz Pántyilimon's house. Now they only had a hundred yards or so to go.

The leader of the band, Turturika, called back:

"Moy Kula!" he said softly. "Go ahead with the meat and throw it in. If the dogs make no noise, rattle the door so that they can hear you. Mind you chuck the meat about so that they all get some!"

Young Kula, for it was he that had carried the poisoned bouquet, went ahead. He had agreed to do that for the others, but only that, and only because he knew that he must. After he had gone only a few steps, he was swallowed up in the falling snow. The rest of them remained where they were, leaning on their long sticks like shepherds on watch. Soon, though slightly muffled by the curtain of snow, they could hear the dogs barking. The first sounds seemed to come from further away down the hill but then the barking came from nearer

at hand, probably from the upper corner of the fortress-like compound - it was the sound of dogs fighting over something. Kula came back and joined the men who had been waiting. Soon the barking stopped; but the men from Pejkoja did not move. They waited for a long time, for the people of the mountain are patient. They had to wait, so time did not matter. After an hour had gone by, Turturika gave a few brief orders and they started off downhill. Two men with axes went to the door while the others went to that part of the wall nearest the mountain, threw a felt jacket over the jagged broken glass that was fixed along the top, and climbed in.

The next day the enquiries started. Gaszton Simó came to the village and, instead of bringing the usual two gendarmes, he came accompanied by four of them, all heavily armed. This was unheard-of and caused much comment in the village.

The great oaken doors were still intact, locked and barred. The house too seemed untouched until one saw that smoke was seeping out of the windows darkening the walls above with black smears of soot, and that part of the roof had caved in where the flames in the living room had caught the b^ams above. The falling snow had nearly extinguished the fire, but it still smouldered inside where Rusz Pántyilimon lay dead upon the floor of his room. Here everything had been smashed into small pieces and everything that could burn had been set alight. Obviously petrol had been poured everywhere, and there remained intact only one corner of the letter tray among the ashes of burnt papers and the icon on the wall in front of which the little oil lamp still glowed protected, no doubt, by the gusts of snow that had blown in through the broken windows. All this was quickly ascertained by the notary's inspection. Also the fact that the dogs - two of whom still had pieces of wire in their mouths - had been poisoned by strychnine. That was all; nothing else. The pretty little servant boy, Rusz's slave, who had run down the hill to the village and hidden in the mill as soon as the men had entered the house, could tell them nothing. He had heard a noise. He had looked out and seen some men. It was dark and the men were dark too. He saw that there were some more outside the gate so he had climbed the wall and fled. His hands had been badly cut by the g.'i ss and he had run bleeding profusely, as fast as he could and as far as he could.

That was all he knew.

"Whom did you see?"

"I don't know!"

"Didn't you recognise anyone?"

"Nobody!"

"How were they dressed?"

"I don't know!"

No matter how hard they tried or how much they threatened the lad, they could get nothing else out of him. Of course it was true that he was still shaking with fright, and it was always possible that even if he knew more he would never dare admit it.

"What time did all this happen?"

"I don't know... it was night."

"All right. Early at night... or late at night?"

"I don't know. It was night. *La noptyel"*

Later at the inquest nothing more was discovered. Many people were summoned and questioned, for many people had been heard to utter threats against the hated money-lender. Every man who owed money to Rusz was a suspect and naturally this included all the men of Pejkoja. But no-one knew anything, no-one confessed or admitted to even hearing anything. That night everyone had been at home, everyone had been asleep. The story was always the same. They were morose and sullen, shrugging their shoulders. They knew nothing; they had all been at home in their beds, asleep. No-one even tried telling lies or making up complicated alibis by which they might have been trapped. "It was snowing. I was at home, asleep...!"

Nothing was ever discovered.

*

It was not until a month later that Abády heard the news, reported to him in a letter from Honey. Honey had been summoned for questioning. They wanted to know where he had hung the meat that was to poison the wolves. He told them in exact detail. It is true that no poisoned meat was found near Pejkoja but then it wasn't found anywhere. It could have fallen into the snow and been long covered or it could have been dragged away and eaten somewhere else. One or two dead wolves were found, the corpses of others were no doubt deep under the snow. The only person who had been with Honey and who also knew where the meat had been placed was the forest guard, Tódor Páven. He was also questioned but he had returned with Honey afterwards and had spent the rest of the night with him in Scrind. Neither of them had moved from there until the next day when Rusz was already dead. Honey vouched for Tódor and Tódor vouched for Honey, who wrote all this to his master knowing that he would be interested in everything that affected the people in the mountains.

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