

# HS

# HUNGARIAN STUDIES

2000

## CONTENTS

*Volume 14*  
*Number 1*

*László Borhi: Some Questions on Hungarian–Soviet Relations, 1945–1955*

*Thomas Cooper: Dezső Kosztolányi and Intertextuality*

*Ernő Kulcsár Szabó: Aspekte des (Un)Vollkommenen*

*Anikó Sohár: Pseudotranslations in Hungary after 1989*

*Adam Makkai, ed.: In Quest of 'Miracle Stag': The Poetry of Hungary*

*(Reviews by Richard Aczel, Thomas E. Cooper, Christof Scheele,  
Mihály Szegedy-Maszák)*

# HUNGARIAN STUDIES

a Journal of the International Association of Hungarian Studies  
(Nemzetközi Magyar Filológiai Társaság)

---

*Hungarian Studies* appears twice a year. It publishes original essays – written in English, French and German – dealing with aspects of the Hungarian past and present. Multidisciplinary in its approach, it is an international forum of literary, philological, historical and related studies. Each issue contains about 160 pages and will occasionally include illustrations. All manuscripts, books and other publications for review should be sent to the editorial address. Only original papers will be published and a copy of the Publishing Agreement will be sent to the authors of papers accepted for publication. Manuscripts will be processed only after receiving the signed copy of the agreement.

*Hungarian Studies* is published by

AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ  
H-1117 Budapest, Prielle Kornélia u. 4  
Homepage: [www.akkr.hu](http://www.akkr.hu)

Order should be addressed to AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ,  
H-1519 Budapest, P.O. Box 245, Fax: (36-1) 464-8221, E-mail: [kiss.s@akkr.hu](mailto:kiss.s@akkr.hu)

Subscription price for Volume 14 (2000) in 2 issues USD 130.00, including normal postage,  
airmail delivery USD 20.00

*Editorial address*

H-1014 Budapest, Országház u. 30. Telephone: (36-1) 355-9930  
Mailing address: H-1250 Budapest, P.O. Box 34, E-mail: [nmft@iif.hu](mailto:nmft@iif.hu)  
Homepage: [www.bibl.u-szeged.hu/filo](http://www.bibl.u-szeged.hu/filo)

*Editor-in-Chief*

Mihály Szegedy-Maszák

*Editors*

Richard Aczel  
Gábor Beveczky  
József Jankovics  
Peter Schimert

*Advisory Council*

Loránd Benkő, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Budapest; László Kósa, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Budapest; Péter Rákos, University of Prague; Denis Sinor, Indiana University, Bloomington; Miklós Szabolcsi, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest; Bo Wickman, University of Uppsala

© Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 2000

# HUNGARIAN STUDIES

---

VOLUME 14, 2000

CONTENTS

NUMBER 1

---

<i>László Borhi</i> : Some Questions on Hungarian–Soviet Relations, 1949–1955 . . . . .	1
<i>Thomas Cooper</i> : Dezső Kosztolányi and Intertextuality. Anticipations of Post-Modern Literary Criticism . . . . .	45
<i>Anikó Sohár</i> : Thy Speech Bewrayeth Thee: Thou Shalt Not Steal the Prestige of Foreign Literatures. Pseudotranslations in Hungary after 1989 . . . . .	55
<i>Ernő Kulcsár Szabó</i> : Aspekte des (Un)Vollkommenen. Fragment und vollendetes Kunstwerk im Horizontwandel der Sprachlichkeit . . . . .	85
<i>Péter Hajdu</i> : Metaphorische Geschichteninteraktion. Die Taube im Käfig des Kálmán Mikszáth . . . . .	103
<i>Péter Zirkuli</i> : Mythes des origines et hypothèse linguistique chez Sándor Körösi Csoma . . . . .	113
<i>Mirko Dombrowsky</i> : Zu Péter Lengyels Cobblestone . . . . .	121

## REVIEWS

Adam Makkai (ed.): In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag': The Poetry of Hungary. An Anthology of Hungarian Poetry from the 13th Century to the Present in English Translation. Vol. I ( <i>Richard Aczel, Christof Scheele, Thomas E. Cooper, Mihály Szegedy-Maszák</i> ) . . . . .	127
Der literaturgeschichtliche Fahrplan ( <i>Kristóf Szabó</i> ) . . . . .	139
The Kiss: 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Hungarian Short Stories ( <i>Frank J. Kearful</i> ) . . . . .	142
László Kósa (ed.): A Cultural History of Hungary ( <i>James T. Wilson</i> ) . . . . .	147
Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy: A magyar nyelv stilisztikája [Hungarian Stylistics] ( <i>Laura Knudsen</i> ) . . . . .	150





# SOME QUESTIONS ON HUNGARIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS 1949-1955

LÁSZLÓ BORHI

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN,  
U.S.A.

By late 1949 the bipolar structure of the world had already taken shape. Both the United States and the Soviet Union had decided that not only was there no longer any ground for their cooperation, but to continue cooperating would menace their respective positions in the world, if not their very existence. Hence the most pressing issues that faced the victorious powers remained unresolved. No collective peace treaty was signed with Japan, and Germany ended up as two separate states. The division of Germany had not been premeditated, but it was probably inevitable.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Stalin, at least, may have kept hoping for its unification until his note of 1952 was turned down by the Western powers.<sup>2</sup> World politics seemed now to function as a zero-sum game: a loss for one superpower constituted a gain for the other, and vice-versa. A case in point was China, where Mao Tse-tung's victory meant the "loss" of that country for the United States. This loss was exploited by Stalin through the signing with China of a pact of friendship that guaranteed military, political and economic gains for the Soviet Union. In exchange Moscow recognized Chinese sovereignty and the Chinese communist party's preeminence in leading revolutionary movements in the Asian region.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, the North Korean invasion of South Korea received support from the Kremlin, which had come to be convinced by Kim Il Sung that a revolutionary situation existed in Korea. Stalin, who thought that a friendly regime ruling the whole Korean peninsula was needed in order to hold off a seemingly inevitable Japanese revanchist invasion of the Soviet Union, agreed to support Kim on the assumption that the United States would not intervene.<sup>4</sup> This turned out to be erroneous, and Washington launched a counterattack under United Nations auspices. Learning from the experiences of European diplomacy in the late 1930s, when the democratic powers had mistaken each of Hitler's aggressive steps as Germany's final move rather than as what they actually were, the stepping-stones for further gains, the United States regarded the Korean aggression as a mere prelude to further communist expansion orchestrated by Moscow.<sup>5</sup> The Korean aggression as a result gave a strong impetus for the United States to drastically increase its military preparedness. The division of the European continent

was complete. Political relations between East and West were so hostile that virtually no contact remained between them. Relations had degenerated into mutually slanderous political campaigns; and the Soviet "lager" lined up unequivocally behind the Soviet Union in all questions of international relations. In fact, the communist regimes of the people's democracies by and large identified their own national interests with those of the Soviet Union; and they shelved mutual grievances to increase bloc solidarity. A rift appeared within the Soviet bloc itself, as Iosip Broz Tito's otherwise Stalinist Yugoslavia was ostracized from the family of fraternal communist nations. Moscow's allies slavishly followed an anti-Yugoslav course to such a degree that minor clashes on the Hungarian-Yugoslav border, for example, became every-day occurrences. The Soviet bloc embarked on a campaign of military build-up in 1948, which, as a result of Stalin's insistence that the newly created people's democracies had to share the burden of preparing for the seemingly inevitable military conflict with the "imperialists," was drastically accelerated in January 1951. The continental division involved to a considerable extent economic issues. On the one hand the United States introduced an economic embargo starting in 1948 against the Soviet bloc and was joined reluctantly by its European allies. On the other hand the Soviet Union, which had failed to secure East-West trade on its own terms, imposed a policy of autarchy on its allies and made preparations for close economic cooperation and even coordination among the members of the Soviet orbit.<sup>6</sup> The American imposed embargo was never watertight because Western Europe remained strongly interested in trade with the East and vice versa. Nevertheless, the flow of ideas and people came to a virtual standstill. Western ideas only reached people behind the iron curtain illegally, through radio broadcasts; and except for some limited travel for business purposes East Europeans were not allowed to visit the non-communist world.

The Soviet export of Stalinism introduced a large degree of political and economic uniformity on nations with such divergent backgrounds as Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. The Kremlin also tried to shape these societies to the Soviet Union's own image by attempting to destroy social autonomies, that is to eliminate much of what makes a society a society.<sup>7</sup> Explained in terms of realpolitik, the export of Stalinism allowed the Soviet Union to secure its conquests in Eastern Europe by creating a political system that could exist only through dependence on the Soviet Union and by which the new rulers of Eastern Europe would give their loyalty to Stalin or else be swept from power.<sup>8</sup> In Hungary's case the key to Soviet control was the unquestioned ideological obedience of its rulers, even though in practical matters they sometimes represented slightly different positions. The role of ideological commitment cannot be overestimated, and it was exactly this commitment that made the real difference in the control the Soviets had *before* and *after* the communist seizure of power. This made continuous, direct Soviet interference in Hungarian affairs unnecessary all the more so, since the first secretary of the party

Mátyás Rákosi, and possibly others as well, sought policy guidance from the Soviets, sometimes even directly from Stalin, on a regular basis.<sup>9</sup> As Rákosi explained in his memoirs, in communist usage “advice” in actual fact meant “instruction”.<sup>10</sup> Of course this was complemented by the “hard” components of the Soviet presence: the Soviet army and the significant number of advisors who worked in all the ministries, the army, the police, the political police, and the economic establishments. One would expect that these advisors were imposed on the country, but the records suggest that the Hungarian leaders actually asked for them.<sup>11</sup> This fact, in turn, reinforces what was said earlier about the Hungarian leadership’s voluntary obedience and commitment to the Soviet Union. Sometimes the Soviets did not send advisors on time, and the Hungarians had to keep asking for them. For example, on one occasion Moscow dragged its feet about sending the three military advisors requested by a Hungarian delegation in negotiations with Bulganin and Shtemenko.<sup>12</sup>

Even so, Hungary was not sovereign in the years under discussion. Kenneth Waltz argued that to “say that a state is sovereign means that it decides for itself how it will cope with its external and internal problems including whether or not to seek assistance from others and in doing so to limit its freedom by making commitments to them”. While Waltz recognized that constraints restrict a nation’s freedom to act, he would not regard a nation as sovereign unless it surrendered its freedom of action voluntarily.<sup>13</sup> Hungary did not surrender its freedom of action voluntarily, and the leaders of the regime, who sought Soviet guidance for their actions, were put in place and kept in power as a result of foreign interference. The Rákosi regime not only owed its existence to Moscow, but even its political structure was determined there, and it made important appointments only after consulting with the Soviets. Hence, for example, in 1950 the chief of staff of the Hungarian army was appointed “in agreement with the Soviet advisor comrades”.<sup>14</sup> In fact, in a time of crisis in June 1953 Moscow actually intervened directly to implement a significant change in the make-up of the Hungarian leadership and to steer the country to a new political course.

Hungary adopted the Soviet political structure not only in the formal, bureaucratic sense but also in that the highest party decision-making organ, the Political Committee was not consulted in the most important policy issues. In June 1953, when Rákosi was demoted in Moscow, the members of the Politburo felt free to air their frustration for not having been consulted, for their views having been disregarded, for their opinions not having been solicited, and for having been intimidated to keep silent. According to Politburo member Károly Kiss, Rákosi, Gerő, Farkas and Révai decided on issues of national importance during the course of discussions among themselves. The most important matters were decided in such conversations and were not addressed either in the Politburo or the Central Committee.<sup>15</sup> A Committee of Defense with three members was created on Sta-

lin's advice in 1950. It included party leader Rákosi, Minister of Defense Mihály Farkas, and Ernő Gerő.<sup>16</sup> This committee was in charge of all issues related to political and economic affairs, as well as national defense, and was not responsible to any other organ. After 1953 the situation changed in the sense that many momentous political issues came to be decided by the Political Committee. These included: the dismissal of Imre Nagy and subsequently that of Mátyás Rákosi, the fate of Mihály Farkas, and issues such as the fate of the Hungarian-Soviet joint companies and the Soviet-Hungarian uranium agreement. On some occasions, as during the critical debates on the fate of Rákosi in July 1956, a Soviet representative was present and offered his views, but he did not decide the outcome. The judicial branch of government was subordinated to the executive branch to such an extent that, for example, in the Rajk trial the Hungarian Workers' Party (HWP) leadership decided not only that the defendants would be found guilty, but also what sentences – mostly death – they would receive. Even before the trial Rákosi confided to Baranov that Rajk would be tried and then executed.<sup>17</sup> Although the parliament existed, it had no role in legislation. Laws were passed in the form of government decrees, which in turn were formulated by the party leadership. To make sure that the Parliament would cause no inconvenience, its members were almost exclusively drawn from the party. The exact percentage of non-party members was decided prior to the elections.<sup>18</sup>

Communication with the Kremlin was conducted through several channels. One obvious choice was the Soviet embassy in Budapest, and this line of communication was especially active in the summer months of 1956, when Soviet Ambassador Iuri Andropov regularly consulted with Hungarian party leaders. A more direct contact to the Kremlin was offered by the so-called VCh line, which connected the HWP's first secretary to the Stalin secretariat. This line of direct communication was opened in 1949, but one had already existed in Sofia for Dimitrov, and there were two such lines in Warsaw: one for Minc and the other for the Polish central committee. Such lines of communication were also at the disposal of the Soviet ambassador and the military attaché.<sup>19</sup> The first Hungarian record for its use dates from 1953, but it had almost certainly been used beforehand.<sup>20</sup> Rákosi is also known to have sent messages to his mentor and superior in Moscow in ciphered telegrams, the Russian texts of which were collected in hard bound diaries. These were addressed to comrade Filipov or a variant of this pseudonym. The Hungarian party boss asked for Moscow's policy guidance in twenty-two such messages, but the *Vozhd* seldom bothered to answer. His silence was probably taken as acquiescence.<sup>21</sup> Rákosi also sent letters, which were delivered to the addressees by political emissaries. Similarly to the ciphered telegrams, these contained proposals and requests to be heard and acted upon in the Kremlin. Finally, Rákosi was received personally by Stalin in Moscow, or elsewhere in the Soviet Union, on eight or nine occasions. Unfortunately no written record of these meet-

ings has been found. The lower level communication, for example between Hungarian ministries and their Soviet counterparts, was done through the well-paid Soviet advisors, who worked in Hungary.

Rákosi was surrounded by a cult of adulation, but as he himself admitted, he was only a “disciple” of Stalin. Nevertheless, by his own admission, Rákosi considered himself to be the best of these disciples. Indeed, the international hierarchy was scrupulously observed by the state controlled media, as well as in every other forum. The ultimate light, wisdom and guidance came from the Soviet Union in general and from Stalin in particular. Prior to 1949 this had not been so. On one occasion the party leadership, including Gerő, Farkas and Rákosi, received strong criticism for disregarding the interests of the Soviet Union in economic, cultural and propaganda affairs, for distancing themselves from the Soviet Union in their fear of being branded as Moscow’s agents, and for deviating from the correct line toward a “nationalist” tendency, the most serious error of all.<sup>22</sup> The Hungarian dictator, whether he knew about the criticism or not, made a point of not repeating these mistakes and did his very best to follow what he thought Stalin, whom he considered the most fit to serve as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’s (CPSU) first secretary,<sup>23</sup> wanted him to do. Rákosi’s recently published memoirs support the view that like Molotov, he remained a Stalinist to his last breath. He was seemingly not after wealth, or even after power for its own sake. He had devoted his life to the great cause and no amount of corpses, blood, sweat, or tears could stand in his way. He regretted nothing he had done. He knew his own and his country’s limits. This did not mean that the Hungarian communists and Rákosi did not each have their own separate agendas. On some occasions the Hungarians strove to assert Hungary’s interests vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. This was particularly true in the effort to reduce the size of the payments demanded by the Soviets under various pretexts. On at least two occasions the Hungarian communist leaders sought to protect the interests of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia after the treaty of friendship had been signed with Czechoslovakia. Rákosi objected to the Slovakian policy towards the Hungarian national minority, which “contradicted the Stalinist nationality policy, as well as the treatment of Hungarians in Romania and the Soviet Union”. He wrote a critique of an article that appeared in the journal *Novoe Vremia*, calling its suggestion to limit the political right of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia “harmful”. He demanded that the journal publicly renounce this “incorrect attitude”. The Hungarian party’s chief ideologist József Révai asked his Soviet counterpart Suslov whether the Hungarians could raise the issue in the Informburo and asked for the help of the “fraternal parties” to resolve it. Suslov, however, recommended a bilateral approach.<sup>24</sup> As the historian János M. Rainer has argued, Rákosi on occasion produced his own initiatives.<sup>25</sup> Some of these were bold indeed and suggest that he might have been seeking some kind of a leading role for himself in the region in

pursuing ideological battles. He tried to play an active role against Yugoslavia by recommending that an émigré Yugoslav press organ be edited in Moscow, or one of the people's democracies (no doubt he was thinking of Hungary), a "unified Yugoslav center" and an illegal communist party on Yugoslav territory be set up, and military partisan activity against his southern neighbor be organized.<sup>26</sup> He even suggested armed struggle against Tito.<sup>27</sup>

Rákosi's anti-Yugoslav fervor became apparent in the way that he pursued the Rajk trial. In this show trial Rákosi attempted to stretch Moscow's leash the farthest, and his personal ambitions – as well as those of Mihály Farkas – became most apparent. Similar trials were taking place all over Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria, Albania, Poland and in the Soviet Union itself. Although the Rajk trial was directly, or indirectly, initiated by the Soviet KGB [?], the size of the campaign, the selection of the defendants, many of the trial's motives, and the sentences were contrived by the Hungarian government in general and Rákosi in particular.<sup>28</sup> While Rajk was tortured to obtain the necessary confession, based on which the case was prepared, in Poland Gomulka was arrested only in 1951, was not tortured, and did not confess to anything. The Polish authorities could not come up with a case against him, and as a result Gomulka escaped Rajk's fate.<sup>29</sup> The charge that Rajk had been a police agent of the former regime was developed by the Hungarian political police, while the other concept, namely that the former Minister of the Interior was a Titoist agent came from the KGB and Rákosi. The Hungarian party leader could not have known that his role in the show trial would turn against him and prove to be his demise. At the time, however, the Rajk affair seemed to provide a chance for Rákosi to refute the earlier accusations from the Soviets that his position in the struggle against the Hungarian Trotskyists had been incorrect and had impeded the struggle of the Soviet and Hungarian state security organs against them. By "revealing" the Rajk case's international connotations, Rákosi "helped" to "unmask" the enemy that had wormed its way into the ranks of the fraternal parties.<sup>30</sup> He spread the word that there existed "a unified spy ring" in the people's democracies, "especially in Czechoslovakia".<sup>31</sup> He then proceeded to pass along the details and the lists of spies to Prague, Bucharest and Warsaw. His main targets were the Czechoslovaks in general and Klement Gottwald in particular, whom he accused of not doing anything to unmask and reveal spies and enemies within his party. There may even have been a personal motive involved for Rákosi because Gottwald had pursued an unrelenting campaign against the Hungarians in Slovakia. Rákosi had protested against this campaign, and Gottwald had responded by refusing to talk to the Hungarian communist party. The ambitious Hungarian dictator penned a letter in which he named sixty-five alleged Anglo-American spies. Dissatisfied with the apparent lack of results, Rákosi sent his brother Zoltán Bíró to Prague. Bíró asked Gottwald what action the Czechs had taken in view of the Rákosi letter; and the Czechoslovak party leader re-

sponded that they had set up a trilateral commission and arrested fifteen people. Rákosi's envoy expressed his dismay that the Czech Ministry of the Interior was sabotaging the exposure of the spy ring because Interior Minister Nosek had been implicated in the confessions of the spies arrested in Hungary. Provoking his hosts even further, Bíró condemned the slowness of the tripartite commission and advocated the arrest of most of the suspects. Furthermore, he asked Gottwald whether "the Czechoslovak comrades were menaced by the treason of the Czechoslovak army's generals, and that of Svoboda in particular". Bíró was then assured that, just as the Hungarian army, the Czechoslovak army was also under constant cleansing. Gottwald was visibly troubled and asked whether the Rajk trial could be conducted without mentioning any of the Czechoslovak names. Bíró responded that the Czechs were underestimating the international significance of the Rajk case.<sup>32</sup> Rákosi then called the Soviets' attention to the fact that the Hungarians had unmasked Nosek and Clementis as spies. As Rákosi noted, "the Soviet organs and authorities give little assistance, what is more, they sometimes do not pay enough attention to the numerous spy groups that have been arrested by the Hungarians".<sup>33</sup>

Although Rákosi's international initiative seems to have lost steam, his domestic campaign against enemies inside and outside the party gained momentum. This process was in tune with the Stalinist dogma of the sharpening of the class struggle. "Political consolidation and the increase of the class struggle were not contradictory conditions," as the chief ideologist József Révai put it. According to the diabolic explanation, "as the enemy weakened, its resistance grew". Another leading communist also observed, "on the higher stage of development the class struggle intensifies" and this was "inescapable".<sup>34</sup> The class struggle was constantly increasing in Poland as well, where the dogma had been introduced in 1948 as a method to fight "right wing nationalist deviations" and enemies inside and outside the party.<sup>35</sup> On June 2, 1956 Rákosi talked to the Soviet ambassador, Ievgeni Kiselev about the need to arrest 500 social democrats in the "near future" and to "organize concentration camps for them". It didn't make a difference whether they were right wing or left wing, they were "all the same, informers all of them".<sup>36</sup> Rákosi later informed Stalin of his desire to arrest Marosán and Ries, the former social democrat leaders, and to organize open trials for them. Stalin agreed to their arrest, but wanted a closed trial.<sup>37</sup> Later other arrests followed, including those of Árpád Szakasits, who had been head of state for a while, János Kádár, a former Minister of the Interior, Sándor Zöld, Kádár's successor at the Ministry of the Interior, Gyula Kállai, the Foreign Minister, and even Ernő Szűcs, the deputy head of the secret police. Zöld knew what was waiting for him when he was dismissed by the party boss at a Politburo meeting on April 20, 1951. He went home, killed his family, and committed suicide.<sup>38</sup> The Hungarian Politburo was not consulted on such arrests, but "consented" to them after the event. There is no indication that Moscow instructed the Hungarians to make any of the arrests, but usu-



ally, although not always, gave its consent either expressly or by silence. In fact, historian János M. Rainer has noticed, on some occasions the Kremlin might even have exercised some restraint on the head of the HWP. Once Stalin prohibited the dismissals of Gábor Péter, the head of the secret police, and Mihály Farkas. "Why do you want to shoot Mihály Farkas?" and "What is wrong with Gábor Péter?" Stalin had asked. When Rákosi started to list their mistakes, the *Vozhd* waved him down, "leave them alone". Thus, Rákosi became convinced that the two would-be victims had gotten wind of what was in the making and had alerted their respective patrons, Bulganin and Beria, to save them.<sup>39</sup> Others were not so lucky. Heavy purges were carried out in the army and the air force; and "a whole line of officers, who had systematically disabled aircraft, had to be arrested".<sup>40</sup> The purges began with the cleansing of bourgeois saboteurs and the trial of Archbishop Mindszenty in 1949. These were followed by the proceedings against "left wing social democrats". This phase involved 431 people. The trials of army generals came next. In the Sólyom case forty-four people were convicted, and ten of them were executed. The continuing struggle against "clerical reaction" was marked by the trial of Archbishop Grósz.<sup>41</sup> It is not hard to see that the proceedings followed the pattern of similar trials as they had been developed in the Soviet Union during the 1930s.

On January 13, 1953 *Pravda* informed its readers that the Soviet security organs had unmasked a group of murderous Zionist doctors. The "Zionist doctors" were allegedly in the service of an "international Jewish bourgeois-nationalist organization, Joint, which had been established by American intelligence services". Historians differ as to what the precise purpose of the doctors' plot might have been. The possibility exists that it was a prelude to an all-out campaign against Soviet Jewry. On the other hand, in his recent book Vojtech Mastny has argued that the doctors' conspiracy to shorten the lives of distinguished patients may have had some foundation, and that there is no evidence to support that it signaled an all-out anti-Semitic campaign.<sup>42</sup> Be that as it may, it had a very concrete repercussion in Hungary. The communist daily *Szabad Nép* carried the *Pravda* report on the Zionist plot. A few days after a bomb exploded at the Soviet embassy in Israel, on February 11, 1953, which had sparked off massive arrests of Jewish intellectuals in the Soviet Union, Mátyás Rákosi, who was himself Jewish but who had been quite willing to exploit popular anti-Semitic sentiments for his political ends, delivered a speech to the HWP Politburo on the Zionist threat. He accused the United States of "mobilizing Zionism and Israel" to increase the work of spies and saboteurs in the people's democracies.<sup>43</sup> Rákosi explained that although one would think that the Catholic church was the largest center of espionage, in reality Zionism had gained prominence as a cover for spying because "Jews are everywhere". He then referred to the Rajk trial by saying that most of the people, who were sentenced to death, were "petit-bourgeois Jews," and in fact the original Hungarian concept had been to launch a campaign against Jewish

cosmopolitanism. Rákosi alluded to the recent arrest of the secret police's Jewish leader Gábor Péter, whom he accused of having worked with Nazi and Zionist police informers, and promised to "investigate" whether Zionists had infiltrated the party. Of this infiltration, Rákosi seemed to be convinced. He called for increased vigilance in view of the fact that the president of the Israelite religious community in Budapest had "turned out" to be a former "spy for the Gestapo". The drive against the Zionists would not be anti-Semitism. "Good" Jews, who supported the people's democracies, would not be persecuted. The allusion to Zionism as a center for American spying was by no means a coincidence. Although the trial was never staged because Stalin suddenly died, the preparations for a large anti-Semitic campaign had begun in the Fall of 1952. The Hungarian authorities had prepared various scenarios, all of which followed the pattern set by the Slansky trial in 1952.<sup>44</sup> According to Slansky's confession, American and Israeli leaders had agreed at a secret conference in 1947 that the Zionist organizations in Eastern Europe would be the center of anti-Communist espionage and subversion. In return the United States would support Israel. That is, Zionist agents had wormed their way into the higher echelons of Hungarian political life, the economy, and the state security organs. All of them had previously served the Gestapo. According to the preliminary hypothesis, Jewish conspirators could be found in the political police, in the Jewish religious organizations, and in important economic positions. They received their instructions from the World Jewish Congress and Joint and passed on intelligence to the United States secret service. Zionist engineers were sabotaging production; and Zionist doctors were standing ready to murder party and state leaders.

The first phase in the preparation for the "trial of trials" was the arrest of the leader and other high ranking officers of the ÁVH, or political police. Even though the ÁVH men had themselves been working on unmasking a Zionist conspiracy, they now found themselves accused of being Zionists themselves. On January 6, 1953, three days after Gábor Péter's arrest, Ernő Gerő, Mihály Farkas and Béla Vég instructed the ÁVH to pursue the matter along the following lines: Yugoslavia, American spying, the Horthy police and the Zionists. One doctor, a colonel of the ÁVH who was arrested, found himself accused among other things of several murders and of deliberately maltreating senior comrades. Some eighty to ninety people were detained, including Lajos Stöckler, the president of the National Representation of Hungarian Israelites. The great show trial never took place. The charges of Zionist conspiracy were dropped in the summer of 1953, and with the help of Soviet experts a new party line was initiated. Many of the suspects were let go. Gábor Péter and "his gang" stood trial for economic crimes, such as selling passports to rich people who wanted to leave the country. These charges were well-grounded. Their arrest provided a great opportunity for the HWP leaders to accuse Péter of "misleading" them about Rajk and the other communist victims

of the purges. It turned out that it was not Rákosi who was responsible, but Péter and his associates. In the summer of 1956 Péter took vengeance on Rákosi, helping to destroy him by revealing his former master's true role in the show trials of 1949.

The function of terror in a Stalinist society was to enforce compliance, to destroy pre-existing values, to break down preconceptions, to make it easier for the new revolutionary values to take root, and to facilitate the politicization of society. Stalinism was an ideology of perfection. Hence, by definition there could be no problems that could not be solved. Should a solution fail, failure could not be attributed to the ideology, only to antagonists. Consequently, there was no place for error, there were no accidents or honest mistakes.<sup>45</sup> In the implementation of terror against real and imagined "hostile elements," Hungary followed the Soviet model closely, not only because Moscow demanded it, but also because the country's rulers believed in the dictatorship of the proletariat. Rákosi agreed with Lenin's definition, "Rule founded on violence unconstrained by law".<sup>46</sup> Even one decade after his fall, Rákosi still believed that Stalin's definition of the *kulaks* remained valid. In 1955 almost seventy thousand people worked for the Ministry of the Interior. Most of them belonged to the border guards, or wore the uniform of one of the police organizations.<sup>47</sup> Their enemies were numerous. According to contemporary Soviet figures the cases of 362,000 people were taken to court in 1951, and additional administrative, meaning police, proceedings involved another half million.<sup>48</sup> Even so, in 1953 Zoltán Bíró, the deputy head of the Central Committee's Agitation and Propaganda Division, estimated that there were still around 500,000 hostile elements<sup>49</sup> in a country of less than ten million. Beria believed that 1,500,000 people had been subjected to legal proceedings prior to 1953.<sup>50</sup> Up to the end of the first quarter of 1953 alone the courts tried 650,000 people and sentenced 387,000; the police meted out punishment in 850,000 cases.<sup>51</sup> As a comparison, in Poland there were six million names on the list of "criminal and suspicious elements" in 1954, that is one third of the adult population. In 1950 thirty-five thousand political prisoners were held in Polish jails.<sup>52</sup> Of course the massive hunt for "enemies" did not cease after 1953. A note prepared by József Révai sheds light on the list of those the system regarded as enemies: Zionist and Hungarian bourgeois nationalists, the remnants of capitalists, *kulaks* and cosmopolitans. "It is impossible not to talk about the bourgeois remnants of ideology beside the remnants of the capitalist classes, which nourish the hostile forces. In Hungary these remnants are much larger and more dangerous than in the Soviet Union, because in Hungary there was hardly any struggle against them and the majority of our intelligentsia is bourgeois".<sup>53</sup> The chief targets were the former "ruling classes" and the *kulaks*. Rákosi borrowed Stalin's interpretation of the *kulaks* and considered them the most implacable enemies of Socialist construction. According to this view, the *kulaks* along with the former "ruling classes"

needed to be liquidated. In a campaign against the former ruling classes almost 13,000 were deported from Budapest in 1951 and forced to live in distant parts of the country – usually small villages – that the authorities had designated for them. They were compelled to give up their immovable property and could take with them only what they could carry. What they left behind was allocated to reliable cadres.

In fact, the enemy seemed to be everywhere: entrenched in the top and lower echelons of the party, in the ministries, in the factories, in the mines, and even within the Soviet-Hungarian joint companies. Thus, for example, saboteurs were discovered in the joint Soviet-Hungarian oil and bauxite companies, and oil proved to be a sensitive point for the Hungarian economy. With the nation's top geologist having been incarcerated in connection with the MAORT case, neither the Hungarians, nor their Soviet assistants were able to find new oil deposits to replace the existing, ageing oil fields. According to a report to the Politburo, the joint oil and bauxite companies had become the reservoirs of hostile elements. Shadowy figures, such as former "Horthyite" officers, or their sons, and former landowners, have swarmed in particular into the positions around the Soviet comrades and were creating an anti-Soviet atmosphere. They exploited their skills in Russian to foster antagonism among the Soviets and the Hungarians. The interpreters deliberately mistranslated in order to create conflicts.<sup>54</sup>

As elsewhere in Eastern Europe the judicial branch of government was reorganized in accordance with the Soviet model. The courts were supposed to protect the existing political system, and the Hungarian legal system adopted the Stalinist concept of presumed guilt. One did not have to commit a crime to be dangerous to society. If an individual could be expected to commit a crime, he could be sentenced. In one instance a certain István Szabó was tried by a military tribunal because his adopted son was charged with treason. The judge admitted that Szabó knew nothing about his son's alleged spying activities. Nevertheless Szabó was considered "dangerous to society since his close relative became a servant of the treasonous Titoist gangs, and through this he himself can be used for subversive activity against our people's democracy".<sup>55</sup> In order to make the system of persecution efficient, some 40,000 informers assisted the authorities.<sup>56</sup> In addition, the obligation of people to report crimes was carried to absurdity. Hence, individuals were obliged to inform the authorities about crimes they suspected might happen. Thus, the notorious judge Ferenc Andó charged four defendants with failure to report an alleged spy with whom they had illegal business activities, which included the purchase of nylon stockings, but of whose alleged spying they knew nothing. According to Andó, "Concretely none of them [the defendants] were told that Fazekas was an imperialist spy, and his spying activities were known by none of them. But purely the things they knew about him [the alleged spy], in the present international situation with the obligatory political vigilance binding on all Hun-

garian citizens, they could have been expected to conclude that Fazekas was spying. Today, when the sharpening of the class struggle and the ever increasing aggressor activities of the imperialists are demonstrated by the various forms of subversive activities, which have been cunningly camouflaged, the law that regulates reporting obligations of imperialist activities can be interpreted only according to the demands of increased vigilance."<sup>57</sup>

Molotov recounted that when his wife was arrested, he did not know what happened to her until she was set free a few days after Stalin had died. This was the established pattern in the Soviet Union, and it seems that it was democratic in the sense that no exceptions were made. The system where a person, who had been arrested for anti-state activities, disappeared after a closed trial was adopted in Hungary as well. On one occasion a junior air force officer was arrested for "being a member of an imperialist spy ring composed of aviation officers". Almost two years later his father turned to the first secretary of the party and requested information on his son, who had given no sign of himself for two years. His family had no idea where he was, or what crime he had committed.<sup>58</sup>

The Hungarian communists outdid even their masters in the Kremlin in their revolutionary zeal and persecuted far more people than the Soviets thought desirable. In fact, the large number of mostly unjustified sentences seemed to threaten the stability of the system, and this threat proved to be one of the reasons why Rákosi was reprimanded in June 1953. On one occasion the Budapest party secretary accused the Soviet companies in Hungary for employing too many old cadres. He told the Soviet ambassador that the Hungarians wanted these companies to be rid of "unreliable" and "hostile elements" and recommended that more attention be devoted to the selection of cadres assigned to the Soviet companies.<sup>59</sup> Kiselev decisively rejected the allegations, and he sought to restrain the Hungarians from overt abuses. In one instance he protested against the muggings of kulaks by police, who subsequently fled into the forest.<sup>60</sup> Kiselev deplored the Hungarian party's attitude towards the technical intelligentsia. He felt that the regime's "disdain" towards them was alienating those who would otherwise cooperate with it.<sup>61</sup> The Soviet ambassador found that far too many cases of subversion and other crimes, which got to the judicial organs, were unfounded and recommended the transformation of the judicial system in order to restore socialist legality. He warned that Soviet experts had revealed numerous structural mistakes in the Ministry of Justice.<sup>62</sup> The harshest criticism came from Lavrenti Beria himself in June 1953.

Soviet-Hungarian relations existed on an official level only. The two peoples never had a chance to interact. Tourism was virtually non-existent; educational and cultural exchanges were politicized and very sporadic. Decisions of the highest order were needed for the visits of students, academics or artists. Often the Soviets, who were invited to Hungary, could not come because they did not get their visas on time.<sup>63</sup> The Soviets were afraid of any contact and any organization

that was not entirely under their control. Hence, they deplored the establishment of a Hungarian Institute of Foreign Cultural Affairs based on the model of VOKS because they saw it as a rival to the Soviet-Hungarian Friendship Association. They wanted the latter alone to conduct bilateral cultural relations and deemed that the interference of the former was inimical to the strengthening of Soviet-Hungarian friendship.<sup>64</sup> Centralization and planning was the order of the day, even in cultural and scientific affairs.<sup>65</sup> Success was measured in numbers and growth rate: how many people saw Soviet movies and how many professors, students or artists visited one another. What had been the increase in numbers from one year to the next. Friendship toward the Soviet Union was orchestrated from above, and its manifestations were awkward and artificial. Various Hungarian organizations sometimes sent expensive gifts to Soviet individuals in order to express friendly "feelings". Kiselev had to ask Rákosi to put an end to this practice, which had brought the addressees into awkward situations.<sup>66</sup> Moscow wanted to pass along its "experience" in areas such as collectivization, Stakhanovism, as well as the Soviet life-style itself. The latter was supposed to be popularized by the friendship association, but, as even the HWP Central Committee admitted, with little success.<sup>67</sup>

The bilateral relations were best described by Edward Luttwak's paradigm of a "Leninist client state," which satisfied the "growing hierarchy of Soviet imperial needs,"<sup>68</sup> or in other words provided *services* in the field of foreign and military policy. In the sphere of foreign policy, Hungary's services were insignificant. Throughout the period Hungary followed the Soviet line closely and, in fact, lacked a foreign policy of its own. The fate of the Hungarian minorities abroad was taken off the agenda. Budapest's hostility to the western powers was second only to Moscow's. Foreign citizens were on many occasions arrested, even incarcerated. The British businessman Edgar Sanders and Robert Vogeler spent years in Hungarian penal institutions. The crew of an American aircraft, which had violated Hungarian airspace, was forced down by a fighter flying under Soviet colours, and imprisoned. They were eventually set free in return for a ransom of \$12,000 dollars per person.<sup>69</sup> In foreign policy initiatives involving the capitalist powers, such as sending a protest note to the American government<sup>70</sup> or the proposal to close the United States Legation library,<sup>71</sup> the Hungarians consulted with the Kremlin. On one occasion Rákosi failed to do so, and the Soviet reaction was furious. At the last meeting of the June consultation in Moscow the Soviets claimed that at a reception given by the British embassy in Budapest the American minister proposed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Erik Molnár and to his deputy Andor Berei that a member of the Hungarian government, Molnár, or even Rákosi himself, should meet a member of the United States administration, perhaps even President Eisenhower, to discuss bilateral questions between Hungary and the United States. Rákosi disclaimed any knowledge that his own name, or Eisen-

hower's name, had cropped up and claimed that as soon as he found out about the affair he arranged for the Soviet ambassador to be informed. Nevertheless, Malenkov and Beria, or according to other sources Molotov, reprimanded him for not raising the affair in the Politburo, while planning to discuss it within the Hungarian government. It was clear, however, that the real problem was Rákosi's independence of action. Malenkov complained, "The American minister negotiated with four people on this issue, but the Politburo members did not know about it. Order must be restored, because with such methods Hungary can be lost."<sup>72</sup> As a result, the Soviet leadership removed the foreign minister. A measure of independence began to be restored to Hungarian foreign policy in 1955. Then the Hungarian Foreign Ministry acknowledged that Hungary's foreign policy "on several occasions meant the mechanical copying of the initiatives of others; many times we expected initiatives to come from one or several larger socialist countries".<sup>73</sup> Hungarian embassies in Western states were instructed to search for ways to improve bilateral relations, to expand cultural and economic contacts. This served also the Soviet Union's ends, since ambassador Andropov asked Hungary to explore the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with Turkey, West Germany and Japan as trial balloons for Moscow. Andropov told the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs that he, "would think it right if [Hungary] would attempt to reestablish diplomatic links with Japan. From the Soviet perspective it would be welcome if [the Hungarians] strengthened their links with Turkey, increased [international] confidence, and promoted Soviet-Turkish rapprochement". He suggested that Budapest should "try to deepen relations with West Germany, perhaps to establish diplomatic relations, which would be easier for Hungary than for the other people's democracies".<sup>74</sup> This was not the only service Hungary could provide. In 1950 Budapest and Moscow signed a bilateral agreement for cooperation between the intelligence services of the two countries in the field of foreign policy. This was extended to the exchange of intelligence, the mutual support of intelligence in the "capitalist" states and Yugoslavia, and, "if needed, mutually directed intelligence actions against these countries". Cooperation was extended to introducing agents into Yugoslavia and the Western states, their integration into the necessary circles, and the organization of contact with them. Hungary and the Soviet Union worked closely together in recruiting foreigners, or people with no citizenship, warned each other's agents about dangers, provocateurs, and double agents. Finally, they collaborated in working to disintegrate foreign "anti-democratic parties," as well as in "unmasking and compromising politicians and supporting pro-Communist groups, press organs and leaders".<sup>75</sup> But the services Hungary rendered in the military sphere were far more significant.

The communist party took control of the army by 1946. Following the transition, the Soviet Union asserted its control over the Hungarian military through a system of Soviet advisors and, just as important, the Hungarian political-military



leadership did its best to follow the Soviet guidelines in military strategy and to provide the services required by the Soviet army, which was stationed in Hungary. According to Minister of Defense Mihály Farkas, the Hungarian army was transformed in the image of the Soviet military by 1950. Eleven hundred officers had been removed, and by 1951 eighty-one percent of the officer corps was made up of so-called "new cadres".<sup>76</sup> Although the Paris Peace Treaty had maximized the size of the Hungarian army at seventy thousand, by 1952 it already numbered 210 thousand. In short, it was thrice as large as the treaty permitted. Of course the Soviets were well aware of this violation of the treaty. Consequently when the Hungarians proposed to turn to the United Nations in order to protest against alleged American violations of the peace treaty, Moscow called off the protest. The Soviets did not want to provide the Americans with a precedent to examine violations of the peace agreements.<sup>77</sup> The Hungarian army's growth rate was approximately the same as that of its Polish counterpart. In Poland the army increased from 140 thousand in 1949 to 410 thousand in 1953. But the Sovietization of the Hungarian military did not go as far as it had in Poland. The Polish armed forces were virtually commanded by Red Army generals and officers, who worked with 200 advisors.<sup>78</sup> In the Hungarian army, on the other hand, there were no Soviet commanders.

The framework of the services that Hungary would provide the Soviet military was laid down by a series of Soviet-Hungarian military agreements signed on December 6, 1946. These codified the presence of the Red Army in Hungary as necessary for securing the communication lines with the Soviet zone in Austria.<sup>79</sup> The agreements contained no time limit, or any kind of restrictions on the stationing, or activity, of the Soviet army on Hungarian soil. In fact, the "guest units," as they were euphemistically called, used without restriction the exercise areas that belonged to the Hungarian army as well as the cultivated areas and grazing fields that belonged to private individuals or agricultural cooperatives. They received all sorts of benefits, such as exemption from duties on the materials they brought into the country and a 50% discount on utilities and railway fares. The vast majority of the cost of the installations that the hosts built for them were covered by the Hungarian budget. In order to promote military cooperation, further agreements were signed for the transfer of military technology and licenses, for sending – well paid – Soviet military advisors to Hungary, and for the training of Hungarian officers in the Soviet Union. The Hungarians also expected to receive facts and figures on the organizational principles and size of the Soviet army, but they did not get them.<sup>80</sup> Having learned the lessons of the interwar period, when disarmament had failed to assure European security, the Soviets chose to ensure their security and to prepare for the inevitable clash with the imperialists by drastically increasing the military preparedness of the Soviet armed forces and those of the people's democracies. Hence, in Hungary the Soviet advisors were to assist in preparing

the Hungarian army for World War III and to create a mass army based on the lessons of the Great Patriotic War. Thus, an army of little over thirty thousand in 1948 grew to the nation's largest ever peacetime army. In 1952 it numbered 210,000 troops. In order to achieve the ambitious targets a massive program of industrialization was needed, which could be carried out only by a thirty to thirty-five percent reduction in the standard of living. As the international situation worsened, Moscow demanded an even larger contribution to its military efforts. In order to achieve the desired results, the Kremlin intervened directly. In January 1951 Stalin invited the party and military leaders of the bloc to Moscow. There, in the presence of Defense Minister Vasilevsky and Stalin himself, General Shtemenko gave a briefing on the international political and military situation and concluded that NATO would be able to launch an offensive attack on the socialist world in 1953. This made it necessary to accelerate the development of the armies of the people's democracies. This announcement and the military production targets to be attained caused a tremendous consternation among the guests. The Bulgarian leader Chervenkov was the most outspoken and protested that his country lacked all industry; therefore he thought that the Soviets should supply the necessary hardware for the military build-up. Stalin at first seemed to be sympathetic, but according to the time-honored choreography, when Shtemenko demonstrated that the Bulgarian view was unacceptable, he had nothing left to do but to agree with his own expert.<sup>81</sup> Although the Hungarians parroted the Soviet views on the aggressive designs of the imperialists, in reality they were disturbed by the Korean developments<sup>82</sup> and were deeply disturbed by the Soviet demands. These necessitated a revision of the annual plan and industrialization at an accelerated pace. In short, further resources would have to be diverted from consumption and other sectors of the economy. Nonetheless the Hungarians followed the Soviet initiatives. Moscow did not hesitate to intervene in its satellites' economic planning, when the Kremlin saw a threat to the development of the army. Moscow removed Imre Nagy in 1955 because in Khrushchev's view Nagy was neglecting military investments and the rift within the HWP was threatening military modernization. In the very same year the Soviet Union institutionalized its military domination of Eastern Europe by the Warsaw Pact. The reason, or pretext, for this was West Germany's rearmament and integration into NATO, which seemed to threaten the European military balance. Whatever the real reason or reasons may have been, this was the explanation provided by the Soviets to the Hungarian leadership.

In early November 1954 the Soviet leadership induced Czechoslovakia and Hungary to initiate a conference on collective European security with the participation of the Western states. As could be expected the latter failed to accept the invitation. Therefore at Khrushchev's initiative the Soviet bloc and China convened a meeting in December 1954 and agreed that they would take measures to

put their armies under a joint command in case the Paris agreement was ratified. Prime Minister András Hegedűs reported to the Politburo that according to Molotov, West Germany's rearmament was a dangerous development, a direct measure to prepare for the next war. In case the Western powers continued to rearm, "the peace-loving nations would be compelled to take joint defensive measures".<sup>83</sup> Khrushchev circulated the Soviet draft of the Warsaw Pact among the people's democracies in February 1955 with a recommendation for a secret conference to discuss it. This measure was made necessary by the fact that "the decision on the Paris agreements was passed by the parliaments of most participating nations".<sup>84</sup> The HWP Politburo accepted it without reserve on March 10, 1955. In fact, the only worrisome issue for the Hungarian political and military leadership was that the Austrian Treaty would call into question the continued stationing of Soviet troops on Hungarian territory. They agreed that in case the idea of withdrawing the Soviet units should crop up, the leadership would argue that the Hungarian army's lack of preparedness would necessitate the retention of one Soviet division on Hungarian soil.

The Hungarians provided a variety of services to the Soviet military. In 1954 the Soviet government requested the construction of a military airport capable of receiving heavy bombers. Although the investment – the cost of which was planned at the equivalent of 330 million forints, or roughly 30 million dollars at the official exchange rate – was at odds with Imre Nagy's new economic program, which was out to reduce military expenditures, the so-called Defense Council (not to be confused with the Defense Committee) accepted the proposal after the chief Soviet advisor at the Ministry of Defense M. F. Tihonov put pressure on Nagy and Rákosi.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, the Soviets asked for and received permission from the Hungarians to station in Hungary one Soviet airborne and one infantry division, which had been removed from Austria. In order to do so Hungary agreed to reconstruct a military airport at Szolnok and to build 350 new apartments for the arriving Soviet officers.<sup>86</sup> The Warsaw Pact guaranteed the privileges that the Soviet units had previously enjoyed in Hungary and also that Hungarian units would be put at the disposal of the Warsaw Pact's (Soviet) command.

Loyalty to the USSR was guaranteed by the fact that the Hungarian political and military leadership accepted the tenets of Soviet military strategy and the Kremlin's evaluations of the world situation. Thus, for example, on October 29, 1953 Minister of Defense Bata estimated that only an increase of military power could keep the imperialist warmongers from launching a world war. Nothing reflected more the Hungarian communists' slavishness than their attitude to the use of nuclear weapons in combat. In September 1954 a military exercise took place in the southern Ural military district with the participation of 44,000 men and involved a nuclear explosion. The defense ministers and chiefs of staff of the

people's democracies were invited as observers.<sup>87</sup> As a result of the "experience" the minister of defense saw to it that the necessary measures be taken in order to train an army capable of fighting in a nuclear war.

The satisfaction of the USSR's military requirements placed a tremendous burden on the Hungarian economy. In fact, the economy became the Hungarian communist system's Achilles heel, and one is probably not far from the truth in arguing that the deficiencies of the economy eventually led to the demise of the entire communist structure. The communist economy in Hungary simply could not survive without external assistance. In 1949 the Soviet Union decided to establish COMECON, which was meant to coordinate planning and production among the socialist bloc nations in order to achieve economic independence from the Western world. It aimed to create a common raw material base and the division of industrial labor among its members.<sup>88</sup> In reality the organization failed to get off the ground, and economic relations within the Soviet bloc operated essentially on a bilateral basis. As Lavrentii Beria put it in 1953, the organization is working poorly (*rabotaet iz ruk von ploho*) and "plays no positive role in the coordination of the countries of the people's democracies whatsoever".<sup>89</sup> In fact, the newly created communist dictatorships did their best to earn hard currency, and so they sold whatever marketable goods they had on the Western markets. Hence, countries like Hungary, which suffered from the lack of most raw materials needed for the Stalinist development of their economies, on many occasions could not buy the needed basics from the "fraternal nations," which possessed them. To adopt the Soviet model of modernization and to fulfil the requirements of military readiness, Hungary, as other bloc nations such as Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria, embarked upon a frantic pace of industrialization. The Hungarian Five-Year Plan of 1949 spelled out a rapid increase in industrial production. In 1949 the planners envisioned a growth of 86% in industrial production, but in 1951, as a result of Stalin's decision for the people's democracies to reach peak military preparedness by 1953, this already ambitious rate was raised to 310%. This unrealistically aggressive plan for Hungary was far higher than the new growth rate planned for Poland, where the revised plan of 1950 envisioned an industrial growth of 158%.<sup>90</sup> As a result, the GNP was 50% higher, while gross industrial production was 88% higher in 1954 than in the base year of 1949. It goes without saying that such ambitious plans were entirely unrealistic for a nation, which lacked the necessary economic base, traditions, and raw materials for industrialization. The accelerated pace of industrialization entailed a serious decline in the standard of living and the neglect of such traditional branches as agriculture, food processing, light industry, and machine building. The development of the industry concentrated on the "A sector," namely on steel and iron production, the chemical industry, and the "means of production" in general. The phenomenal growth rate was due to the fact that in the course of the first Five-Year Plan 25% of the national income was allocated to

investment, out of which almost 50% went to industry (including construction) and only 14% to agriculture.<sup>91</sup> This percentage of national income invested in Hungary was higher than the rates of investment under the first Five-Year Plans in Bulgaria (19,6), Czechoslovakia (22,3), Poland (21,6), or for the Soviet Union (21%) between 1946 and 1950. The share of industry in investment was also higher in Hungary than in the abovementioned people's democracies and the Soviet Union. The same was true for the share of heavy industry and construction in all industrial investments, which was over 90% in Hungary, 83% in Bulgaria, 78% in Czechoslovakia and 75% in Poland during the same period.<sup>92</sup> Just as in the Soviet Union beginning in the early 1930s resources were diverted from agriculture to industry. This was done by decreasing the share of the national resources spent on agricultural development, by drastically reducing the price paid for agricultural products, coupled to an artificial increase in the price of the industrial products that were sold to the agricultural sector. In this way the government killed two birds with one stone. It carried out its economic program and made progress in the liquidation of the peasantry as a social class. The impact of the government's economic policy on the standard of living was disastrous. In 1952 the price index of consumer goods was 166% higher than that of capital goods. The price of clothing was seventeen times, that of foodstuffs twelve times higher than in 1938. At the same time services were cheaper. The purchasing power of the Hungarian forint diminished by 40% between 1946 and 1949, and by another 27% until 1955. The year 1951 saw the introduction of rationing for meat, bread, lard, sugar, flour and soap. This was lifted after seven months, but with a simultaneous increase of prices by 40% and a general pay rise of only 20%. Chiefly due to the compulsory deliveries, the peasantry's income actually went down as compared to the pre-war period. During the years between 1949 and 1953 the level of consumption for all important foodstuffs, save for wheat and sugar, was lower than in the last year of peace. The deterioration of the quality of consumer goods added another 10% to the consumer price index, which in 1955 was 35% higher than at the beginning of the decade.<sup>93</sup> The Poles experienced similar hardships. In Poland by 1953 the level of meat and sugar consumption had fallen below that of 1949.<sup>94</sup> Hungary, which had been one of the continent's major exporters of wheat, now had to import this formerly abundant commodity from the Soviet Union and elsewhere because its own production was used to service the country's ever growing foreign debt. Hence in January 1956 the Hungarian leadership had to turn to the USSR for the shipment of 100 thousand tons of wheat, while in September 1956 another 350 thousand tons were requested for 1957. Such requests could only increase Hungary's subordinated position vis-à-vis its hegemonic neighbor. Because of the acute shortage of wheat extraordinary, terroristic methods were employed to curb consumption. In January 1953, for example, a certain Ferenc Reisz was sentenced to two years in prison and the confiscation of a thousand forints for

“buying up” seven kilos of bread and sixty-five croissants. During the same year the district court of Pécs condemned Károly Bod to be incarcerated for three years because the police found that he had “hoarded” 139 kilos of flour and twenty kilos of sugar. Nor did József Fábián get off lightly for having committed a similar offense. For the crime of purchasing ten kilos of bread, even though he “possessed his own flour,” he received three and a half years in prison. Another man, Károly Csorba, had 150 kilos of flour, but was greedy enough to buy bread from the local agricultural cooperative. To make matters worse, he hid twenty kilos of lard in a hole dug in his yard. In view of these “crimes” it is no wonder that he ended up in jail.<sup>95</sup> If the quality of goods a nation is able to produce is indicative of how developed that nation is, what happened in Hungary in terms of production was a sure and dismal sign of a civilizational decline. The food processing and light industry, as well as the machine building industry, had previously been highly competitive. Hungarian electric locomotives had even been sold in Argentina during the 1930s. Hungarian salami and canned food had also been successfully marketed abroad in the days before communism.

The decline can be linked directly to the introduction of the central command system in the economy. Plans of production were worked out by central bureaucracies in accordance with political principles. The quantitative instructions were handed down through a multi-echelon bureaucracy almost to the individual desk, or workbench. Plans included only how much of something should be produced to attain the production quota. Whether or not there was any consumer demand for the particular product did not matter. There were no incentives to modernize capital goods, no incentives for the workers to reduce waste, or increase quality. The “result” was striking and immediate. As early as 1950, only a year after the Stalinist system had been introduced, the director of the Soviet-Hungarian bauxite company complained of the negligence and the low standards of production, which were leading to the continuous growth of waste. The only thing that mattered was the fulfilment of the plan, which meant that production was cyclical. Very little was done at the beginning of the month, while at the end the work was done with great haste.<sup>96</sup> The country’s economic dictator Ernő Gerő complained,

... what is happening in the area of quality is absolutely intolerable and untenable. It has to be said that in 1945, 1946, 1947 and 1948, when we were economically much weaker, there were not so many and so well-founded complaints against the commodities we produced; what is more, there are more [well-founded complaints] now in 1952 than there were in 1951.

Hence for example in the shoe industry, which according to Gerő had once been famous for its quality, the customers returned only one per cent as waste in 1950, but by 1951 the rate of return had reached 25%. On one occasion the USSR re-

turned 4,900 pairs of shoes from a shipment of 5,000.<sup>97</sup> In 1952 and 1953 Austria, Sweden, Italy, and Belgium returned a variety of machine tools due to complaints about quality.<sup>98</sup> The "Red Star" tractor factory sent 140 tractors to Rumania in the fall of 1952. By February 1953 *all* were inoperational and only six could be mended in 1954(!). The factory simply did not make spare parts. No one wanted to purchase the products of the Deep Drill Plant because they were of such poor quality. The machine tools sent to Argentina arrived without paint on them, because the paint had all come off during shipment. The electronic guidance compartments could not be opened because the screws on them had all rusted away. Argentina, which had been a market for Hungarian locomotives before the war, no longer wanted them. Machine tools and motorcycles, which had been sold to Sweden, were not saleable there anymore.<sup>99</sup> Hungarian sugar could not be sold in the Far East because it was too filthy.<sup>100</sup> In 1952 complaints of "low quality" led to the cancellation of the sales of 619 tons of poultry, 120 tons of pasta asciutta, forty-one tons of Hungarian salami[!], 200 tons of cattle, and 287 tons of canned food.<sup>101</sup> But the list is almost endless. Another peculiar trait of the central command economy, which plagued it throughout its existence, was the poor quality of packaging. This problem of packaging emerged almost as soon as the new economic system was introduced. Elevators, which had been sent to Poland, got soaked because of the "primitive manner" in which they had been packaged. Their screws fell apart or rusted. For similar reasons an x-ray apparatus exported to the USSR fell into pieces.<sup>102</sup> On many occasions due to the "proflization" of production, which meant that certain products could only be produced by certain companies, spare parts were not manufactured. In 1951 there were no spare parts available for buses, a major export item. The Hungarians' inability to deliver their products on time was another chronic and acute symptom. To mention just one of many possible examples: out of the twenty lathes ordered from the Machine Tool Plant in 1950 ten were still undelivered two years later.<sup>103</sup> This deficiency got the country in considerable trouble with the Soviets, who greatly resented the fact that Hungary was unable to satisfy its export obligations to the USSR. In November 1952 the Soviet ambassador in Budapest instructed the Soviet consul at Győr, who in effect acted as a kind of Soviet political representative in the western part of the country, to discuss the settlement of Soviet economic grievances with the local county party secretary. The Machine and Wagon Plant in Győr had been "systematically" neglecting to satisfy its obligations for the delivery of goods to the Soviet Union and had not sent the wagons and floating cranes that Moscow had ordered. The consul demanded that the party secretary intervene so that the plant will fulfil its obligations.<sup>104</sup> Since nothing happened, on May 23 Soviet Ambassador Kiselev requested permission from Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin for himself and the Soviet economic advisor in Hungary to visit Rákosi and "discuss how Hungary's delay in fulfilling its delivery obligations to the USSR stemming from the trade



agreement with the Soviet Union could be liquidated".<sup>105</sup> The ambassador was so troubled by the state of affairs that two days later he sent two memoranda to Molotov, both of which dwelt on the economic problems in Hungary. He wrote that although the socialist countries were "usually unable to tackle the problem of the mutual shipment of goods," in this case the chief culprit was Hungary. The tardiness of the Hungarians in this respect was often more significant than that of the others. Several factors were responsible for this situation. On the one hand "the careless work of the planning organs, the low standard of organization on the part of the leading Hungarian firms" played a part. On the other hand the country's leaders were to blame. The top party cadres, the leaders of the economic ministries, and "other responsible persons" were underestimating the importance of foreign trade in the nation's economy. Significantly, Kiselev deplored the "remnants of bourgeois-nationalist methods in the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Trade, against which the necessary struggle is not being waged". He accused the Hungarians of "systematically delaying the delivery of important industrial equipment to the Soviet Union".<sup>106</sup> The Soviet economic advisor in Hungary was instructed by Mikoyan to draw Gerő's attention to the delays in shipments to the Soviet Union; and Gerő promised that by personally taking charge of the exports to the Soviet Union he would solve the problem by the end of the year.<sup>107</sup> Gerő and the rest of the Hungarian leadership were of course well aware of these problems but were unable to do anything about them. Moscow's commercial advisor Nikolaenko had to warn Gerő in July that Hungary was falling behind in exports to the Soviet Union to an ever increasing extent and would not be able to fulfil the plans in ships, automobiles, locomotives, and many other articles. What troubled the Soviet leadership most profoundly was Hungary's accelerated descent into the quagmire of indebtedness, especially to the Western world.

One particular and, as far as the state of the communist economy was concerned, highly damaging consequence of heavy industrialization was that instead of becoming independent from the Western world in terms of foreign trade, the Hungarian economy became increasingly reliant on it as a source of machine tools and raw materials. This was especially true for the period after 1952, when the Soviet Union began to reduce the amount and variety of ores and other materials it exported to Hungary. This change in Soviet export policy and Hungary's inability to export enough goods of sufficient quality to pay for the imports led to the rapid increase of the Hungarian foreign debt and an alarming decrease of its gold reserve, which had to be used to finance imports. And without these imports heavy industry could not function properly. "Forced imports, which were connected to investments and the demand for raw materials, had to be balanced by forced exports," wrote historians Pető and Szakács. "Foreign trade was becoming increasingly self-serving: [Hungary] was importing so as to have enough to export for the next import."<sup>108</sup> In May 1953, not long before Rákosi was summoned to Mos-

cow, Kiselev warned that the Hungarians were struggling with a debt of 534 million forints to the capitalist countries, including West Germany and also owed money to the East, including 221 million forints to the Soviet Union and 244 million to China.<sup>109</sup> The chief culprit was industry, where imports always exceeded exports. The worst year had been 1952, when industry accumulated a trade deficit of 1,686 million forints.<sup>110</sup> The situation in 1953 was worse than the Soviets had suspected. In reality, Hungary's short term debt to the Western world was 865 million forints and 869 million to the "people's democracies". While in September 1950 the debt had only been 614 million foreign exchange forints. One reason was that although both the Eastern and the Western trading partners wanted Hungary to sell them agricultural products, Hungary insisted on offering industrial ones.<sup>111</sup> The situation did not improve during the years of Imre Nagy's "new course" either. The size of the agricultural import went up, while the export decreased. Between 1953 and the end of 1954 the debt to the capitalist world grew 2.5 times, and in 1955 it increased by another 800 million forints. In a few months the nation's debt service was actually higher than its total annual income from the capitalist export,<sup>112</sup> even though the country had managed to increase its exports to the capitalist countries by 60%. The national debt reached a total of 2.6 billion forints by the end of 1955. This happened in spite of the fact that there was a trade surplus with COMECON. But the size of trade with the Soviet bloc decreased in 1954 and 1955: from 72% of the turnover in 1953 to 53% in 1955. More raw materials came from the West than previously.<sup>113</sup> As a result of its inability to finance its imports from the revenue derived from the foreign sale of goods, Hungary used its gold reserves to pay for them. While in 1949 the freely disposable national gold reserve (the part not tied down to finance imports) was 36.1 tons and 33.5 tons in 1950, the amount began to drop drastically to 18 tons in 1951, 13 tons in 1953, seven in June 1954 and only five September 1955.<sup>114</sup> For this reason the Soviets, who were informed by Ambassador Andropov of the deteriorating economic situation, decided to "call Rákosi's attention ... to the deficiencies in the development of the Hungarian national economy and the work of the Political Committee of the HWP".<sup>115</sup> Nothing could have come more handy to the disgraced dictator than such reports. He had been trying to engineer Nagy's removal mostly with economic arguments almost since the moment Nagy had been installed as prime minister in 1953.

In order to keep the economy running the Hungarian regime had to ask the Soviet Union for *favors*, such as loans to service debt or to help develop industrial sites. Thus, in 1952 the USSR agreed to extend a gold loan of forty-eight million rubles for the construction of a metallurgical combine<sup>116</sup> in addition to a 100 million ruble commodity credit that had already been granted "in order to combat the economic hardships caused by the draught and the poor crop".<sup>117</sup> In May 1953 Rákosi asked for another forty-eight million ruble commodity credit in gold be-

cause of Hungary's balance of payments deficit.<sup>118</sup> This loan proved to be insufficient for the ailing Hungarian economy to survive the year; and the government turned to the Kremlin once more for a loan of 200 million rubles in commodities such as wheat and other agricultural products, as well as coal and other raw materials connected to steel production. But Moscow agreed to only half of that amount.<sup>119</sup> Rákosi remembered that when the Hungarian delegation arrived in Moscow to put forward the request, the reception was rather cool. The Soviets explained that Hungary had no need for the loan. The problem must lie with the leadership, if in a year when the crop was good, they could not balance their trade. Kaganovich remarked that the Hungarian request was "hoarding" (*rvachestvo*).<sup>120</sup> When in 1956 the Rákosi regime recommended that the USSR should purchase the Hungarian short-term Western debt and convert it into a long-term one, the response was a decisive *nyet*.<sup>121</sup> In general, what the Soviets gave with one hand, they took away with the other. Hungary had to pay the Soviets on a number of pretexts, which included the profits and the consultation fees of the joint companies, the price of the Soviet companies in Hungary, and the Soviet share of the joint companies that were sold by the USSR in 1952 and 1954, respectively.

The early 1950s saw the growth of foreign trade's importance in the national economy. Hungary's most important trading partner was the Soviet Union. Its share in Hungary's foreign trade rose from 29% in 1949 to 34% in 1953 and then declined somewhat to 22% by 1955. The rest of the COMECON countries accounted for 34,6% in 1950 and 32% in 1955.<sup>122</sup> The Hungarian economy was so heavily reliant on the Soviet Union's shipments for its development and for the Soviet market to be able to pay for its imports that this dependence in itself provided a strong measure of Soviet political control. This became all too apparent in 1955, when for the first time the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade rejected the list of goods Hungary desired to sell and purchase from the Soviet Union. What usually happened was that the Hungarian planning office was invited to Moscow for consultation with Gosplan. At these meetings the Soviets decided whether or not they agreed with the general trade guidelines. Hungary would produce a list of required Soviet commodities along with a list of items it wanted to sell to the Soviet Union. In July 1954 Hungary presented a list but had to wait for the reply until January 1955. The Russian response proved to be shocking, because the Soviets signalled that they did not want many of the things that Budapest had offered to them. At the same time they refused to deliver much of what the Hungarians had requested. No explanation was given, and the refusal fundamentally threatened Hungary's economy.<sup>123</sup> For example, Hungary had asked for anthracite, lead, and raw iron. But none of these commodities were offered for sale to Hungary by the Soviets. In other goods such as crude oil, or raw phosphate, Moscow promised less than half of the amount the Hungarian government had requested.<sup>124</sup> The situation was so critical that the Central Committee dispatched

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Berei and Minister of Foreign Trade Háy to Moscow to consult with Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade Kabanov and the leaders at Gosplan. The deputy director of Gosplan was not particularly helpful when he argued that the people's democracies themselves should solve the problems caused by the reduction of Soviet shipments. The Soviet economic advisor Bachin recommended that the Hungarian government should turn to its Soviet counterpart; and being aware of the Hungarian situation, the Soviet government would support the Hungarian government's requests.<sup>125</sup> Rákosi intervened personally, and as a result Moscow agreed to raise the export by 130 million rubles, its import by 94 million. A number of Soviet products were offered, which were not on the original list, and quite a few Hungarian goods were purchased, which the Soviets originally did not wish to take. This was still insufficient, especially in commodities such as cotton, iron and crude oil,<sup>126</sup> but the Soviet government refused to raise the value of its shipments to the 1954 level. This forced Hungary to purchase the missing items from Western Europe, which in turn aggravated the country's debt situation. Lacking the relevant Soviet sources, one can only speculate on the Soviet motives. One of these may have been to weaken Imre Nagy's position. In fact, after he had been ousted Moscow lifted the reduced quotas.

The Soviet Union had a significant control over the Hungarian economy by virtue of the Soviet owned companies in Hungary and the Soviet-Hungarian joint companies. The latter gave the Soviets control over the bauxite, aluminum, oil, and oil refining industries, as well as shipping on the Danube and coal mining.<sup>127</sup> Hungary's only manganese mine was Soviet owned. In 1952 the Soviet Union centralized and expanded the activities of the Soviet-Hungarian companies, but at the same time the Kremlin decided to sell the assets of the Soviet companies. According to the agreement signed with the Soviet Union on September 30, 1952, Hungary was to purchase these assets for 990 million forints, payable by 1956.<sup>128</sup> This was better than the original proposal, according to which the payment would have had to be made within three years.<sup>129</sup> The debt was to be paid in forints and in kind. The payment in goods included the delivery of 500,000 tons of bauxite in 1955 alone. This amount constituted over a third of Hungary's entire annual production of 1.4 million tons.<sup>130</sup> Two years later, under conditions that the Hungarian government could not accept, the Soviet Union offered to sell to Hungary its share of the joint companies, with the exception of the Hungarian-Soviet Oil Company, which was the most profitable of all, the Soviet Bank, and eleven houses. This occasioned one of the most significant Hungarian-Soviet disputes of the period. In this case the Hungarian regime acted in the national interest. Moscow valued the assets at 1.2 billion forints. Ernő Gerő supported the proposal, with the reservation that Hungary would not be able to pay any instalments in 1955 or 1956 because Hungary's payments to the USSR under the 1952 agreement and earlier obligations already amounted to 253 million forints in 1955 and 265 mil-

lion the following year.<sup>131</sup> The Hungarians did not count on the offer even though the Soviets had already sold their similar holdings in Bulgaria, Austria and Rumania and only the German ones remained in Russian hands. Due to the country's grave financial situation the Political Committee resolved to accept the Soviet offer, with the provision that Hungary would not be able to pay more in consultation fees and profit transfers in the forthcoming years than it had in the earlier period. Hungary announced that it wished to double the period of payment from the Soviet offer of five years to ten years and that it wanted to purchase the joint oil company as well.<sup>132</sup> Gerő then transmitted the Hungarian offer to the Soviet economic advisor in Hungary, Nikolaenko, who had made the original offer to the Hungarian government. The Kremlin's answer reiterated the original Soviet position, with the exception that 50% of the payments would be used in Hungary.<sup>133</sup> Budapest tried to have the Soviets accept an eight-year term for payment and also desired that the Soviet Union omit a clause from the proposed agreement according to which Hungary would have to take responsibility for all further claims against the joint companies.<sup>134</sup> The latter provision caused serious problems when an Austrian–Hungarian treaty was being negotiated, since the Soviet Union, abusing the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, had taken over properties that had belonged to Austria. The Soviets made a few additional concessions: according to the treaty the Soviets agreed to sell the joint oil company, but insisted that they receive the payment of 2–2.5 billion forints in growing instalments over five years starting in 1955. Furthermore, Moscow disclaimed all responsibility for any future claims against these companies.<sup>135</sup> Although the re-acquisition of the joint companies returned economic sovereignty to Hungary, the exploitation of its natural resources continued with the Soviet exploitation of Hungarian uranium.

The exploration for Hungarian uranium resources by Soviet experts began in 1953. At this time the Soviet nuclear weapons program started to expand rapidly. Reserves that had been found in some people's democracies, such as the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, were already being exploited for the USSR's purposes. Large deposits were found in the Mecsek Mountains in southern Hungary. According to the preliminary estimates the reserve contained fifteen million tons of ore, which made it one of the largest deposits in the world. The uranium content of the discovery, on the other hand, was considered to be average.<sup>136</sup> Well after the exploitation of this resource had actually begun, the two countries signed a protocol on June 8, 1955, which regulated the reserve's future exploration, exploitation and sale. This colonial style agreement granted the USSR exclusive rights. The treaty provided for the exploration for radioactive elements and for their production to begin even while the exploration continued. The Hungarian government was obligated to place the sites free of charge at the geological expedition's disposal and to exempt the equipment imported by the Soviets, as well as the ore

taken to the Soviet Union, from all taxes and duties. The Hungarians would supply housing and electricity for the Soviet workers. In return the USSR would provide scientific and technical assistance, experts, and technical equipment for the exploration of radioactive ore. The parties vowed to spend sixty million forints on exploration in 1955 alone. The expenses were to be shared evenly. The protocol was surrounded by great secrecy, and the parties were not allowed mention this cooperative venture in their economic plans or statistical data. The ore would be sold to the USSR, except for the quantity required by Hungary, which was at that time and would for years remain zero. The price would be calculated on the basis of the cost of production and an allowance of 10% for profit.<sup>137</sup> The Hungarian government established a company under the code name “Bauxite” in 1956. It would receive the production site free of charge and would be exempted from all taxes and duties except for the taxes on wages. The company would, however, be obliged to pay the domestic shipping rates. Aside from providing technical assistance and experts, the Soviets also agreed to finance 75% of the investment and exploration costs in the form of long-term loans. The agreement was signed for twenty years, and the USSR would be allowed to purchase all the company’s products that the Hungarian government did not need.<sup>138</sup> The infrastructure, roads and installations, had to be built and 960 flats had to be finished by the end of 1957. Due to the secrecy no documentation for the project, which cost 380 million forints in the first year alone, was prepared.<sup>139</sup> By the end of 1957 the investments had exceeded 650 million forints, and the Soviet side owed 300 million.<sup>140</sup> The Soviets and the Hungarians disagreed on how the production costs, which formed the basis of the price, should be calculated. In order to make the production profitable, the Hungarians thought that the Soviets should pay for all production down to a metal content of 0.03%. On the other hand the Soviets were unwilling to finance the production of the low quality ore; even though the 0.2% quality desired by the Soviets could be produced only if the lesser grades were also made. The Hungarians calculated that on the basis of the Soviet position Hungary would receive only 60% of the actual production costs.<sup>141</sup> Hence, the purchaser was dictating the price, which came to be fixed in agreements concluded in following years. The revision of the uranium agreement became one of the demands of the revolutionaries in 1956. Nonetheless, the Soviets continued to intend to pay less than the Hungarians wanted for their uranium, which would have been acceptable only if Hungary had enjoyed the opportunity to sell its uranium to anyone else. But that was not the case. Moreover, the Soviet experts demanded that the quality and quantity of production be improved at a pace that would have been tantamount to “robbing” the mine.<sup>142</sup> In some ways the situation of the uranium mines and the previous joint companies was different but in some ways the same. The Hungarian government owned the uranium mines and occasionally attempted to

assert its national interests in their exploitation. On the other hand, despite these efforts the mines were operated in the Soviet interest and under terms largely dictated by the Soviet Union.

The balance in services and favors provided by the Soviet Union and Hungary to each other clearly tilted towards the Kremlin. The Soviets built a wall in 1961 in response to Walter Ulbricht's plea to preserve his regime,<sup>143</sup> but the Hungarians could expect no such services. When they asked the Soviets to salvage their economy by purchasing its Western debts and deliver more raw materials, the Hungarians were rebuked. While Walter Ulbricht and Antonin Novotny survived the crises of the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia in 1953, Rákosi was removed from his post as premier in 1953 and Imre Nagy was sacked in 1955. The Soviet decisions about the Hungarian leadership can be interpreted within the framework of the services Hungary provided to satisfy the USSR's imperial needs. Hungary's growing indebtedness to the Western world was beginning to transform the country from a "bastion" into a gaping hole, through which imperialist influence would be able to infiltrate.

Following Stalin's death on March 5, 1953 Beria, Malenkov and Khrushchev grabbed the reins of power. Soon Malenkov announced a peace initiative and the Soviet leaders began to show readiness to bring an end to the Korean conflict and to deal with sensitive issues such as the future of Austria. They were soon forced to confront the problems within their own empire, where some threats to Soviet control had begun to appear. Hence, as Christian Ostermann wrote, in the GDR the "communist regime was much closer to the brink of collapse, the popular revolt much more widespread and prolonged the resentment of SED leader Walter Ulbricht than many in the West had come to believe".<sup>144</sup> Alarming signs had already reached the Kremlin as early as March, when the symptoms of a worsening class struggle started to surface in East Germany. In May Beria circulated a report according to which the dramatic rise in the number of refugees can be explained by the discontent caused by the crash program of building socialism, which had been introduced during the previous summer.<sup>145</sup> The Soviet Council of Ministers found that "as a result of incorrect policies, many mistakes were made in the GDR. Among the German population there was huge dissatisfaction". The mass emigration of Germans showed that "we are facing an internal catastrophe. We are obliged to face the truth and to admit that without the presence of Soviet troops the existing regime in the GDR is not stable".<sup>146</sup> A subsequent report by the Soviet Control Commission in Berlin criticized the accelerated construction of socialism and recommended measures to reduce economic malcontent and steps to alleviate terror. In a similar spirit the Soviet Council of Ministers called for an end to the "artificial establishment of agricultural production cooperatives," for an increase in production for mass consumption at the expense of heavy industry, and for the elimination of the rationing system. Ulbricht was ordered to Moscow,



where the Soviet leaders, expressing concern for the situation in the GDR, advocated a new course.<sup>147</sup> Beria recommended the unification of Germany on a bourgeois basis because he thought that the maintenance of this imperial outpost was far too costly. But for a variety of reasons – the fear that a unified Germany would not be neutral, the GDR's importance as an anti-imperialist obstacle, and various psychological factors – Moscow decided to hang on to the eastern part of Germany.<sup>148</sup> Disquieting news was arriving from Hungary as well. But in this case the critical reports had been coming for some time. Already in October 1952 a report had noted the rightful dissatisfaction of the population. Basic needs, such as the renovation of municipal roads or bridges, were being overlooked by the local Soviets, which were “separated from the masses”.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, the Soviet leadership seems to have lost confidence in Rákosi's leadership after the Kremlin had been forced to reach into its own pocket in order to rescue the Hungarian economy in 1952. But the Soviets were not resolved on removing Rákosi. At the May consultation, in which the dictator participated alone, he was called upon to surrender only one of his functions. Rákosi, aware of the situation in the USSR, wanted to retain his post as premier and desired to give up his position as party leader.<sup>150</sup> But he was in for a surprise. The Hungarian dictator, who wallowed in a cult of personal adulation second only to Stalin's, and who reckoned himself as the deceased *Vozhd's* “best disciple,” was summoned to Moscow in the midst of the Czechoslovak and East German crises. There he had to recognize that his seemingly endless power was only as great as the Soviets allowed. He had reached the limits of his leash as a result of his country's virtual bankruptcy and because his domestic reign of terror threatened the Soviets with the potential loss of Hungary. Ulbricht probably survived because of the split within Soviet leadership over the future of the GDR. By the time the Soviets made up their minds, the German dictator had reconsolidated his position.<sup>151</sup> For the Czechoslovak, Rumanian, and Bulgarian leaders it was enough to kowtow before the new course during the late summer and early fall. For the Hungarian leaders, who had outdone the other fraternal nations in most of the indicators of Stalinism, the Kremlin dictated change. This included advice on the structure and composition of the leadership and prescriptions on what policies should be followed.

The criticisms were highly personal because the Soviets held Rákosi, Geró, Farkas and Révai individually accountable for the “mistakes”. The attack by the Kremlin leadership embraced the whole spectrum of issues. The Soviet objections were directed at the irrational pace of industrialization, the drive for forced collectivization, the oversized army, as well as the regime's punitive policies. The verbal assaults included an anti-Semitic overtone. The Soviets – Khrushchev, Malenkov, Beria, and Molotov in particular – attacked the composition of the party leadership, which uniquely in Eastern Europe was composed entirely of Hungarians of Jewish descent. This criticism was unfair in the sense that the Hun-

garian communist leaders, especially Rákosi, did their best to disclaim their Jewishness. Moscow insisted that Imre Nagy, a "real" Hungarian, replace Rákosi as Prime Minister and that other cadres of Hungarian stock be given top positions in the party hierarchy. Khrushchev criticized the number of students at institutions of higher education; and the low *esprit de corps* of the Hungarian army came under fire as well. The military morale problem was attributed to the excessive "cleansing". The Kremlin leaders also deplored the low level of ideological work. As a result of the criticism, on June 14 the Hungarian delegation drafted a document, which elaborated the measures that they had agreed to take. This statement was presented to the Kremlin on June 16. In accord with the wishes of the Soviets, economic policy would change, the pace of industrialization would slow down, and investments would be reviewed. Agricultural investments would rise, while the pace of collectivization would be "decisively" slower. The government would lend more support to individual peasants. More houses would be built or renovated. As a result of all these steps the standard of living would rise. "Legality" would be introduced and the political police would be put under government control. A Chief State's Attorney's Office would also be established. The document further envisioned the abolition of the *kulak* list. In addition, the Politburo and the government would be reshuffled along Moscow's guidelines. The Soviet leaders found the document to be "basically not bad," although not concrete enough as far as the economic proposals were concerned. Rákosi, the thoroughly disgraced party leader, now vowed to do his best to correct the mistakes.<sup>152</sup> Upon his return to Hungary Rákosi confessed in front of the Political Committee to all the mistakes levelled against him by the Soviet Presidium.

It quickly became obvious that Rákosi's repentance had been insincere, and that he would seize every opportunity to turn the clock back to full-fledged Stalinism. Rákosi deemed the new course a set of "incomprehensible and incorrect" measures, which "emboldened the enemies of socialism".<sup>153</sup> He tried relentlessly to undermine Nagy and used every chance to smear his policies in the eyes of the Kremlin. Rákosi kept hoping that fortunes would turn once again and the Soviets comrades would reinstall him. He did not have to wait long for his first break. Only a few weeks after the June meeting Rákosi, Nagy and Gerő were again invited to the Soviet capital. Gheorghiu-Des and Chervenkov of Bulgaria were also present. Khrushchev informed the visitors that Beria had been arrested as an "enemy of the state". In Rákosi's eyes the fall of Beria immediately brought into question the validity of the criticism that he had received a few weeks earlier, because the former NKVD chief had taken the lead in attacking the Hungarian party chief. In fact, Khrushchev declared that Beria had been "impudent" to the Hungarian party boss and that Beria had been mistaken in arguing that the first secretary of the party had no right to interfere in the affairs of state security. "The question immediately arose," wrote Rákosi, "what remained of the agreement of

three weeks ago?" Other specific issues, such as the *kolkhoz* movement, had not been touched on, but this visit in Moscow proved to be the first step in the Soviet retreat from fostering serious reform in Hungary.<sup>154</sup> This backtracking would eventually lead to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

Following the old dictator's death rapid changes were introduced in Soviet foreign policy. Malenkov announced a "peace initiative" at Stalin's funeral and proclaimed that all outstanding issues between the USSR and the United States could be solved by peaceful means. On March 18 the triumvirate of Molotov, Malenkov and Beria outlined a peace proposal for Korea. Moscow restored relations with Israel, Yugoslavia and Greece and dropped territorial claims against Turkey.<sup>155</sup> Beria would have ventured even further had the temporary coalition of Molotov and Khrushchev not blocked him. Beria also prepared an initiative toward Yugoslavia for a "fundamental reappraisal and improvement of the relations between the [two] countries".<sup>156</sup> In order to forestall West Germany's co-option into the Western defense system, he proposed the unification of Germany on a non-socialist basis.<sup>157</sup> Powerful as he may have been, Beria would soon be brought down by Khrushchev, whose abilities he had underestimated. Georgi Malenkov, a technocrat, seized the post of Prime Minister and lingered on a little longer. Unlike Beria, however, Malenkov survived his fall and was allowed to live quietly in retirement. On August 8, 1953 in a nationally broadcast address Malenkov distanced himself from the dogma of the inevitability of war with the capitalist world and declared that "there is no objective grounds for a collision between the United States and the Soviet Union".<sup>158</sup> Later, he would assert that a reduction of tensions was the only alternative to the Cold War, that is, to "the policy of preparing for a new world war". Such a war, he declared, would destroy "world civilization".<sup>159</sup> This declaration was far from the ideas espoused by Khrushchev, who was still thinking in terms of the destruction of the capitalist bourgeoisie. He forced Malenkov to repudiate publicly his heresy, and on January 31, 1955 at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee Malenkov was dismissed from his post of Prime Minister.<sup>160</sup> This coincided with the dismissal of Imre Nagy in Hungary and the strengthening of the Stalinist line within the HWP. The two events were perhaps not coincidental.<sup>161</sup> Nagy, who received his mandate for change from Moscow, gradually lost the Kremlin's support as Beria was executed and Malenkov's influence began to ebb. The fate of the Hungarian "new course" was not decided in the Soviet capital alone. Nagy had never agreed to the slavish adoption of the Soviet model in Hungary and always thought in terms of a Hungarian model of socialism. He interpreted the mandate for change that he had received in Moscow in his own way. Nagy thought that Hungary had "skipped" the transition period to socialism. From this it followed that Nagy initially did not wish to change the model, but only to slow down the "development".<sup>162</sup> Nagy never wielded as much power as Malenkov had as the head of the Soviet nuclear weapons program. In fact,

Nagy was his party's chief agricultural expert, which was not exactly a position of power in Rákosi's industrially minded Hungary; and until his promotion in Moscow Nagy was far removed from the highest echelons of the Hungarian communist leadership.

Nagy's political, social and economic reform program had been more ambitious than Malenkov's because unlike his Soviet counterpart, Nagy had come to realize that the party itself was in crisis.<sup>163</sup> The Hungarian reformer's most drastic measures were directed at reorienting economic priorities. Nagy did not, however, desire to undo the institutional system of the centralized command economy, or to reestablish a market economy in any significant way. The "economic regulators" were restored in agriculture. In order to raise consumption, the 1954 plan reduced the amount allocated for investment by 17%, while at the same time boosted the share of agriculture in investments from 13% to almost 25%. Industrial investments in general were reduced from 46.3% to 35.2%, and the proportion of investments devoted to heavy industry within the category of industrial investment went down from 41% to 30%.<sup>164</sup> Peasants were allowed to leave agricultural cooperatives; and agricultural taxes were reduced, or tax breaks were granted, not only to cooperatives but to individual peasants as well. The amount of compulsory delivery was also reduced. Unfortunately, however, the country's economic indicators did not improve; and in some respects they actually got worse. For example, more maize was produced but significantly less wheat. Agriculture's share in the gross national product did not change.<sup>165</sup> In fact, the nation's GNP stagnated. Furthermore, in 1954 Hungary's indebtedness to the West increased significantly. The foreign debt expanded because the country was unable to sell in foreign markets the planned amount of goods in order to offset the growing import of agricultural products and raw materials necessary for its industry. The economic difficulties made it much easier for Rákosi's "old guard" to conspire against Nagy in Moscow and to attack his policies at home. Rákosi did not hide his aversion to any reform of hard-line Stalinism and spoke out for the continuation of heavy industrialization not long after that policy had been disavowed in the Kremlin. The conflict within the Hungarian leadership was becoming so tense that less than a year after the June 1953 consultation a new one was to be held in Moscow. This new consultation may have been initiated by Rákosi. The screenplay was the same as before: the masters of the Kremlin listened to report on the Hungarian situation, which was delivered by the head of the HWP. The Soviet leaders then passed judgment and gave voice to their policy guidelines. The meeting took place on May 5, 1954 and, among others, included Malenkov, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Bulganin, Mikoyan, and Suslov from the Soviet Union and Rákosi, Nagy, Gerő, and Farkas from the Hungarian side.<sup>166</sup> Khrushchev and Voroshilov were interested in the question of unity within the Political Committee; Kaganovich inquired about the class struggle in the countryside and in the

urban areas. Mikoyan wanted to talk about the economy. He worried about the growing foreign trade deficit and claimed that the production of soap, textiles, and shoes was below the 1952 level. According to Mikoyan, Hungary's goals for the development of heavy industry were still set too high. An 86% increase, envisioned in the production of iron in a country that possessed no iron ore or coke, seemed unrealistic.<sup>167</sup> Mikoyan's views were seconded by Malenkov, who also deplored the renewed attempts to accelerate industrialization.<sup>168</sup> Khrushchev then proceeded to pronounce a criticism of Nagy and Rákosi that fell equally on the shoulders of both men. The latter was guilty of sticking to his old policies and not recognizing his mistakes. These errors were harmful to party unity. Then CPSU's first secretary also made a significant remark, which strengthened Nagy's hand. Khrushchev claimed that it was incorrect, as Rákosi had attempted, to explain away the earlier Soviet criticisms by arguing that they constituted a "Beria provocation". "He [Rákosi] thinks," said Khrushchev, "that after we shot Beria, we also shot [Beria's] criticisms. This is not so". Rákosi was responsible for the sentencing of many innocent people.<sup>169</sup> He then scolded Prime Minister Imre Nagy for dwelling too much on the mistakes of the past and not talking enough about the "results" of that same past.<sup>170</sup> This and the statement that "the mistakes will have to be corrected in such a way as not to destroy comrade Rákosi's authority" were clear signals that Khrushchev was no longer firmly supporting the policy of 1953. At the same time he was not ready to return to traditional Stalinism either. In a particularly noteworthy comment Khrushchev touched on the collectivization issue by stating that he did not favor its acceleration, but did not wish to see it held back either. Khrushchev referred to his own experience in the Ukraine as a positive example. There the collectivization had been pursued as part of a "very tense class struggle, but was still concluded three years earlier than in neighboring Byelorussia".<sup>171</sup> Moscow's critiques crystallized around the themes of party unity and economic policy; and it was not hard to see that Khrushchev and the Hungarian "old guard" did not see eye-to-eye on the latter issue. Yet, the two problems were closely interrelated, because economy was the stumbling bloc that divided the Hungarian leadership the most. Of course the economy was important for its own sake as well. The Soviets reinstated Ernő Gerő, who had been relieved of his economic responsibilities in 1953, and asked him once again to devote fully his energies to economic issues.

This reinstatement allowed Gerő to launch an offensive designed to revive his old economic policies. He and Rákosi tried to convince Yuri Andropov, the Soviet ambassador to Hungary, that the new government was responsible for the economic problems because of its non-repressive peasant policies and devotion to raising the standard of living. The rise of incomes championed by the new government simply exceeded the levels that the country's economy could support. Gerő recommended that the problems could best be alleviated by reducing the

standard of living. This argument startled the ambassador.<sup>172</sup> Nagy was able effectively to counter the proposals put forward by the hard-line Stalinists, and he threatened to get rid of those who failed to do their best to implement the new course. In his effort to put Gerő out of the way Nagy enjoyed the support of Mihály Farkas, who made an effort to convince Andropov that Gerő had been responsible for the economic malaise.<sup>173</sup> Nagy emerged victorious in the party's Central Committee, which took his side in the controversy; and opponents of the new economic course, such as István Friss, lost their position. Nonetheless, Nagy committed a blunder by publishing an article in the party daily, *Szabad Nép*, which violated the party norms by drawing public attention to a dispute within the party leadership. Such publicity, according to the Soviet ambassador, created an "intolerable and abnormal situation," where "the authority of the party leaders was destroyed in the eyes of a whole range of party organizations".<sup>174</sup> Andropov was sending other signals of alarm as well. In late 1954 he reiterated his view that the Hungarian economy was generally in a poor shape, and he drew attention to the problems in agricultural production in particular. Andropov claimed that the yields of Hungarian crops, such as potatoes, maize, sugar beets and sunflower seeds were too low. Furthermore, the state cooperatives' supply of fodder "was not organized," and the ambassador complained of great losses in livestock, including the loss of 250,000 pigs because they were poorly kept. Andropov's superior passed his observations along to the Central Committee.<sup>175</sup> Andropov's note also had to be sent to Gosplan in order to facilitate the preparations for the economic consultations requested by the Hungarians. At the same time Rákosi's attention had to be called to the "deficiencies in the development of the Hungarian national economy and the work of the Central Committee".<sup>176</sup> This made Rákosi's task much easier. He had been plotting against Nagy, while spending extended time in the Soviet Union, allegedly for medical treatment. Interestingly enough, the Soviets' poor assessment of the weak performance of the Hungarian economy under the new course was shared by the American officials in Budapest. According to the United States embassy there was no appreciable change in the standard of living, and the economy's performance had failed to improve. Moscow now "offered" yet another consultation. Nagy tried to convince the Political Committee to reject the need for the consultation, but this time the party organ failed him and sided with Rákosi, his arch enemy.<sup>177</sup> Stalin's former "best disciple" now turned the tables on his foe. The inquisition in Moscow now showered its curses on Nagy, and to a lesser extent Farkas. Even Malenkov now turned his back on the reform program, which may have been an indication of his dwindling influence in the Politburo. Nagy's ill-fated article in the *Szabad Nép* came to be one of the chief targets of the attacks, especially because it demonstrated that its author was breaking the party's sacred unity. Malenkov "read it with great anxiety;" and claimed that had it not been signed by Nagy, he would have thought it was written by someone alien

from Marxism. He deemed that “rotten” trends were lurking behind Nagy. Khrushchev seconded Malenkov by claiming that Nagy’s article was “the best gift for the bourgeoisie; [and] Churchill is rubbing his hands” in the hope that Hungary will become a second Yugoslavia.<sup>178</sup> Kaganovich and Molotov both got an opportunity to take revenge for having had to disavow their own policies eighteen months earlier. Now they claimed that Rákosi was a well-respected communist and condemned Nagy’s economic policy. Molotov blamed it on Beria and noted that they had warned the Hungarians that the recommendation to allow people to leave the cooperatives was only Beria’s provocation. Molotov also added that without the Soviet Union’s assistance the Hungarian People’s Democracy could not survive.<sup>179</sup> There was one significant difference from 1953. Then the Soviets actually appointed Nagy and dismissed Rákosi as the premier. Now they did not put forward such a concrete “recommendation”. Instead, they offered Nagy a chance to survive by exercising self-criticism. At this point Nagy offered his resignation. But this solution was not favored in Moscow because it would have signaled that the Prime Minister was in conflict with the party. The Kremlin and the Hungarian Political Committee preferred some form of public self-criticism. Consequently, the Hungarian Politburo discarded Nagy’s resignation at its January 13 session. On the other hand Nagy had to accept all of the elements of Soviet criticism and implement the required changes without reserve.<sup>180</sup> Although the Prime Minister was not completely inimical to some measure of self-criticism, he was not willing to go to the lengths required of him by his adversaries in Hungary and the Soviet Union. At this point, Mikhail Suslov was sent to Budapest to solve the impasse. In a pattern that would subsequently be repeated, Hungarian domestic issues came under the direct guidance of a Soviet expert. The Soviet emissary not only met with Nagy on two occasions to try to negotiate a suitable solution but also participated in the March 12–14 session of the HWP Central Committee meeting. Even during the Stalin years the Soviets had not resorted to sitting in on the meetings of the Hungarian Central Committee or at any other party sessions. Mikoyan would do so again in July 1956, when Rákosi’s successor had to be appointed. This time, however, it was Nagy’s turn to be defeated. He was forced to resign and was then expelled, first from the Politburo and then from the party itself. Nevertheless, the genie was already out of the bottle, and it would take a massive armed Soviet intervention to usher it back in again.

Nagy’s removal can be understood against the backdrop of the power struggle within the Kremlin. Malenkov lost out to Khrushchev. This meant that instead of promoting a policy of peaceful coexistence, the shoring up anti-imperialist defense was determined to be the proper response to West Germany’s remilitarization. Khrushchev was unable to rid himself of the notion that the final showdown with the bourgeoisie was inevitable. Hence, the Warsaw Pact required increased military contribution by the people’s democracies; and the emphasis on consumer

goods and agriculture became untenable. One historian has argued that Nagy's reforms did not fit into the Soviet policy of piecemeal "corrections," not because of their rapidity but because they threatened to transcend a certain limit and destabilize the system. From Moscow's perspective it was not the actual details of the reforms but the tendencies revealed by the reforms that were too dangerous. Namely, these steps appeared to be leading to "democratic reform".<sup>181</sup> Yet, there must have been some immediate and concrete reasons behind the Soviet intervention to steer Hungary toward yet another change. This time the Hungarians were to adopt a "conservative" course. If one recognizes that the role of Hungary as a Leninist client state was to satisfy the USSR's imperial needs, these reasons become more readily apparent. Hungary, as we have seen, rendered military services to the Soviet Union. The importance of these military services were suddenly upgraded by the Austrian treaty and even more by the existence of the Warsaw Pact. Some Soviet armed forces had to be removed from Austria and re-stationed in Hungary. Khrushchev had criticized Nagy's military policy by stressing that it was not enough to have enough bacon, aircraft were also needed.<sup>182</sup> Hence, if Hungary had followed Nagy's policies, it would not have been able to satisfy the Soviet empire's military requirements. Moreover, Nagy had proved unable to carry out the reduction of Hungarian indebtedness to the West; and what is more, the debt problem had gotten far worse while he was in power. It did not matter that there was nothing much that Nagy, or anyone else, could do about this indebtedness. The trend had to be arrested, because it was destabilizing the economy and increasing Hungary's reliance on such countries as the Federal Republic of Germany. Yet, if the Stalinists thought that the time had come to return to the old path, they were badly mistaken. The seemingly unpredictable Soviet leadership soon produced yet another unexpected turn of events. As we have seen, Soviet domestic political development often had a direct influence on the Hungarian domestic sphere. But the impact of Soviet domestic politics was never as dramatic as it would become in the wake of Khrushchev's secret speech at the CPSU's 20th Congress. Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalin's purges cleared the way to an open split between the reformers and Stalinists within the Hungarian party. Furthermore, the criticism of Stalin also eventually led to the mass expression of discontent, or in the final analysis to the first revolution behind the iron curtain.

#### Notes

1. See Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overtstreich: Germany in Soviet Foreign Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998).
2. For an argument that Stalin would have accepted a unified Germany in 1952 under certain conditions see Stein Bjornstad, "The Soviet Union and German Unification During Stalin's



Last Years” (Oslo, 1998. *Defense Studies*, 1998/1). On the other hand Adomeit believes that “the diplomatic note and its sequels were a tactical device designed to... gain a greater degree of influence on West German public opinion ... to delay or prevent West Germany defense integration in the framework of the EDC ...” and other ends. Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch*, *op. cit.*, 88.

3. See on this Sergei N. Goncharev–Xue Litai–John W. Lewis, *Uncertain Partners – Stalin, Mao and the Korean War* (Stanford, 1995).
4. On the Soviet Union and the Korean War see Kathryn Weathersby, “*Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945–1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives.*” Woodrow Wilson Center Working Paper No. 8.
5. On the US perception of Soviet involvement in the Korean attack see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, 1973) 34.
6. Reshenie Politbiuro TsK VKP (b) ob ekonomicheskikh otnosheniakh mezhdru SSR i starane narodnoi demokratii. *Vostochnaia Evropa v Dokumentah Rossiskih Arhivov (VEDRA)*, tom I (Moscow: Sibirskii Hronograf, 1996). Document 308. December 23 1948.
7. George Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe, 1945–1992* (Oxford: Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).
8. *Ibid.*
9. On one occasion the Hungarian government wanted to turn to the UN with a protest against “US intervention in Hungary’s internal affairs”, but asked for the Soviet advice (i.e. instruction) whether they should do so. The request went to Vishinsky, who in turn addressed Stalin for the answer. Vishinski’s letter to Stalin. September 8 1951. *VEDRA*, tom II 1949–1953 (Moscow: Sibirskii Hronograf, 1998). Document 220. 609–610. On another occasion Deputy Foreign Minister Andor Berei turned to the Soviet ambassador for “advice” whether the Hungarians should close the US Legation’s library in Budapest. Iz dnevnika Kiseleva. *Ibid.*, November 17 1950. Document 150. 441–442.
10. Rákosi Mátyás, *Visszaemlékezések 1940–1956* (Memoirs, 1940–1956). Volume II. (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 1997).
11. Hence for example the Soviet Union’s Council of Ministers resolved to send to Hungary forty-five expert advisors to ministries including Machine Construction, Heavy Industry, Agriculture, etc. at the Hungarian government’s request. Soviet Ministrov SSSR Postanovlenie. April 30 1956. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 96. 296–297. In the same year Rákosi requested the sending of six Soviet experts to work in the oil industry. Rákosi’s letter to Stalin. October 31 1951. *Ibid.*, Document 147. 437–439.
12. Rákosi’s letter to Suslov. April 13 1949. *Ibid.*, Document 22. 70–74.
13. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Berkley, 1979) 96. Martin Wight argued that a nation can be sovereign without full national independence. Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (London, 1946).
14. Rákosi’s letter to Stalin. October 31 1951. *op. cit.*
15. Minutes of the meeting of the HWP Political Committee. June 20 1953. HNA HWP 276 f. 53 cs. 122 őe. Volume I.
16. Rákosi’s letter to Stalin. October 31 1950. *op. cit.*
17. Dokladnaia zapiska Zabolzhskogo Baranovu. July 11 1949. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 54. 179–180. See also Dokladnaia zapiska S. T. Zabolzhskogo v Sekretariat Informburo o protsesse nad Rajkom, besedah s Rákosim. September 29 1949. *Ibid.* Document No. 72. 231–234. Rákosi told his interlocutor that he had had “many debates with Farkas, who wanted to condemn everyone to death”. On the other hand Rákosi wanted to save Brankov in order to be able to “further reveal” the “Tito clique”.

18. In 1949 prior to the national election the party fixed the number of party member MPs in 70%. 20% would be “secret party members”. Rákosi’s letter to Suslov. April 13 1949. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.*, 70–74.
19. Report by István Friss to Mátyás Rákosi. March 12 1949. HNA HWP Rákosi Secretariat. 276 f. 65 cs. 114 őe.
20. See Rainer M. János, “Sztálin és Rákosi, Sztálin és Magyarország, 1949–1953” (Stalin, Rákosi, Stalin and Hungary). In: *Évkönyv 1956–1998* (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 1998) 92.
21. *Ibid.*, 93.
22. Spravka OVP TsK VKP (b) ‘o natsionaliticheskikh oshibkakh rukovodstva kommunisticheskikh partii i burzhoaznom vlianii v vengerskoi kommunisticheskoi pechati’. *VEDRA*, tom I, *op. cit.* Document 269. 802–806.
23. Rákosi Mátyás, *Visszaemlékezések*, Volume II, *op. cit.*, 753. Rákosi considered Stalin an all-round talent, who was better than his former rivals like Bukharin or Trotski if all requirements for a politician are taken together even if in one or another field they may have been more able than Stalin.
24. Rákosi’s letter to Suslov. April 13 1949. *op. cit.*; Iz zapis besedi M.A. Suslova s chlenom Politburo J. Révai. *VEDRA*, tom I, *op. cit.* Document 283. 872–875.
25. Rainer M. János, *Sztálin és Rákosi, Sztálin és Magyarország*, *op. cit.*
26. Dokladnaia zapiska S. G. Zabolzhskogo. September 29 1949. *VEDRA*, tom II. Document 74. 237–238. Zapis besedi S.G. Zabolzhskogo s Rákosi. January 31 1950. *VEDRA*, *op. cit.* Document 97. 297–298.
27. Dokladnaia zapiska Zabolzhskogo Barananovu o besede c Rákosi. July 11 1949. *Ibid.*, Document 55. 181–183.
28. On the Rajk trial see Hajdu Tibor, “A Rajk-per háttéré és fázisai” (The background and phases of the Rajk trial). *Társadalmi Szemle*, 1992/11. 17–36; Rainer M. János, *Sztálin és Rákosi, Sztálin és Magyarország*, *op. cit.*
29. Andrzej Paczkowski, *Fél évszázad Lengyelország történetéből, 1939–1989* (Half a century from the history of Poland, 1939–1989) (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 1997) 177.
30. On these accusations see Rainer M. János, “Távirat Filippov elvtársnak” (Telegram to Comrade Filipov). In: *1956-os Évkönyv*, 1998, *op. cit.* 106.
31. Dokladnaia zapiska Zabolzhskogo Baranivü. July 11 1949. *op. cit.*
32. Annotatsia dokladnoi zapiski chlena TsK VPT Z. Biró o besedah s Gottwaldom i Slanskim. September 26 1949. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 69. 219–224.
33. Dokladnaia zapiska Zabolzhskogo Grigorianu. Marc 9 1950. Document 105. 316–319.
34. Elméleti feladataink és a pártoktatás. Vázlat az Országos Oktatási Értekezleten tartandó referátumhoz (Our theoretical tasks and party education). 1948. Contribution by József Révai and Erzsébet Andics. HN HWP 276 f. 53 cs. 10 őe.
35. Andrzej Paczkowski, *Fél évszázad Lengyelország történetéből*, *op. cit.*, 173.
36. Iz dnevnika posla SSSR v Vengrii. June 2 1950. Document 126. 371–372.
37. Stalin to Rákosi. June 23 1950. Published in: Rainer M. János, *Távirat Filippov elvtársnak*, *op. cit.*, 113.
38. In his memoirs Rákosi makes note of the affair and expresses his lack of comprehension about Zöld’s awful act. Rákosi Mátyás, ...He neglected to mention that he had been already planning to arrest him together with Kádár and Kállai. Rákosi’s letter to Stalin. Zöld committed suicide on April 20, Kádár and Kállai were arrested soon after. March 27 1951. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 171. 497–498. Rákosi reported to Stalin on Zöld’s suicide on April 21 noting that Kádár and Kállai would be arrested when they find out about it. Rákosi to Filippov. April 21 1951. In: Rainer M. János, *Távirat Filippov elvtársnak*, *op. cit.*, 116–117.
39. Rákosi Mátyás, *Visszaemlékezések*, *op. cit.*, Volume II, 899.

40. Rákosi's letter to Stalin. March 27 1951. *op. cit.*
41. See Izsák Lajos, *Rendszerváltástól rendszerváltásig* (From transition to transition). (Budapest: Kulturtrade, 1998) 110–111.
42. Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 158–164.
43. Rákosi's speech at the meeting of the HWP Political Committee. HNA HWP Rákosi Secretariat. 276 f. 65 cs. 30 őe.
44. In writing this passage I used Schmidt Mária, "Ez lesz a perek pere" – Adalékok egy torzóban maradt tisztogatási akcióhoz. In.: Schmidt Mária, *Diktatúrák Ördögsekéren* (Budapest, 1998).
45. George Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, *op. cit.*
46. Rákosi Mátyás, *Visszaemlékezések*, Volume II, *op. cit.*, 756.
47. The figure is from Recommendation to the HWP Political Committee. December 6 1955. HNA HWP 276 f. 53 cs. 260 őe.
48. Letter by Kiselev to the Foreign Minister of the USSR, A. Ia. Vishinsky. December 25 1952. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 309. 853–854.
49. Iz dnevnika sovietnika posolstva SSSR v Vengrii Filippova. Zapis besedi s Z. Bíró. February 3 1956. *Ibid.*, Document 312. 866–871.
50. See Jegyzőkönyv a szovjet és magyar párt- és állami vezetők tárgyalásairól – 1953. június 13–16. Edited by T. Varga György. *Múltunk*, 1992/3. 242.
51. Izsák Lajos, *Rendszerváltástól rendszerváltásig*, *op. cit.*, 112.
52. Andrzej Paczkowski, *Fél évszázad Lengyelország történetéből*, *op. cit.*, 175.
53. Révai's memorandum to Rákosi. HNA HWP Rákosi Secretariat. 276 f. 65 cs. 16 őe.
54. Report to the HWP Political Committee. October 29 1953. HNA HWP 276 f. 53 cs. 146 őe.
55. MIHO 10–51048/952. V-93057.
56. Izsák Lajos, *Rendszerváltástól rendszerváltásig*, *op. cit.*, 113.
57. MIHO 10–51048–952. V-93057.
58. HNA HWP Rákosi secretariat. 276 f. 65 cs. 82 őe.
59. Iz dnevnika Kiseleva. Zapis besedi s sekretarem Ts. K. VPT Kovacsem. June 16 1951. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 204. 567–570.
60. Iz dnevnika Kiseleva. Zapis besedi s ministrom vnutrennih del Vengrii. August 28 1951. Document 215. 600–601.
61. Iz dnevnika Kiseleva. Beseda s ministrom inostrannikh del. September 5 1951. Document 217. 604–605.
62. Soprovoditelnoe pismo Kiseleva Vishinskomu. December 25 1952. *Ibid.*, Document 309, *op. cit.*
63. Pismo sotrudnika tsentralnogo apparata MID SSSR Levichkina zamestiteliu ministra inostrannikh del Zorinu. 21 March 1949. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 15. 41–43.
64. Informatsionnaia spravka sovietnika Posolstva SSSR v Vengrii Smirnova. October 20 1950. *Ibid.*, Document 144. 425–429.
65. The Soviet cultural institutions were supposed to work according to "long-term, pre-formulated plans". Pismo sotrudnika tsentralnogo apparata MID SSSR Levichkina, March 21 1949, *op. cit.*
66. Iz dnevnika Kiseleva. Zapis besedi s Rákosi. October 20 1952. *Ibid.*, Document 298. 824–827.
67. Resolution on the work of the Soviet–Hungarian Association. February 1 1954. HNA HWP 276 f. 65. Cs. 94 őe. The Soviet Union failed to become popular. The resolution claimed that the Association sought to "justify the overextended production plans – which were not popular at all – with the Soviet example and thus on not one occasion depicted the Soviet Union in a distorted way".

68. Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union* (London, 1983) 177.
69. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FR)* 1949, V; 483; *FR*, 1950. IV, 982–1021; *FR*, 1951, IV, 1459–1464.
70. Pismo A. Ia. Vishinskogo I. V. Stalinu. September 8 1951. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 220. 609–610. In this case the Hungarian government was *instructed* not to turn to the UN. Obrasczenie Gromiko k Stalinu. September 19 1951. *Ibid.*, Document 237. 646–647.
71. Iz dnevnika Kiseleva. Zapis besedi so stats-sekretarem MID Vengrii Berei. November 17 1950. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 150. 441–442.
72. Jegyzőkönyv a szovjet és a magyar párt- és állami vezetők tárgyalásairól. *Múltunk* 1992/3. Published by T. Varga György, 268. According to Rákosi's account the Americans raised the issue on two separate occasions. On the first, at the reception, the US minister said that Eisenhower would be interested in meeting the leaders of the people's democracies and would perhaps invite them. Rákosi informed Kiselev of the initiative, and asked his foreign minister to inform Kiselev if he found out more. Without his knowledge the US minister raised the issue again at another reception, to an official of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry in a "concrete form", saying that Eisenhower wanted to meet Rákosi himself. Allegedly the latter found out about this second initiative only when the Soviets read Kiselev's report. Rákosi Mátyás, *Visszaemlékezések*, II, *op. cit.*, 917.
73. HNA FM XIX-J-1-j USA tük 1/b Box 1. 0064–1955.
74. The Soviet ambassador's visit at Foreign Minister Imre Horváth. HNA FM Moszkva tük XIX-J-1-j IV-100.2. 1/d Box 5 1455/56.
75. HNA HWP Rákosi Secretariat. 276 f. 65 cs. 182 őe.
76. Iz dnevnika sovietnika posoltsva SSSR v Vengrii, S. T. Kuzmina. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 156. January 4 1951.
77. Pismo Vishinskogo Stalinu. September 8 1951. *op. cit.*
78. Andrzej Paczkowski, *Fél évszázad Lengyelország történetéből*, *op. cit.*, 178.
79. The agreements are published in *Múltunk*, 1995/3. Edited by Pataki István. 123–158.
80. The forthcoming passage is based on Okváth Imre, *Bástya a béke frontján – Magyar haderő és katonapolitika, 1945–1956* (Budapest, 1998).
81. Rákosi Mátyás, *Visszaemlékezések*, Volume II, *op. cit.*, 860–863.
82. The Soviet ambassador in Budapest noticed that the Korean events caused great anxiety and a certain amount of confusion in the Hungarian leadership. Iz dnevnika Kiseleva. Zapis besedi s ministrom oboroni. July 18 1950. *VEDRA*, *op. cit.*, tom II. Document 130. 386–388.
83. Quoted by Okváth Imre, *Bástya a béke frontján*, *op. cit.*, 334.
84. Letter by Khrushchev to Rákosi. HNA HWP 276 f. 53. cs. 229 őe.
85. The Minister of Defense to Rákosi. March 15 1954; The 45/24/1954 Resolution of the Defense Council. March 29 1954. HNA HWP 276 f. 65 cs. 195 őe; Okváth Imre, *Bástya a béke frontján*, *op. cit.*, 387.
86. Okváth Imre, *Ibid.*, 341; The Minister of Defense to the Council of Defense. May 31 1955. HNA HWP 276 f. 53. cs. 234 őe.
87. For description of the exercise see David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, *op. cit.*, 326–328.
88. See Pető Iván–Szakács Sándor, *A hazai gazdaság négy évtizedének története*, *op. cit.*, 162.
89. Soprovoditelnoe pismo L. Beria G. Malenkovu. June 1–2 1953. *VEDRA*, tom II, *op. cit.* Document 329. 918.
90. Andrzej Paczkowski, *Fél évszázad Lengyelország történetéből*, *op. cit.*, 157.
91. See Pető Iván–Szakács Sándor, *A hazai gazdaság négy évtizedének története*, *op. cit.*, 152–167; Izsák Lajos, *Rendszerváltástól rendszerváltásig*, *op. cit.*, 114–115.
92. Source: Pető Iván–Szakács Sándor, *Ibid.*, 168.

93. Pető Iván–Szakács Sándor, *Ibid.*, 212–233.
94. Andrzej Paczkowski, *Fél évszázad Lengyelország történetéből*, *op. cit.*, 160.
95. Memorandum to the Delivery Group of the Local Council Division of the Ministry of the Interior. January 22 1953. HNA XIX-A-1–2-ee. F/tük Box 198. 39. dosszié.
96. Report by the deputy general manager of the Soviet–Hungarian Bauxite Company. December 13 1950. HNA Economic Section (ES) XIX F 35. Box 2.
97. Meeting held by Ernő Gerő on foreign trade. June 3 1952. HNA HWP Gerő Secretariat. 276 f. 66 cs. 69 őe.
98. Memorandum of goods returned because of complaints on quality. August 27 1953. HNA HWP 276 f. 67 cs. 178 őe.
99. Report on foreign trade. August 1954. HNA HWP Gerő Secretariat. 276 f. 66 cs. 69 őe.
100. Meeting on foreign trade held by Ernő Gerő on foreign trade. June 3 1952. *op. cit.*
101. HNA XIX-A-2-ee A/tük Box 6. 8. dosszié.
102. Meeting on foreign trade held by Ernő Gerő. June 3 1952. *op. cit.*
103. *Ibid.*
104. The Balkan Department of MID (Valkov) to the Soviet consul in Győr (Iniushkin). January 26 1953. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 33 papka 164 delo 200.
105. Memorandum by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Foreign and Domestic Trade (Kumikin) to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade (Zorin). May 23 1953. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 33 papka 164 delo 210.
106. Kiselev’s messages to Molotov. May 25 1953. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 33 papka 164 delo 210 and 211.
107. Kiselev to Molotov. May 25 1953. *Ibid.*, delo 210; Memorandum by Kumikin to Zorin. June 4 1953. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 33 papka 164 delo 210.
108. Pető Iván–Szakács Sándor, *A hazai gazdaság négy évtizedének története*, *op. cit.*, 166.
109. Kiselev to Molotov. May 30 1953. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 33 papka 166 delo 240.
110. Source: Pető Iván–Szakács Sándor, *A hazai gazdaság történetének négy évtizede*, *op. cit.*, 164. The debt was calculated in “deviza forints”, which was equal to two forints. The exchange rate for the forint was 12 to a dollar.
111. Memorandum on the situation in foreign trade by the Minister of Foreign Trade (László Hágy). October 13 1953. HNA HWP 276 f. 67. cs. 178 őe.
112. Memorandum on the debt situation, 1955. HNA HWP Rákosi secretariat, 276 f. 65. cs. 283 őe.
113. Record of the meeting of the HWP Political Committee. January 2 1956. HNA HWP 276 f. 53. cs. 264 őe.
114. Memorandum to the HWP Political Committee. October 11 1954. HNA HWP 276 f. 53. cs. 199 őe.
115. Zimianin to Molotov on the economic situation in Hungary. November 12 1954. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 34 papka 178 delo 260.
116. November 1952. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 33 papka 164 delo 211.
117. See Urbán Károly, *Sztálin halálától a forradalom kitöréséig – a magyar–szovjet kapcsolatok története, 1953–1956*. Unpublished manuscript.
118. Kiselev to Molotov. May 30 1953. *op. cit.*
119. Urbán Károly, *Sztálin halálától a forradalom kitöréséig*, *op. cit.*, 27.
120. Rákosi Mátyás, *Visszaemlékezések*, Volume II, *op. cit.*, 948.
121. The meeting of the HWP Political Committee. January 2 1956. *op. cit.*; Nachalniku Glavnogo Upravlenia po delam ekonomicheskikh sviazei so storoni narodnoi demokratii. March 3 1955. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 36 papka 183 delo 240.

122. Source: Pécsi Kálmán, *A magyar–szovjet gazdasági kapcsolatok 30 éve* (Budapest, 1979) 190–192.
123. Urbán Károly, *Sztálin halálától a forradalom kitöréséig, op. cit., 37.*
124. *Ibid.*, 34–37.
125. Report by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Andor Berei to the Minister of Trade László Háty. February 2 1955. HNA HWP 276 f. 65. cs. 283 őe.
126. Memorandum by László Háty. February 24 1956. 276 f. 65. cs. 283 őe.
127. The coalmines of the Pécs region, which was among the country's most important coal regions had been attached the Soviet–Hungarian Navigation company.
128. Obligations concerning the companies purchased from the Soviet Union. HNA HWP Gerő Secretariat. 276 f. 66. cs. 71 őe.
129. Memorandum on the sale of Soviet companies and the expansion of the activities of the joint companies. HNA HWP Rákosi Secretariat. 276 f. 65. cs. 282 őe.
130. Memorandum to the HWP Political Committee on bauxite deliveries to the USSR. undated (1955). HNA HWP 276 f. 53. cs. 223 őe.
131. Urbán Károly, *Sztálin halálától a forradalom kitöréséig, op. cit., 31.*
132. Meeting of the HWP Political Committee. August 18 1954. HNA HWP 276 f. 53. cs. 190 őe.
133. Gerő to Rákosi. August 27 1954. HNA HWP Rákosi Secretariat. 276 f. 65 cs. 283 őe.
134. Report to the HWP Political Committee on the purchase of the Hungarian–Soviet joint companies. October 10 1954. HNA HWP 276 f. 53. Cs. 198 őe.
135. Soglashenie o prodazhe Vengerskoi NR sovietskoi doli uchastie v sovietsko–vengerskih smeshannih obschestvah. November 6 1954. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 34 papka 178 delo 256.
136. Memorandum to the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party Political Committee. November 19 1957. HNA ES XIX-F-17-ah. Box 1.
137. Protocol on geological works to discover radioactive elements in Hungary. June 8 1955. HNA HWP 276 f. 53 cs. 234 őe.
138. Egyezmény a MNK kormánya és a Szovjet SzSzK kormánya között vállalat létrehozásáról uránlelőhelyek felkutatására és kiaknázására Magyarországon. 1956. HNA ES XIX-F-17-ah. Box 1.
139. A Magyar Népköztársaság Minisztertanácsának 3351/V.21./1956 Határozata a Bauxitbánya Vállalat fejlesztése és működtetéséről. May 17 1956. HNA ES XIX-F-17-ah. Box 1; Memorandum to András Hegedűs. August 21 1956. HNA HWP XIX-F-ah. Box 1.
140. Előterjesztés a gazdasági bizottsághoz. December 18 1957. HNA ES XIX-F-ah. Box 1.
141. *Ibid.*
142. *Ibid.*
143. See Vladislav Zubok–Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War* (Harvard, 1996).
144. "This is not a Politburo but a Madhouse" – The Post-Stalin Succession Struggle, Soviet *Deutschlandpolitik* and the SED: *New Evidence from Russian, German and Hungarian Archives*. Introduced and annotated by Christian Ostermann. CWIHP Bulletin Issue 10. March 1998. 61.
145. *Ibid.*, 63.
146. Quoted in Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch: Germany in Soviet Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998) 93.
147. Christian Ostermann, *New Evidence from Russian, German and Hungarian Archives, op. cit., 65–66.*
148. Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch, op. cit., 98.*
149. Iz dnevnika vtoroga sekretaria Posolstva SSSR v Vengrii Sikacheva. October 14 1956. VEDRA, II, *op. cit.* Document 297. 821–824.

150. Urbán Károly, "Nagy Imre és G. M. Malenkov – két miniszterelnök Sztálin után." *Múltunk*, 1996/1. 138.
151. For the Soviet debate on the fate of the GDR and Ulbricht's manouvers see Christian Ostermann, "This is not a Politburo but a Madhouse", *op. cit.*
152. For the documentation of the June 13–16 meeting see: Jegyzőkönyv a szovjet és a magyar párt-és állami vezetők tárgyalásairól, *op. cit.*, 234–269. A part of the minutes were appeared in English translation in: Christian Ostermann, "This is not a Politburo but a Madhouse", *op. cit.*, 81–86.
153. Rákosi Mátyás, *Visszaemlékezések*, Volume II, *op. cit.*, 936–937.
154. *Ibid.*, 937–939.
155. Vladislav Zubok–Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, *op. cit.*, 155.
156. *Ibid.*, 158–159.
157. *Ibid.*, 159–162.
158. *Ibid.*, 164.
159. *Ibid.*, 164; 166.
160. *Ibid.*, 168.
161. The parallel features of Malenkov's and Imre Nagy's course between 1953–1955 are treated by Urbán Károly, "Nagy Imre és G. M. Malenkov. Két miniszterelnök Sztálin után." *Múltunk*, 1991/1. 129–180.
162. Rainer M. János, "Nagy Imre tizenhét hónapjának a mérlege, 1953–1955" (The balance of Imre Nagy's seventeen months, 1953–1955). *Múltunk*, 1998/2. 5–6. On Nagy's political career see: Rainer M. János, *Nagy Imre. Politikai életrajz* (Imre Nagy. Political Biography). (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 1996).
163. Urbán Károly, "Nagy Imre és G. M. Malenkov", *op. cit.*, 150–152.
164. Pető Iván–Szakács Sándor, *A hazai gazdaság négy évtizedének története*, *op. cit.*, 248–249.
165. *Ibid.*, 272.
166. The transcript of the meeting are not verbatim records and were compiled from the notes of several Hungarian participants. These do not include the reflections of the Hungarian side. See: "Konzultációk". Dokumentumok a magyar és szovjet pártvezetők két moszkvai találkozásáról 1954–1955-ben ("Consultations". Documents on the two Moscow meetings of the Hungarian and the Soviet Party Leaders in 1954–1955). Published by Rainer M. János–Urbán Károly. *Múltunk*, 1992/4. 124–148.
167. *Ibid.*, 135.
168. *Ibid.*, 140. In reality the Political Committee discarded István Friss's proposal to halt the economic reforms and supported Nagy in the reduction of investments by 11 billion forints.
169. *Ibid.*, 135–136.
170. *Ibid.*, 136.
171. *Ibid.*, 137.
172. Baráth Magdolna, "A szovjet nagykövet 1954. őszi beszélgetései" (Conversations of the Soviet ambassador in fall 1954). *1956-os Évkönyv*, 1956. (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 1998) 121–122.
173. *Ibid.*, 126.
174. *Ibid.*
175. Spravka Andropova Zorinu. 12 October 1954. AVP RF Fond 077 opis 34 papka 178 delo 260. The document contains an appendix with Zorin's writing to Zimianin: "Nuzhno informirovat TsK, daite predlozhenie".
176. Spravka Zimianina Molotovu. November 12 1954. AVPRF Fond 077 opis 34 papka 178 delo 203.

177. Rainer M. János–Urbán Károly, “Konzultációk”, *op. cit.*, 126.
178. *Ibid.*, 145.
179. *Ibid.*, 143.
180. Urbán Károly, “Nagy Imre és G. M. Malenkov,” *op. cit.*, 170.
181. Rainer M. János, *Döntés a Kremlben* (Decision in the Kremlin). Döntés a Kremlben, 1956. A szovjet pártelnökség vitái Magyarországról. (1956-os Intézet, Budapest, 1996.) 112.
182. Rainer M. János–Urbán Károly, “Konzultációk”, *op. cit.*, 147.



# DEZSÓ KOSZTOLÁNYI AND INTERTEXTUALITY

## ANTICIPATIONS OF POST-MODERN LITERARY CRITICISM

THOMAS COOPER

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN,  
U.S.A.

In 1918 French linguist Antoine Meillet published an ambitious work entitled *Les langues dans l'Europe nouvelle*. Purporting to offer an assessment of the linguistic situation in Europe “telle qu'elle est, et non comme les vanités et les prétensions nationales ... souhaitent qu'elle soit”.<sup>1</sup> the Frenchman descanted on the inadequacies of many European languages. Expressing his belief that in Europe “la civilisation matérielle, la science, l'art même s'y unifient”,<sup>2</sup> Meillet lamented that the gradual incorporation of many languages into academic and intellectual discourse hampered this process. He complained that in the 20th century “la connaissance de l'allemand, de l'anglais, de l'espagnol, du français, de l'italien ne suffit plus à qui veut se tenir au courant de la civilisation moderne.”<sup>3</sup>

There was an unintended irony to Meillet's rueful remark. At the time that he was writing his book the Hungarian poet and novelist Dezsó Kosztolányi was formulating ideas about language very different from those of Meillet. In articles published in Hungarian periodicals Kosztolányi expressed views that threw into question some of Meillet's basic tenets. Indeed, in 1930 Kosztolányi penned a response to Meillet's work in which he challenged the Frenchman's conclusions. Meillet, however, ignorant and even disdainful of Hungarian, could hardly “se tenir au courant.”

Kosztolányi's conception of language constituted a radical departure from the views of his European contemporaries. Though his ideas seem to reflect the influence of German thinker Wilhelm von Humboldt, they also bear startling similarity to the concepts later expressed by Bakhtin, Barthes, and others. Indeed, in both his articles and his fiction the Hungarian poet anticipated some of the most influential theories of the 20th century.

In order to understand Kosztolányi's conception of language we ought to begin by contrasting his ideas with those of Meillet. Meillet adopted a conventional approach to language. Echoing Locke's faith in the primacy of thought, he contended that “[la langue] fournit à la pensée une forme”.<sup>4</sup> Many of the languages of Europe Meillet thought insufficient for this task. Breton, for example, he dismissed as “un outil si grossier, si peu utile qu'aucun Breton sensé ne peut songer

à l'employer de préférence."<sup>5</sup> He had similar contempt for Hungarian. Indeed, the Frenchman believed that the entire Finno-Ugric language family "n'a fourni de véritables langues de civilisation."<sup>6</sup>

Kosztolányi thought this ranking of languages absurd. He viewed language as an organic structure and rejected the notion that one language could be considered superior or inferior to another. A people's language, he believed, is an embodiment of its past.<sup>7</sup> According to Kosztolányi, language is "a mighty self-contained organism, a product of nature."<sup>8</sup> "From this lofty standpoint", Kosztolányi argued in his response to Meillet, "all languages are equal. [...] There is not, there has never been, there cannot be a barbaric language."<sup>9</sup> "We cannot pass judgement", he believed, "on nature's primeval manifestation."<sup>10</sup>

This view of language was not new in Europe. Already in the 19th century Wilhelm von Humboldt had expressed similar ideas. Like Kosztolányi, Humboldt also described language as an organism. He contended that "[Eine Sprache] ist ein organisches Wesen", and the linguist "muss sie, als solches, behandeln."<sup>11</sup> Humboldt believed, "Die Sprache [...] ist das Organ des inneren Seyns, dies Seyn selbst, wie es nach und nach zur inneren Erkenntniss und zur Aeusserung [sic!] gelangt."<sup>12</sup> "Die Sprache", Humboldt contended, "ist gleichsam die äusserliche Erscheinung des Geistes der Völker: ihre Sprache is ihr Geist und ihr Geist ist ihre Sprache, man kann sich beide nie identisch genug denken."<sup>13</sup> In contrast to Meillet, Humboldt valued the diversity of languages:

Die Sprachverschiedenheit tritt [...] in doppelter Gestalt auf, einmal als naturhistorische Erscheinung, als unvermeidliche Folge der Verschiedenheit, und Absonderung der Völkerstämme, als Hinderniss der unmittelbaren Verbindung des Menschengeschlechts; dann als intellectuell-teleologische Erscheinung, als Bildungsmittel der Nationen, als Vehikel einer reicheren Mannigfaltigkeit, und grösseren Eigenthümlichkeit intellectueller Erzeugnisse, als Schöpferin einer, auf gegenseitiges Gefühl der Individualität gegründeten, und dadurch innigeren Verbindung des gebildeten Theils des Menschengeschlechtes.<sup>14</sup>

There are other affinities between the ideas of the German educator and the Hungarian poet. Both Kosztolányi and Humboldt doubted the primacy of thought over language. Indeed, they questioned this division. Humboldt wrote "Wenn wir Intellectualität und Sprache trennen, so existirt [sic?] eine solche Scheidung in der Wahrheit nicht."<sup>15</sup> "Das Denken", Humboldt suggested, "ist aber nicht bloss abhängig von der Sprache überhaupt, sondern, bis auf einen gewissen Grad, auch von jeder einzelnen bestimmten [sic?]."<sup>16</sup>

Kosztolányi shared this belief. He echoed Humboldt when he wrote, "we think in words, and not only does thought influence language, language influences thought."<sup>17</sup> Kosztolányi waged an almost quixotic struggle against the incorpora-

tion of words and structures from foreign languages into Hungarian. In 1926 he wrote an article in which he offered literally dozens of alternatives to the word “fantasztikus” (“fantastic”).<sup>18</sup> He was motivated not only by his conviction that the incorporation of loan words into Hungarian would cause people to forget words of Finno-Ugric origin. He also believed that this would impair an individual’s ability to think. The child who grows up learning foreign languages, he cautioned, would fail to develop an understanding of the subtleties of one language. Kosztolányi believed that “both his sense for language and his ability to think will wither.”<sup>19</sup> “Not only do we think”, Kosztolányi wrote, “language also thinks. [...] people cannot take liberties with language, because if they hit it, it will hit back, it will intercept and make off with their thoughts – whereas, if they handle it gently, not only will it carry into effect their thoughts, it might even lend them one or two new ones.”<sup>20</sup>

Yet Kosztolányi’s ideas went beyond those of Humboldt in their implications. Humboldt questioned the potential of translation:

Man hat zwar die Wörter der verschiedenen Sprachen mit allgemein gültigen Zeichen vertauschen wollen, wie dieselben die Mathematik in den Linien, Zahlen, und der Buchstabenrechnung besitzt. Allein es lässt sich damit nur ein kleiner Theil der Masse des Denkbaren erschöpfen, da diese Zeichen, ihrer Natur nach, nur auf solche Begriffe passen, welche durch blosse Construction erzeugt werden können.<sup>21</sup>

Kosztolányi – though in practice a translator – in theory rejected translation. Challenging the notion that the relationship between signifier and signified was arbitrary, Kosztolányi suggested that the signifier signified nothing more than itself. Just as Derrida would later play with the French pronunciation of Hegel’s name (“l’aigle”<sup>22</sup>), Kosztolányi pointed out that the Hungarian word “désir” would translate into Hungarian as “vágý”, yet the word itself echoed the Hungarian word “vezér” (“leader”).<sup>23</sup> The translator, he wrote, must waver between such possibilities.

For Kosztolányi a symbol was valid only if in it the signified becomes the signifier. “Tej” (milk), he wrote, “for me is simply *tej*, because it has a past of thirty-six years – the number of years I have lived. But *Milch* for me is only twenty-six, *lait*, *latte*, and *milk* barely twenty. Sometimes I don’t even believe that they really mean *tej*.”<sup>24</sup> This blurring of signified and signifier underlies Kosztolányi’s conviction that “It is not possible to translate.”<sup>25</sup>

Kosztolányi anticipated not only the ideas of Derrida, but also those of Bakhtin and Barthes. He suggested that language itself is fundamentally intertextual. “The value of a word”, he wrote, “depends first and foremost on its context.”<sup>26</sup> Words, he claimed, do not exist independently of one another. In one of his articles on the hazards of learning foreign languages at a young age, Kosztolányi listed various

words for “weak.” Each of these was appropriate in a particular context. The feeble arm, he wrote, was “gyenge” (“weak”), but a soft breeze was “lenge” (“light”).<sup>27</sup> In each case the meaning of the word was dictated by the other words in the sentence. It was not contained within the word itself, but rather in the contexts within which it had been used.

The similarity between this view and the essential tenet of Bakhtin’s work is striking. “Each word”, Bakhtin wrote, “tastes of the context and contexts within which it has lived[.]”<sup>28</sup> The implications of this idea were more fully developed by Barthes:

a text is [...] a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture. [...] [The writer’s] only power is to mix writings [...] Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner ‘thing’ he thinks to ‘translate’ is itself only a ready-formed dictionary[.]<sup>29</sup>

None of these ideas was alien to Kosztolányi. “There is much that we don’t remember”, he wrote. “But language – hidden from us – remembers everything.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, decades before Barthes put pen to paper Kosztolányi had expressed the notion of writing as an intransitive verb. “I do not use language”, he wrote, “rather it uses me.”<sup>31</sup>

How are these ideas about language present in Kosztolányi’s fiction? An examination of a few passages from his novel *Skylark*, published in 1924, is revealing. Focusing on Kosztolányi’s use of loan words as dialectical markers that reveal the presence of several languages styles of discourse within one text, I will suggest how the novel itself may be perceived as an allegory for Kosztolányi’s conception of language.

The characters of the novel attempt to appropriate words and phrases of a language foreign to them and, as Bakhtin writes, “to populate [the words] with [their] own intentions[.]”<sup>32</sup> (From now on I use the word language in the sense articulated by Bakhtin.) Their failure illustrates the contrast between their haughty pretensions and their humdrum lives. The following passage describes a loutish braggart who is hoping to prove his bravery to the townspeople by engaging in a duel:

Feri Fűzes was to meet the opponent’s seconds in the club dining room so that statements could be drawn up and the thorny affair, which had been dragging on for weeks, could finally be settled, for better or worse, according to the proper protocol. Provocation, duel, court of honor, sabres, plastrons, five paces forward, to the finish – these were the words that buzzed through Feri Fűzes’ head[.]<sup>33</sup>

This passage is taken from Richard Aczél's English translation of the novel. Aczél has succeeded in rendering the distinctive feature of the original. The words buzzing through Feri Füzes' head are clearly the hackneyed rhetoric of chivalry. For example, the word 'buzzed' reveals the implied author's skeptical stance toward Feri's appropriation of these words.

There is one feature of the original Hungarian text, however, that deserves attention. In the Hungarian the words "provokálás" ("provocation"), "bandázs" ("plastron"), and "öt lépés avansz" ("five paces forward") stand in stark contrast to the words "megverekedés" ("duel"), "becsületbíróság" ("court of honor"), and "végkimerülés" ("to the finish").<sup>34</sup> The words in the first group are of Latin origin. The words in the second group are Finno-Ugric. This use of awkward loan words for which there are common Finno-Ugric equivalents in Hungarian reveals that Feri Füzes is attempting to adopt a language other than his own. A Hungarian would usually say "előre" for "forward." The word "avansz" is the Hungarian spelling of the French fencing term, "avance." This appropriation of another's speech depicts Feri Füzes as a fop who strives to ape fashionable affectations.

Kosztolányi makes more blatant use of loan words when satirizing the political pretensions of the townspeople:

At the opposite end of the table the men talked politics. They spoke of state delegations, constitutional crises and of Prime Minister Kálmán Széll.

"Ah yes", Környey sighed. "A visionary statesman[.]"

Priboczay, who was an old forty-eighter, became visibly heated.

"No doubt because he went to Vienna for the unveiling of the Albrecht statue. He, prime minister of Hungary. For shame!"

"Tactics", Környey replied."

"Tactics", Priboczay nodded bitterly. "And when they ordered our boys out to the Hentzi statue in Pest? That was tactics too, I suppose? Bánffy would never have done such a thing. Never. Your man's a commoner today."

"Raison d'état", Feri Füzes commented.<sup>35</sup>

Aczél again preserved vital features of the original. Introduced here as the utterances of the characters, the words "delegations", "constitutional crises", "visionary" and "raison d'état" represent a parodic stylization of political discourse.

It is nevertheless worthwhile, however, to consider some of the features of the original. In the original, the English "talk politics" is "politizálni."<sup>36</sup> This is a verb created from the noun "politika" ("politics"). The noun is, obviously, a loan word. Just as "talk politics" is mocking, "politizálni" is always ironic. In the Hungarian text, however, this loan word accents more clearly the transition into a new language. It is then followed by a series of equally awkward loan words that a speaker

of English will recognize: *delegáció*, *taktika*, *koncepciójú*. This last word is particularly absurd. It is the adjective form of the noun “*koncepció*” (“concept”). The phrase “*nagy koncepciójú államférfi*” translates literally into English as “big concepted statesman”, meaning “statesman of great concepts.” Though the word “*koncepciójú*” exists in Hungarian, it sounds as absurd as the word “concepted” would in English. The absurdity of these terms betrays the vacuity of the discussion.

It is significant that the characters in this dialogue interpret the word “tactics” differently. The first sees tactics as a virtue, the second as a failing. Each fails to populate the word with his intentions. Bakhtin writes:

not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them[.]<sup>37</sup>

It was Kosztolányi himself who warned that language, if mishandled, would “intercept and make off with”<sup>38</sup> the speaker’s thoughts.

In these examples the transitions from the words of the narrator to the speech, or thoughts, of the characters are clearly marked. There are more subtle changes, however, in which a character’s attempt to appropriate another language is contained in narrated monologue. The following passage describes Feri Füzes’ outrage at being made the butt of a joke:

For a moment Feri Füzes was at a complete loss. Then he asked himself how such behavior could possibly offend a proper gentleman, and looked for someone else to provoke.<sup>39</sup>

The first instance of parodic language (“how such behavior could possibly offend a proper gentleman”) is introduced explicitly as the character’s thoughts. It is worth mentioning that in the original Kosztolányi used the word “gentleman”, though no such word exists in Hungarian. This ostentatious use of an à-la-mode term (many Hungarians considered loan words a sign of cultivation at the time Kosztolányi wrote) is typical of Feri Füzes’ airs. The concluding clause of the passage is, in Hungarian at least, equally mocking. The telling clue is the word “*provokáljon*” (“provoke”). This loan word reveals that this not simple narration but rather the thoughts of Feri Füzes.

The irony of the mixture of languages in the novel is not simple however. The failure of a character to appropriate another’s speech does not always evoke scorn, but sometimes pity and sympathy. There are two stalwart peasants who struggle to adopt the townspeople’s language in the novel. They too attempt – and usually fail – to appropriate the speech of others. In this instance the failure is pathetic rather than comic.

The following passage illustrates the inability of the peasants to grasp the language of the townspeople. The protagonist of the novel, Ákos, reads newspaper headlines to his wife, referred to here as “Mother”:

“Strike”, said Ákos. “An English word. Pronounced *strahyke*. The workers don’t want to work.”

“Why not?”

“Because they don’t want to.”

“Why don’t they make them?”

Ákos shrugged.

“Goodness, Mother”, he said in a low voice, adjusting his spectacles on the bridge of his nose, “five thousand workers are on strike in Brazil. ‘The employers have adamantly refused to meet their demands.’”

“Poor things”, said Mother, not really knowing whom she pitied, the workers or the employers.<sup>40</sup>

The newspaper constitutes a foreign language that the couple is not able to understand.

When the peasants venture into town they encounter similar riddles. The protagonist is puzzled by the words on the menu at a fancy restaurant:

Vanilla noodles. What exactly can they be? I’ve never tried them, never even seen them. I’ve no idea how they might taste. [...] I’ve only ever glimpsed the name, in passing, between the curd dumplings, fruit sorbets and hazelnut gateaux. As if I’d dreamed it somewhere. Still can’t get it out of my head. [...] Noix de veau. Another puzzle. [...] Crayfish bisque, caviar à la russe. Absurd macabre names.<sup>41</sup>

In this passage the character himself mixes three distinct languages. As he struggles to sort out the words on the menu (the first language), he makes simple statements such as “I’ve never tried them” (the second language). He then lapses into fancy rhetoric (“As if I’d dreamed it somewhere”) inspired by what is for him something fantastic, but what is for the reader something mundane. This constitutes the third language.

The closing phrase of this passage reveals that the character himself is aware of the dissonance between these languages. As he grows more perplexed by the strange languages of the townspeople, however, he becomes less aware of how he mixes these languages. In the following passage he asks himself if it is really a sin to indulge in the pleasure of fine cuisine:

Is it a sin? They say the devil torments the fasting hermit. If it is a sin, it’s all the sweeter for being so. What do I care? One can’t deny these things exist. Goulash soup exists, out there in the world, on the table.

[...] And on the menu too, between the saddles of mutton and herds-men's cutlets. Beside the tenderloins of pork and the rump steaks. And then all the other things on the menu – they exist too. The sides of pork, the Transylvanian mixed grills, the lamb chops. Not to mention all the dishes with English, French and Italian names: beefsteaks, tournedos, fritto misto, breathing their foreign aromas. Then the cheeses, light and creamy, thick and heavy, the Camemberts, the Bries, the Port-Saluts; and the wines, red Bull's Blood from Eger, sweet muscatels, light Chardonnays, and Fair Maid from Badacsony, in tall and slender bottles. Fair Maid. Beloved Fair Maid. Ah, my sweet, Fair Maid...<sup>742</sup>

The mixture of languages in this passage gives rise to a multiplicity of meanings. On the one hand the juxtaposition of quasi-biblical rhetoric with entries from a restaurant menu is comic. On the other hand the character's adoption of a lyric tone as he recites the items is pathetic. So enthralled is he by the delicacies (pleasures which for him have been forbidden by his austere daughter) that he manages to fill these banal terms with all his longing and frustration. The character has successfully appropriated another's speech and transformed it into a language of his own. In a clever blurring of signifier and signified Kosztolányi has strung together mundane terms to create a poem expressing the transports of a man tasting life's forbidden fruits as if for the first time.

The novel *Skylark* is a subtle tragedy in which the author manipulates clashing languages in order to depict the hopelessness of the characters' strivings to escape their monotonous lives. The story can be interpreted as an allegory illustrating Kosztolányi's belief that the meaning of a word is dictated by the context in which it has been used. The characters' inability to escape their dreary surroundings is analogous to the impossibility of uprooting a word from the contexts within which it has acquired meaning.

To this day Kosztolányi's ideas about language remain – to my knowledge – unmentioned by scholars outside of Hungary. Much has changed since the publication of Meillet's book. Yet it is still the case that, along with Russian, west European languages are studied in depth, while other languages of Europe (not to mention the rest of the world) are given cursory attention. Even the iron curtain did not prevent the ideas of Bakhtin from spreading to the West. The Hungarian language has proven to be a more formidable barrier.

## References

- Bakhtin, M. M., *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981.



- Barthes, Roland, *Image, Music, Text*. Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- von Humboldt, Wilhelm, "Über das vergleichende Sprachstudium in Beziehung auf die verschiedenen Epochen der Sprachentwicklung", In: *Wilhelm von Humboldts Werke*. Vierter Band. Berling: B. Behr's Verlag, 1907.
- von Humboldt, Wilhelm, "Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluß auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts," In: *Wilhelm von Humboldts Werke*. Siebenter Band. Beriling: B. Behr's Verlag, 1907.
- Kosztolányi, Dezső, "A magyar nyelv helye a földgolyón." In: *Nyugat* (Reprint, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó), July 16, 1930. 81–92.
- Kosztolányi, Dezső, *Nyelv és lélek*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1990.
- Kosztolányi, Dezső, *Pacsirta*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1961.
- Kosztolányi, Dezső, *Pacsirta* ("Skylark"). Translated by Richard Aczél. London: Chatto and Windus, 1993.
- Meillet, Antoine, *Les langues dans l'Europe nouvelle*. Payot: Paris, 1928.
- Szegedy-Maszák, Mihály, "Kosztolányi nyelvszemlélete." In: *Alföld* (August, 1994), 47–59.

### Notes

1. Antoine Meillet, *Les langues dans l'Europe nouvelle*, (Payot: Paris: 1928.) Avant-propos de la 1<sup>er</sup> Édition (1918).
2. *Ibid.*, 1.
3. *Ibid.*, 1.
4. *Ibid.*, 3.
5. *Ibid.*, 178–179.
6. *Ibid.*, 50.
7. The German word "Volk" is perhaps a better rendering of the Hungarian "nép".
8. Dezső Kosztolányi, *Nyelv és lélek* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1990), 8. ("A nyelv egymagában álló hatalmas szervezet, egy természetproduktum.")
9. Dezső Kosztolányi, "A magyar nyelv helye a földgolyón." In: *Nyugat* (Reprint, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó), July 16, 1930. 81–92. ("Ebből a magas szempontból minden nyelv egyenlő... Nincs, nem volt, nem lehet 'barbár' nyelv.")
10. *Nyelv és lélek*, 252. ("A természet ősi megnyilatkozásában nem bírálhatjuk")
11. Wilhelm von Humboldt, "Über das vergleichende Sprachstudium in Beziehung auf die verschiedenen Epochen der Sprachentwicklung." In: *Wilhelm von Humboldts Werke* (Beriling: B. Behr's Verlag, 1907). Vierter Band, 10.
12. Wilhelm von Humboldt, "Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluß auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts." In: *Ibid.*, Siebenter Band, 14.
13. *Ibid.*, Siebenter Band, 42.
14. *Ibid.*, Vierter Band, 8.
15. *Ibid.*, Siebenter Band, 42.
16. *Ibid.*, Vierter Band, 21
17. *Nyelv és lélek*, 49–50. ("Szavakban gondolkozunk, s nemcsak a gondolkozás hat vissza a nyelvre, hanem a nyelv is visszahat a gondolkozásra.")
18. *Ibid.*, 63–65.
19. *Ibid.*, 49. ("Mind a nyelvérzéke, mind a gondolkozása elsovrad.")
20. *Ibid.*, 120–121. ("Nemcsak mi gondolkozunk: a nyelv is gondolkozik. [...] a nyelvvel nem

lehet komázni, mert az, ha ütök, vissza is üt, elsikkasztja gondolatukat, holott, ha csínján bánnak vele, nemcsak érvényre juttatná gondolatukat, hanem esetleg kölcsön is adna nekik egyet-kettőt.”)

21. *Wilhelm von Humboldts Werke*, Vierter Band, 21.
22. See Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, “Kosztolányi nyelvszemlélete.” In: *Alföld* (August, 1994), 47–59.
23. *Nyelv és lélek*, 575.
24. *Ibid.*, 44. (“A *tej* számomra csakugyan *tej*, mert harmichat éves múltja van, ahány éve élek, de a *Milch* bennem csak huszonhat éves, a *lait*, a *latte*, és a *milk* pedig alig húsz. Néha nem is hiszem el, hogy valóban *tej*-et jelentenek.”)
25. *Ibid.*, 120. (“Nem lehet fordítani.”)
26. *Ibid.*, 15. (“A szó értéke mindenekelőtt a helyzetétől függ[.]”)
27. *Ibid.*, 49. (“Az erőtlen karó gyenge, a tavaszi levél azonban már zsenge, a könnyű ruhácska vagy a szellő lenge, a tengő fa csenevész, a düledező, régi ház rozoga, az üveg pohár törékeny, a beteges gyermek vézna vagy satnya vagy mazna, a tévedő ember gyarló, az erélytelen táplálék silány vagy hitvány vagy gyatra stb.”)
28. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981), 293.
29. Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*. Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 146.
30. *Nyelv és lélek*, 53. (“Sok mindenre nem emlékszünk. De a nyelv, rejtetten, mindenre emlékszik.”)
31. *Ibid.*, 318. (“[...] én nem használom: hanem engem használ.”)
32. Bakhtin, 293.
33. Dezső Kosztolányi, *Pacsirta* (“Skylark”). Translated by Richard Aczél. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), 39.
34. Dezső Kosztolányi, *Pacsirta* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1961), 38.
35. *Skylark*, 68.
36. *Pacsirta*, 60.
37. Bakhtin, 294.
38. See note 20.
39. *Pacsirta*, 69.
40. *Ibid.*, 57.
41. *Ibid.*, 61–62.
42. *Ibid.*, 63.

**THY SPEECH BEWRAYETH THEE:  
THOU SHALT NOT STEAL THE PRESTIGE  
OF FOREIGN LITERATURES**

**PSEUDOTRANSLATIONS IN HUNGARY AFTER 1989**

**ANIKÓ SOHÁR**

Miskolc University, Miskolc,  
Hungary

The use of pseudonyms and pseudotranslations<sup>1</sup> has always been very common, particularly in popular, as opposed to elite or canonised literature, or when introducing new literary forms. When one wishes to conceal one's identity, the simplest way to do so is to adopt a pen name. In all probability, no reader will look up the copyright in the imprint. If one likes, the copyright will belong to the *nom de plume*, thus preventing even the interested reader from finding out who lurks behind the alias. But it is still possible to go further. In addition to a foreign-sounding allonym one may provide the reader with an 'original' publisher, a publication date, a translator's name (which might, or might not, be that of the author), a translation date in the imprint, a dedication, a motto referring to the author's assumed culture, and, most frequently, a foreword or afterword, which is full of hints designed to confirm the author's assumed identity. In most cases the identification process can be very difficult and time-consuming, and the results are in fact often unverifiable without the writer's avowal (as happened recently in the case of Lili Csokonai). Thus, any literature, at any time, may unknowingly include certain assumed translations, and the fictitious translations are treated as if they were genuine ones. Since pseudotranslations usually occur in popular and/or experimental genres, they tend to appear on the periphery of the literary system, a fact that of course helps to preserve the mystery.

There are times in a literature, or culture, when applying a feigned name is the "in thing," times when nobody bothers with pseudonyms, and times when fictitious names are practically compulsory for a certain group of writers and/or in a particular genre. This latter situation seems to be the case in contemporary Hungary.

As I have already written extensively about the discovery of the phenomenon and the social and cultural reasons for it,<sup>2</sup> here I will only sum up my findings very briefly in order to put pseudotranslations into context. Then I will proceed to

analyse the characteristics of modern pseudotranslations by focusing primarily on the similarities and divergences between the original, English-speaking and the domesticated, Hungarian versions of science fiction and fantasy; but I will occasionally also refer to other genres.

While researching translated science fiction and fantasy novels, I accidentally came across pseudotranslations in 1995. Investigating novels by Wayne Chapman, apparently an American writer, I discovered that Wayne Chapman was in truth a pseudonym of two separate Hungarian authors. My research led to the discovery of approximately one hundred assumed names in the genre, much more than in other popular genres such as romance, detective fiction, or thriller. There appeared to be an entire group with interconnected roles such as (pseudo)-translator, editor, manager and publisher. Furthermore, I was led to a better understanding of the significant role that these fictitious translations play in the cultural importation process. We have to bear in mind that before the political changes of 1989–1990 the government frowned upon entertainment literature; and although such literature was published in a relatively large numbers of copies beginning with the 1960s,<sup>3</sup> the assortment remained rather limited. For instance, in science fiction the annual production, local and imported, did not exceed twenty novels. Certain (sub)-genres were completely ignored, and some authors were blacklisted. It can therefore be claimed that, despite the obvious public demand for this type of reading-matter, a literary subsystem of popular writing, as it existed in the West, was almost unknown in Hungary. Consequently, a remarkable boom in publishing such books began in 1989.

It goes without saying that the altered political and economic conditions, which have characterised the transition of converting ‘socialism’ into capitalism, have heavily influenced cultural importation. This is particularly true in the case of ‘trash’ literature.<sup>4</sup> Evidently, this sort of publication is not considered to be in need of the same protection and subsidies that canonised or specialist literatures require. On the contrary, its primary purpose is to bring in a profit; which it may in fact do. The present book market remains in a state of flux and is highly concentrated.<sup>5</sup> Fifty publishing houses produce approximately eighty-six percent of the publications, and thirteen dominate sixty percent of the entire book market. About fifty to sixty publishers, usually with well-defined specialisations, partake in the rest; and according to the *Hungarian National Bibliography*, compiled by the personnel of Széchenyi National Library, about five thousand institutions possess copyright permits.

The market for entertainment literature, including illustrated popular science, covers approximately twenty-seven percent of the whole production. Two huge international corporations – whose turnovers currently account for second and third place within the book market in Hungary – own one half of the turnover in this segment of the publishing industry. Naturally, the other, small or medium-

sized, enterprises do not have the capital to compete with them. But by publishing prestigious ‘translations’ without having to pay royalties and expensive copyrights – a Hungarian writer should not expect more than 50,000 to 100,000 Hungarian *forints*, while the minimum copyright for a novel is \$1,000 – the smaller and medium sized firms can attract readers. This is particularly true, if the assumed translation is much more popular with consumers than a genuine one. Thus, the economic realities of the publishing trade provide sound reasons to encourage domestic production. Furthermore, the average number of copies for each work has been decreasing from 30,000 a few years ago to today’s 4,000 to 5,000; and in the case of foreign writers the small Hungarian publishers usually buy the copyright of only one edition.

Let me return for a moment to the previously noted prestige of English-speaking literature. American and British writers prevail in practically all popular genres, and their predominance, supported by other political, economic, and cultural factors, has given a great impetus to pseudotranslating. It is by no means accidental that most of the pen names chosen by the Hungarian authors are English. These include Martin Clark Ashton, John Caldwell, Arthur Philip Feist, Jeff Hank, Mark Shadow, and Jeremy Taylor. It also has to be taken into consideration that quite a few Anglo-Saxon writers adapt fictitious names,<sup>6</sup> sometimes more than one,<sup>7</sup> when writing popular literature. Even if they do not attempt to be accepted as mainstream authors; almost every writer assumes a fanciful name when taking an occasional trip outside his or her usual genre.<sup>8</sup> When one regularly works in different (sub)-genres, he or she is expected to use several pseudonyms, at least one for each (sub)-genre.<sup>9</sup> In these practices the Hungarians are following suit. For instance, István Nemes has at least seven pen names in science fiction and fantasy and several more when he writes detective stories, romances, or film and television scripts. Another Hungarian well-supplied with allonyms is Zsolt Szántai. These authors are by no means exceptional.

However, the use of pseudotranslations in popular genres appears to be required by the distributors<sup>10</sup> in order to enhance their marketability. In entertainment literature a book with a Hungarian name on the front cover is regarded as unsaleable, dud stock. These days, when the market is overrun with would-be best sellers, an attractive cover and an alluring foreign-sounding name are necessities. Even authors, who were well known before 1989, such as István Nemere, have applied feigned names such as Stuart Herrington during the last decade. Although there are certain exceptions such as Vavyan Fable [Éva Molnár] or Leslie L. Lawrence [László L. Lőrincz], in most cases the use of a fictitious name is not initiated by the writers or publishers but by the distributors.

The collapse of the previous distribution network, strongly connected with the privatisation of the publishing industry, which dragged on until 1994, has led to a more diversified, fairly flexible distribution system and the inclusion of some new

forms such as mail order and book clubs. It has also engendered a quasi-legal book market. The latter produces either pirate editions or obsolete, out of copyright but seemingly novel publications and sells these books for a half or a third off the cover price. Thus, the customers are deceived in multiple ways. This quasi-legal zone, which appears to possess an independent chain of bookshops of its own, is estimated to have realised a turnover of approximately two billion Hungarian *forints* [HUF] in 1997, an amount equal to a little more than eight percent of the whole Hungarian book market. In other words, the quasi-legal market makes up a surprisingly large proportion of the whole.<sup>11</sup> Needless to say, this part of the book industry has hardly been researched, as it is nearly impossible to gather reliable data. Therefore, it will be ignored in this study. The problem of the quasi-legal publishing business has been mentioned only to provide a clearer picture of the current market situation and to point out that the numerous translations brought out by ephemeral, shady publishing houses have also contributed to the relatively high standing of translated literature.

As far as science fiction and fantasy are concerned most publishers working in these genres are relatively small, sometimes medium-sized, and, with a very few exceptions such as JLX or Maecenas International, owned by Hungarians. This does not seem to be the case with other popular genres. Harlequin is the most influential publisher of romance novels, and Bastei Budapest is in second place, at least from the point of view of the number of publications. Many small publishing houses held by Hungarians also issue such books. These include Aldina, Esély, Textronic, Gold Book, Hati Kv., and Risus. The collected data<sup>12</sup> indicates that only the Hungarian publishers make use of pseudotranslations.

Now, let us have a closer look at these assumed translations. Using science fiction and fantasy novels as examples, I will attempt to outline some of the overall tendencies in promoting popular fiction and pinpoint several of the customised features by comparing them with the characteristics of original, English-speaking stories. So as to clarify its context, this task needs a brief introduction to science fiction in Hungary.

As I have previously noted, this genre hardly existed before 1989. In fact, only Móra Ferenc Ifjúsági Könyvkiadó, which mainly specialised in children's and juvenile literature, had a paperback science fiction series *Kozmosz* [Cosmos], later *Galaktika* [Galaxy], and published four to twelve books yearly, or altogether 133 between 1969 and 1987. Of that number, forty-two, including four second editions,<sup>13</sup> were translated from English. In addition, there was a magazine for grown-ups called *Galaktika*, which began in 1972, and a bimonthly for juvenile readers entitled *Robur*, which was started in 1985. Other publishers also issued science fiction but only occasionally. The first translation of a fantasy was *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien and was published by Gondolat in 1981. (Better late than never.)

At that time science fiction was regarded as a specific type of ‘fantastic literature’ (as Todorov’s ‘la littérature fantastique’), whose origin went back to the Gothic novel, or more precisely to *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley.<sup>14</sup> It was not considered as part of a particular sort of American pulp literature, which had first emerged in the 1920s. This line of thought, stemming in large part from the UK, has prevailed since the 1960s and has evidently influenced the selection of novels to be published, along with the perception and reception of science fiction in Hungary. Obviously the fans of the genre have readily accepted this notion because it wholly corresponds to their attempts to establish science fiction in a more favourable literary position than ‘trash’ or juvenile literature. The promotion of science fiction as serious literature was assisted by Péter Kuczka, the editor of the above mentioned *Kozmosz/Galaktika* series, who included anthologies of short stories by Jorge Luis Borges, Italo Calvino, Mircea Eliade, Mór Jókai, and Frigyes Karinthy. It should be remembered that at that time aesthetic value and merit were still considered to be important factors for the editors in the selection of literary works.

Péter Kuczka wrote the entry ‘Hungary’ in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. In the article he claims, “Today [that is, 1992] 25-30 authors in Hungary are engaged in sf, although many of them work also in other genres.”<sup>15</sup>

He mentions †Klára Fehér, Mária Szepes, †László András, Péter Bogáti, †Iván Boldizsár, †József Cserna, Zoltán Csernai, Tibor Dáné, István Elek, Gyula Fekete, Mihály Gergely, Ervin Gyertyán, Gyula Hernádi, Dezső Kemény, András Kürti, Péter Lengyel, László L. Lőrincz, István Nemere, †György Nemes, László Nemes, Miklós Rónaszegi, Péter Szentmihályi Szabó, †Rudolf Weinbrenner, and †Péter Zsoldos – altogether twenty-four names – which is supposed to constitute an almost complete list. However, even by that time many more young writers had appeared on the science fiction and, perhaps more importantly, fantasy scenes. Among others, these included: Zsuzsa H. Kiss, Katalin Makó, Tibor Bihon, András Gáspár, György Juhász, Zsolt Kornya, István Nemes, Csanád Novák, Zsolt Szántai, †Tamás Viszokay. In fact, the younger generation has already taken over almost the entire science fiction business. The young writers are successfully redefining, renewing, extending, and promoting the genre, as well as introducing and popularising fantasy together with role-playing games, which include the whole range from thought-provoking speculation to heart-stirring tales, from recycled pulp to formula fantasy, “mass-produced supplier of wish fulfilment.”<sup>16</sup>

In the beginning it was quite an undertaking, but they seem to have managed very well. In the first six years after the political changes more than seven hundred science fiction and fantasy novels and numerous anthologies were published. This prodigious output was twice the number of all publications in fantastic literature during the socialist era, which had included highly canonised literature such as E. T. A. Hoffman, Virginia Wolf, Mikhail Bulgakov or Dante Alighieri to cite just a

few examples. Several magazines also came into being, although most of them vanished after just a few issues (*Dragon*, *Rúna* [Rune], *Solaria*, and most recently, *Analóg* [Analogue]). An annual science fiction convention is held in Salgótarján. Many bookshops specialising in these genres have been founded. These include stores with such notable names as Univerzum [Universe], Trollbarlang [Troll's Cave], Camelot in Budapest, the Valhalla bookshops all over the country, Csillagvég [Star's End] in Szeged, as well as others. Science fiction and fantasy newsgroups (e.g., *Solaria*), on-line fanzines (e.g., *Aurin*) and webpages flourish (*Codex*, *Beholder*, *Cherubion*, etc.), numerous associations (e.g., *Avana*, Hungarian Fantasy Association), role-playing meetings, competitions – even a national competition – and clubs have been organised. Mainly due to the popularity of fantasy the audience – its proportion, as everywhere else, is approximately seventy percent within the entire science fiction and fantasy production – and related games, has multiplied.

As opposed to the previous, careful selection of works to be published, these days competition determines what will be introduced to the Hungarian reader. The entertainment and marketability factors override all other considerations. For instance, as Table 1 shows, apart from the prestigious British and American originals, practically all other source cultures have vanished from the assortment of genuine translations. As has been said, most of the local production is published under foreign-sounding pseudonyms, a fact that at first appears to indicate a cultural homogeneity in popular genres. Nevertheless, on closer examination this impression proves to be illusory.

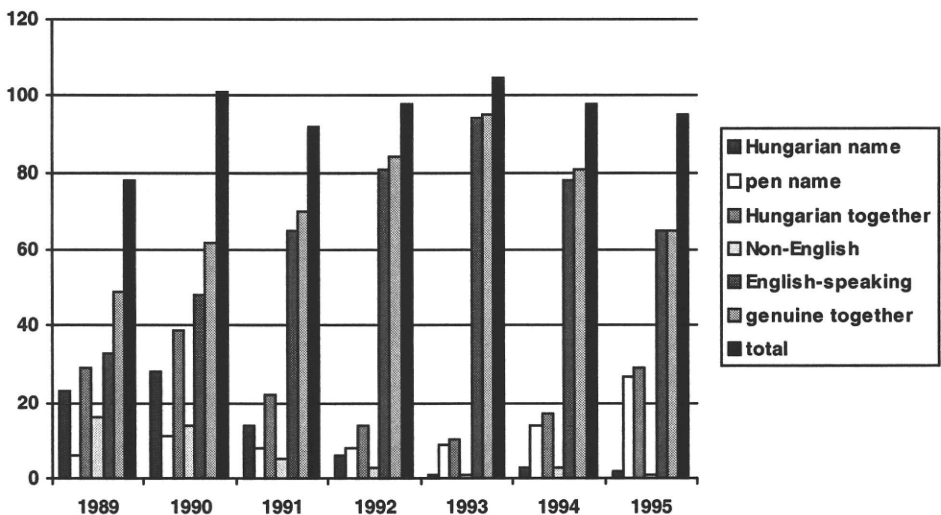


Figure 1. Science fiction and fantasy novels according to their source culture



Table 1. The textual structure of the three versions of Blood Season

BLOOD SEASON	FIRST ED.	SECOND ED.	THIRD ED.
PART 1	8 chapters	7 chapters	17 chapters
	chapter 1	chapter 1	chapters 1–2
	chapter 2	chapter 2	chapters 3–6
	chapter 3	chapter 3	chapters 7–9
	chapter 4	chapter 4	chapters 10–11
	chapters 5–6	chapter 5	chapters 12–14
	chapter 7 partly	chapter 5	
	chapter 7 partly	chapter 6	chapters 15–16
	chapter 6 partly		
	chapter 8 partly	chapter 7	chapter 17
	chapter 8 partly		
PART 2	3 chapters	6 chapters	12 chapters
	chapter 2	chapter 2	chapter 2
	chapter 2	chapter 3	chapter 3
	chapter 3	chapter 4	chapters 4–6
	chapter 3	chapter 5	chapters 7–10
	chapter 3	chapter 6	chapters 11–12
PART 3	7 chapters	8 chapters	16 chapters
		chapter 3 added	chapters 3–6
	chapter 3	chapter 4	chapters 7–9
	chapter 4	chapter 5	chapters 11–13
	chapter 5	chapter 6	chapter 14
	chapter 6	chapter 7	chapter 15
	chapter 7	chapter 8	chapter 16
PART 4	7 chapters	7 chapters	13 chapters
	chapter 1	chapter 1	chapters 1–2
	chapter 2	chapter 2	chapter 3
	chapter 3	chapter 3	chapter 4
	chapter 4	chapter 4	chapters 5–6
	chapter 5	chapter 5	chapters 7–8
	chapter 6	chapter 6	chapter 9
	chapter 7	chapter 7	chapters 10–13
PART 5	no division	no division	2 chapters

\* The corresponding chapters are not included in this table.

Besides a delimitation of source cultures, one of the new elements has been the appearance of several series, set in the same, shared imaginary world. These include: M.A.G.U.S. by Valhalla, Káosz [Chaos] by Cherubion, A hatalom kártyái [Cards of Power] by Beholder). In addition, sequels, often written by several peo-

ple, and sometimes linked with role-playing games, have appeared. The sequels may continue the story of very well known, usually American, books. For instance, Valhalla published sequels to Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, while various publishers provided sequels for *Alien*, *Terminator*, and *Star Wars*. This element has been loaned and domesticated to a certain extent as the listed imaginary worlds and linked role-playing games developed by Hungarians demonstrate. If we wish to examine the phenomenon of cultural importation, it becomes crucial for us to establish whether the Hungarian domestic versions differ from their English-speaking models, and if so, to what extent.

One may hypothesise at the outset that the palette of science fiction and fantasy literature in Hungary will range from mere copycat efforts to highly idiosyncratic writings, which domesticate the particular popular genre by using to a great extent Hungarian literary traditions and models.

I have selected two novels from different genres, *A Halál Havában* [In the Month of Death] by Wayne Chapman (András Gáspár and Csanád Novák) and *Tűzvarázs* [Fire Magic] by Vavyan Fable (Éva Molnár), to be analysed in order to point out the most relevant features within the main trends of pseudotranslating.

### ***Tűzvarázs* by Vavyan Fable**

*Tűzvarázs* is the twenty-first novel by Vavyan Fable (copyright: Éva Molnár), whose first book was published in the late eighties. Several companies had published her stories previously; but since the mid-1990s Fabyen<sup>17</sup> Kiadó has issued her works. *Tűzvarázs* appeared first in 1996 and there have been several other books since then. These novels are labelled 'detective fiction' in the *Hungarian National Bibliography*; but they should in fact be categorised as an amalgam of detective story and romance, with the added flavour of ecological concerns, and, more recently, paranormal phenomena. One of her novels, *Álomhajszó* [Dream Pursuit], combines all these elements with fantasy. This hybridisation of genres is by no means exceptional; on the contrary, diverse genre mixes are symptomatic of late twentieth-century fiction.

The front cover was designed by Hungarians at SEE STÚDIÓ. In Hungary domestic cover design is quite common even in the case of genuine translations. Besides being cheaper, local design is regarded as more alluring in the local market because visualisations are also culture-specific. In the background on the front cover is a black and white photo of a female face. The woman's face is partly hidden by the author's name in huge white letters, by three other black and white photographs of a smiling man, a cat, and a small boy, by the book's title in red edged white letters, and by a promotional sentence that reads: "E könyv olvastán lehozza a padlásról jobbik önmagát!" [Having read this book you shall fetch your

better self from the attic!] As a result only the woman's beautiful eyes can be seen completely. The back cover repeats the author's name and the title (twice) in the same format, includes a photograph of the author by Tamás Diner, a short blurb, a humorous warning (*Caution! Pure inventions! Vavyan Fable did not fashion a fitness cassette and a dietary Bible!, etc.*), the ISBN number and the price of 548 HUF.

As always in the publications of Fabyen Könyvkiadó, the ecological concerns are indicated by the following claim in the imprint: "Ennek a könyvnek az elkészítése érdekében egyetlen újabb fának sem kellett meghalnia ..." [Not even a single tree had to die in order to produce this book...]. That is, it was made using recycled paper.

The first, unnumbered page contains an idiosyncratic version of the typical reminder that the characters are fictitious,<sup>18</sup> and includes a statement of the author's gratitude to Ákos Fodor, a well-known poet, whose poems are often incorporated in Fable's novels.

The different sections of the story are separated from one another not by the more typical asterisk but by an abstract image of a piece of cake. There may be several possible interpretations for this. It could be a reference to the protagonist's diet and intensive fitness program, or it could be an allusion to a well-known Hungarian saying 'Az élet nem habostorta' [Life is not a cake with whipped cream on top]. (In English one would say, "Life is not a bowl of cherries.") Italics are used to highlight important parts and linguistic puns (e.g., *fogyton-fogyvást*, made of 'fogy' [lose weight] and 'folyton-folyvást').

Despite the eventful plot told by the female protagonist, the basic situation can easily be summed up. Ex-cop Shane Negrin, now public relations officer for the police department, has to face several criminals, including two who wish to get even with her because she arrested them ten years ago. At the same time her private life is also in crisis. She dislikes being a spokeswoman, finds it difficult to cope with her teen-age son, has trouble coming to terms with her own ageing, struggles with her increased weight, and discovers that her marriage has become jaded. As the plot progresses towards the inevitable happy ending, the heroine gradually solves all these problems. The criminals end up killed – in self-defence of course – or under lock and key. The heroine becomes a detective again and recovers her self-confidence. In part this is because she starts to do gymnastics, but it is mostly due to having fallen in love with her ex-lover again, with the man who happens to be the father of her son. The rekindled affair ends her son's uncommunicative and cheeky behaviour outright, dissolves her marriage, and puts a stop to her concerns about ageing.

We should focus primarily on the stylistic components because they disclose much more than the elements of the plot about how the domestication takes place. In any event the main features of the plot correspond to those of countless detec-

tive stories and romances (including the practically compulsory car chase with gun fight and bedroom scenes). The fairly conservative narrative technique and the dramatic elements are all rather immaterial. However, it has to be pointed out that the living standards described in the novel are far beyond the average Hungarian citizen's reach. These elevated lifestyles might be attributed to the genre because detective stories and romances tend to be about the upper classes, but they could also be attached to the general idealised nature of Fable's world.

Fable can spin a good story. But her most recent works are full of digressions, or to be more precise include quite a few loosely related episodes. These are usually reminiscences of the protagonist, which are not strictly necessary from the point of view of the main story line and render the overall structure rather unbalanced. These insertions either express a strong opinion held by the author concerning various topics – ranging from a two-page long mockery of the over-use of mobile phones, particularly by men,<sup>19</sup> to several passages about wholesome nutrition or health food discussed by women – or merely serve as basis for more linguistic witticism – such as *delejizió*,<sup>20</sup> *Micimacho*,<sup>21</sup> *fogyalt*,<sup>22</sup> and *Zsába Királynője*.<sup>23</sup> Fable obviously feels that she has to educate her readers, raise their awareness of particular matters, propagate certain attitudes, and condemn others. Her intention is sometimes too easily detected and this transparency perhaps reduces the impact of the narrative on the audience. These extraneous subjects have all the lively topicality of journalism and include references to current political events, or television series, and may render the book dated for any future generation. But of course, entertainment literature is not supposed to be enduring.

The writer bestows great care upon making the locale and the culture unidentifiable in all her books. The country or city where the plot takes place is either unnamed or has a fanciful name such as Line; Dalm, Fertő City [Slough City]. Other toponyms include names such as Sólyom-hegy [Hawk Hill], Einstein tér [Einstein Square], Orson utca [Orson Street], and Balzsam utca [Balsam Street]). The currency is also nameless. The names of the characters,<sup>24</sup> except for some nicknames,<sup>25</sup> cannot be ascertained to any particular language. In fact, this multicultural variety may suggest the United States as the location of the stories. Most of the references, especially to everyday life, are international. These include brand names,<sup>26</sup> writers and literary characters,<sup>27</sup> the film world,<sup>28</sup> and well-known personages,<sup>29</sup> institutions,<sup>30</sup> and objects.<sup>31</sup>

Quite a few English words or idioms appear in the text, either in their original form<sup>32</sup> or respelled according to Hungarian phonetics,<sup>33</sup> and are sometimes combined with Hungarian words.<sup>34</sup> This is also an international phenomenon, frequently lamented by purists. As English is today's *lingua franca*, particularly for the younger generations reared in a world dominated by English-speaking cultures, it is small wonder that more and more words and idioms are borrowed from its vocabulary. In fact, Fable is quite low-key in using words taken from English

compared with some other science fiction and fantasy writers. Some writers, who have been 'brought up' on role-playing games, simply Hungarianize a number of terms when writing their own fiction.

The loan-words are countered by the coined ones and the inventive use of Hungarian, resulting in an easy diction, fit for a hybrid novel, which is very close to the vernacular but draws on various lexicons. Fable's coinage applies different grammatical methods and belongs to the realm of linguistic humour as defined by Hart (1998).

One of example of Fable's method is combination. Here she merely puts two words together creating a new meaning: 'újra-hajadon' [lit. again-maiden, meaning divorced], 'anyósjártassági' [lit. mother-in-law proficiency, meaning married], 'biobucka' [lit. bio-hillock, meaning domestic animal underfoot], 'hörgőropi' [lit. bronchial pretzel, meaning cigarette], 'szomszédnyóvó' [lit. neighbor-hack, meaning objectionable person], 'nőfasizmus' [lit. female fascism, meaning feminism carried to excess], 'löncsdiszkont' [lit. lunch discounter, meaning obese person].

A special form of this type of linguistic joke is when the two words have an identical syllable, for instance gömbölydedóvó [gömbölyded + dedóvó, 'buxom' + 'nursery school'], and pufitness [pufi + fitness, 'fatty' + 'fitness'].

She also forms verbs out of nouns: melléfrigyel [aside + nuptials + verbal suffix, meaning mismarry], fitnesskedik [fitness + verbal suffix, meaning engage in fitness activities], kipszichéz [preverb + psyche + verbal suffix, meaning analyse psychologically], kifreudoz [preverb + Freud + verbal suffix, meaning analyse psychologically], in one case she makes up a new verb replacing one verbal suffix by another without altering the meaning [go dotty]: meghibbul out of meghibban.

Some of her coinages are derivations, made by adding an unusual ending (marked by **bold**) to a common word on the analogy of a synonym or similarity. For instance, she invents expressions such as fax**améta** (analogous to paksaméta, meaning lots of facsimile messages), gonosz**di** (uncommon suffix to form an adjective with less pejorative meaning [between catty and spiteful] out of the original adjective [evil], analogous to ravaszdi.), izmol**ás** (two suffixes, the former to form a verb out of a noun, the latter to form a noun out of that verb, analogous to many words, slang for 'do exercises'), macerat**úra** (analogous to szekatúra, slang-type, meaning rag), pasiz**mus** (guy + ism), röpd**e** (noun-forming suffix added to the verb 'fly', meaning bird-cage), trillár**ium** (analogous to aquarium, ending added to the noun 'trilla', meaning bird-cage), agyász, gyagyász, elmész (noun-forming suffix, these derivations always refer to occupation, their bases are 'brain', 'loony' and 'mind' resp., meaning psychiatrist), fűrgönc (the underlying form is fűрге [brisk], synonym of and analogous to küldönc [errand-boy]).

Fable also likes punning by altering just one letter – for instance, jógászasszony instead of jogászasszony (long 'o' turns the word 'female jurist' into 'female practitioner of yoga'); or bö**h**ömbika (böhom is a slang word, meaning very large, in

current slang *bika* [bull] is used as a synonym of man, put together the new word means a body-builder who takes steroids and the connotation of the term is very pejorative: brainless idiot) instead of *bölömbika* [mire-drum, *Botaurus stellaris*]; or applies homonyms, which are far less frequent in Hungarian than in English but do exist, for instance, *hangyász* (ant-eater and a slang word for psychiatrist), very assonant to *hangyás* [dotty]).

Besides these linguistic innovations it is very characteristic of her language use that she often applies nouns as attributives: for instance, *turbék géphang* (approx. cooing mechanical voice), *gerlice női hang* (lit. turtle-dove female voice), *frigó Bella* (lit. fridge Bella, meaning frigid), *konga harangnyelv* (lit. clang/conga bell-hammer, referring to sound and motion simultaneously), *jegesmedve asszony*, *jégmackó nő* (approx. polar bear woman, meaning woman of ample proportions), *liba Cindy Crawford* (lit. goose C.C.), *kohó város* (lit. furnace city, meaning very hot), *torlasz járgány* (approx. barricade car, meaning car blocking the traffic), *titanik Vitara* (lit. Titanic Vitara, meaning sunken), *bifla vers* (lit. swot poem, meaning poem learnt by heart), *fityma száj* (lit. foreskin mouth, meaning despising expression, playing with *fitymál* [despise]). This stylistic instrument is not rare in Hungarian but Fable seems to favour it much more than is customary in literary texts.

Fable also applies many synonyms – frequently repeating the same word is a very serious stylistic error in Hungarian – making the text more colourful. Since she draws from several lexicons, Fable is able to deploy thirty-four synonyms for woman<sup>36</sup> and forty-one synonyms for man<sup>36</sup> in this novel alone. Interestingly, the scope in the case of ‘woman’ is more wide-ranging than those used for men. Some are very pejorative: *kurva* [whore], *liba* [goose], *lotyó* [slut], *némber* [approx. nag], *picsa* [vulgar for ‘vagina’], *rongy* [rag], *satrafa* [termagant], *tehén* [cow]; while some are eulogistical: *bajadér* [bayadere], *dáma* [dame], *igézet* [glamour, enchantment, meaning enchantress], *nimfa* [nymph], *szépség* [beauty, belle], or *szirén* [siren]. The synonyms for ‘man’ usually do not carry such strong, positive or negative, implications.

If someone still had any doubts concerning the author’s cultural background, after these linguistic games they can be set at rest easily by looking at the cultural references. Even if this novel was translated most freely by the most brilliant translator, it could not contain so many specifically Hungarian allusions and connotations, only an original work can possibly incorporate the following jokes:

- **Száz év ármány** (One Hundred Years of Intrigue, playing with García Márquez’s famous title, *One Hundred Year of Solitude*, as ‘magány’ and ‘ármány’ sound similar);
- **Ki vesz ma?** (Who loses today?, playing with the title of a well-known radio programme ‘Ki nyer ma?’ [Who wins today?]);

- **brazil rabszolgáány** (Brazilian slave-girl, referring to the heroine of a Brazilian soap opera television series, Isaura);
- **eltűnési viszketegség** (playing with feltűnési viszketegség [approx. histionics], the missing ‘f’ changes the meaning into approx. ‘attitude to disappear’);
- **magad lányom, ha jógid nincsen!** módszer (lit. you-yourself-my-daughter-if-you-don’t-have-a-yogi method; twisting a well-known and often used saying ‘magad uram, ha szolgálád nincsen’ [lit. you yourself, my lord, if you don’t have a servant], that is, one should do the job oneself);
- **csak lóbálok/ez sem fog többé lóbálni** (lit. I’m just dangling/this will not dangle again; reference to a famous water-polo sportscast by György Szepesi that was later parodied in a radio cabaret by Pál Peterdi ‘Faragó csak lóbálja ...’ meaning that from the point of view of the speaker the person referred to lazes his time away when he should act);
- **félművelt és egész hülye** [approx. half-educated and wholly stupid];
- **aki á-t mond, mondjon G-t is** (original saying: aki á-t mond, mondjon b-t is [in for a penny, in for a pound], Fable replaces ‘b’ by ‘G’ referring to Dr. Grafenberg);
- **“Jöjjék a mese, mi esett meg azokban a nehéz napokban, amikor még szárnyasbetét se volt ...”** (Let’s hear about what happened in those difficult days when winged sanitary napkins did not exist ... reference to the incredible amount of television ads for such products);
- **“Hol lakik az alkoholista? Az üvegegyeken túl”** (Where does the alcoholic live? Beyond the glass/bottle mountains; reference to the customary beginning sentence of Hungarian fairy tales ‘beyond the glass mountain’ playing with the two meanings of ‘üveg’);
- the suggestion to disguise oneself as **‘pancsoló kislány’** [lit. splat-tering girl] or **‘mákos metélt’** [a sort of pasta with poppy seeds] for a fancy-dress ball (the former was a pop song-hit in the sixties, the latter hints at ‘körülmetél’ [circumcise, the original verb plus adverb/preposition] as the person in question is Jewish);
- **“Hörrentem erre, hogy hát szent nap a mai, ülj te a hokedlira, várjad a locsolókat!”** (approx. Hearing this I grunted that today being a holy day, you just sit down on the stool and wait for the sprinklers!, reference to the habit that on Easter Monday the men traditionally sprinkle the women with water – recently and regret-ably with eau de toilette – and get a paste-egg in return, vestige of an ancient fertility ritual).

These jokes can be labelled ‘cultural humour’ (Hart:1998).

The third, ‘universal’, type of humour is less important from our point of view as it can be found in any culture or language. Examples include, for instance:

- “Lupon harminc másodpercen belül kénytelen volt megválni rajongott késétől, később néhány fogától, végezetül testi épségétől.” [Within thirty seconds Lupon had to part first with his beloved knife, later some of his teeth, and finally his physical health.] p 165;
- “Fiatalabb korodban sokkal messzebbre düledtek a halántéki ereid a mérgeledéstől, mint mostság.” [lit. In your youth your temporal veins bulged far more farther from fuming than nowness (these days)] p 210;
- “– Royal nem lesz a terhetekre, azt mondta, korcsolyázni készül, egyébként a te koridat is becsomagolta. Amíg ő csúszkál, ti vígan szeretkezhettek.  
– Prima ötlet – hagytam rá. – Bár szerintem enélkül is nagy tolongás lesz a jégpályán.”  
[‘Royal won’t inconvenience you, he said he’d go skate. By the way, he has also packed your skates. While he is skating, you may merrily make love.’ ‘Good idea,’ I said acquiescently. ‘Although I think even without this, there will be a large crowd in the ice-rink.’] p 251.

One would assume that this sort of humour occurs most frequently, but it certainly is not the case in this novel, or, for that matter, in any other work by Fable. The specifically Hungarian cultural connotations are far more abundant than one would expect in any pseudotranslation.

There is a sort of private joke in several of her books, in which one of the characters buys, or reads, a Fable book:

- “továbbá egy dundi könyv, valami Vavyan Fable nevű szerzőtől.  
– Legalább jó? – kérdeztem, körmöm hegyével megkocogtatva a kötetet.  
– Most lőttem – felelte vállat vonva.” [in addition, a thick book by someone called Vavyan Fable. ‘Is it any good?’ I asked tapping on the volume with the tip of my finger-nail. ‘I’ve just bagged it,’ she shrugged.] p. 477.

However, there is one sentence that seems to hint at a definitely non-Hungarian environment:

- “– Nem gondolod, hogy Pool is elhunyhott volna a csatában, praktikusán?”



– Összetévesztesz az igazságszolgáltatás későbbi fázisával – feleltem. – A bíró még halálra ítéelheti. Aztán jöhet a bakó.“

[‘Don’t you think that Pool should have died in the battle, practically?’ ‘You confuse me with a later phase of justice,’ I replied. ‘The judge may sentence him to death. Then the racker can come.’] p 309.

As the constitution of Hungary has prohibited the death penalty, this conversation, just as the previously mentioned living standards, appears to refer to a different society. Nevertheless, such elements cannot counterbalance the inventive use of language and the domestic cultural references, or Hungariana.

I have also found a mistake that could perhaps be attributed to careless translation. At one point the author seems to have forgotten that her protagonist has already taken off her coat:

- “kigomboltam az ajtót, a kabátomat, utóbbi széles ívben a kanapéra röptettem ... ültem a fotelban, tűkön, kigombolt kabátban, szerencsétlenül” [I unbuttoned the door, my coat and let the latter fly in a wide arc to the couch ... I was sitting in the armchair, on pins and needles, miserably in an unbuttoned coat] pp. 438, 441.

Apart from using a pseudonym and avoiding unmistakably transparent cultural allusions such as explicitly Hungarian names, it seems quite evident that Fable does not even make an attempt to render the possibility of a genuine translation probable.

### *A Halál havában* by Wayne Chapman

Wayne Chapman is one of the most popular fantasy authors in Hungary. His novels are published in print runs of approximately 15,000 and are quickly sold out, usually within a month. Three of them have had further editions, which is very unusual for any popular fiction in Hungary nowadays.<sup>37</sup> One of the first Hungarian fantasy role-playing games was based on his imaginary world. When I began to research the cultural importation process of popular fiction into Hungarian, it thus seemed obvious that I should start by examining Chapman’s novels. After several months of thorough – and highly frustrating – investigation in 1995 it became obvious that Wayne Chapman was a pseudonym of two persons who happened to be the founders, managers and editors of one of the most important publishing houses specialising in SF & fantasy. When I presented the amassed facts to the Hungarian publisher, it was very reluctantly admitted that Wayne

Chapman was in fact a pseudonym, and I was asked not to reveal this fact in Hungary.

*A Halál havában* [lit. In the month of death] was first published by Unikornis Kiadó [Unicorn Publishing House] in 1991 as the ninth volume in the Griff [Griffon] Series. This was the very first fantasy series in Hungary and advertised as offering “Izgalom! Kaland! Fantázia! Szerelem! Költészet!” [Thrills! Adventure! Fantasy! Love! Poetry!]. Only thirteen fantasy novels were published in this series. Most of them were works by western authors such as Brian W. Aldiss, Steven Brust, Rick Cook, Tom Deitz, Raymond E. Feist, Richard A. Knaak, Tanith Lee, Robert Silverberg. One was by a Hungarian writer (András Gáspár), and the series also included – under the names Michael Aschroft, John Caldwell, Wayne Chapman, Gwyn Gwylin – what later proved to be the first four pseudotranslations of fantasy fiction. But the publishing house gave up the venture, apparently because the new genre was not well received. The imprint claimed that **the translation** had been done, using the 1987 edition of Chapman’s *Blood Season* (note the different title!) issued by Pendragon Publishing Co., Inc., London, by András Gáspár and Csanád Novák in 1990. The copyright is held by Wayne Mark Chapman; and the front cover has been designed by Gábor Szikszai and Zoltán Boros. The back cover bears the logo, name and usual advertisement of the series, a short blurb, and the price. The length of the text is twelve folios, or 191 pages including the appendices. Moreover, it is remarked **in English** that the book was published, “*With the most sincere written consent of the Author.*”

The second, extended paperback edition was brought out in the M.A.G.U.S. avagy a kalandorok krónikái [M.A.G.U.S. or the chronicles of the adventurers] Series by Valhalla Páholy in 1994. The imprint claims that the **translation** was done by András Gáspár and Csanád Novák between 1990 and 1994. Furthermore, the translators used the 1987 edition of Chapman’s *Blood Season*. The copyright belongs to Wayne Mark Chapman. The front cover, different from the first edition, contains a painting by Gábor Szikszai and Zoltán Boros. The back cover displays a short blurb, the name of the publisher, the price and the ISBN number. The text length is twenty-five folios, or 395 pages, including appendices.

The third, a hardcover edition, published in *A fekete dalnok* [The black songster] together with the second edition of *Csepp és tenger* [Droplet and ocean] and the third edition of *Észak lángjai* [lit. Flames of the North, fictitious title: Banners of Flame] and announced as the first trilogy of the Gorduin Cycle, was issued by Valhalla Holding Kft. in 1997. The imprint claims that *A Halál havában* is a novel by András Gáspár and Csanád Novák. A painting by Gábor Szikszai and Zoltán Boros can be seen on the front cover, and again the cover is different from the previous ones. The back cover bears a quotation from a poem in *Banners of Flame*, a short blurb, a recommendation, the name of the publisher, the price, the ISBN

number, and a bar code. The text length (pp. 159–351) is not mentioned in the imprint.

All editions are categorised as fantasy novels in the *HNB*.

The twenty-one centimeter format of the first paperback edition is characteristic of all Unikornis publications; the second edition is only nineteen centimeters, which is the favoured format of Valhalla books, while the hardcover is again twenty-one centimeters.

As has been mentioned, the first edition of *Blood Season* does not entirely correspond to the second and third editions. The first edition is only half as long as the second (twelve vs. twenty-five folios). One might suspect that the difference was due primarily to the publishing house. Yet, such suspicion is not enough to prove that the work is a pseudotranslation; and the second edition of *Blood Season* was carefully advertised as the “First complete unabridged edition.”

All Chapman novels are dedicated to persons with an English-sounding name, including *Csepp és Tenger* dedicated to ‘Eddie’ – which happens to be another pseudonym of András Gáspár, the more industrious half of the authorial duo known as Wayne Mark Chapman.<sup>38</sup> *Blood Season* is dedicated “to Rick, Sally-Ann and of course Bob E. Howard, wherever he sails.”

The domicile of Chapman given in the Author’s Note in *Blood Season* is Concord, New Hampshire, US.

The Chapman ‘translations’ are part of a series called M.A.G.U.S.,<sup>39</sup> which stands for “Miracle Adeptia Guns Urrus Sorrate”<sup>40</sup> [Chronicles of Adventurers] and is about the imaginary world “Ynev.” Certain novels in this series have been advertised using Chapman’s name – “Új kalandok Wayne Chapman világán!” [New adventures in Wayne Chapman’s world!], or “Wayne Chapman előszavával!” [With a preface by Wayne Chapman!] or are dedicated to him as Wayne Chapman, or to half of him as G.A. or N.CS.

Interestingly enough, the fictitious features of these pseudotranslations become less prominent as time passes. I assume that the fictitious English-language origin was felt necessary when the publishers were attempting to establish a new genre, but it lost its importance when the novelists met with success. The fact that I was fairly easily able to draw up a list of pseudotranslators shows clearly that the disguise became less important with the passage of time. Of course, the identities most easily revealed were those that were relatively minor participants in this network of writers and sometimes translators. Things were rather more difficult with the identities behind Wayne Chapman. But even here the disguise has slowly been falling away. For instance, in *Csepp és tenger* all fictitious bibliographical references have vanished and no translator was mentioned; only the pseudonym remains. It seems no longer necessary to pretend that Wayne Chapman is an American as the imprint of *A fekete dalnok* clearly indicates.

With the value of hindsight we can see that already the external packaging of the novels should have aroused our suspicions. A striking portrayal of human figures on the front covers plays a central role in the Chapman novels and indeed in most Valhalla fantasy publications. Yet, this is definitely not the case elsewhere. Not only in Hungary but all over the world fantasy covers tend to display magi (with the signs of their superhuman powers), elves, dwarves, dragons, griffins or other miraculous beings, and often scantily dressed minor female characters. The difference here could have been explained by the different visual traditions in popular literature, which would also be worth examining, particularly if we take into consideration that even the genuine translations are rarely published with the original cover.

A comparison of the three front covers appears to be edifying. The first depicts Tier Nan Gorduin and his treacherous lover before an ochre background. The man wears bluish black and shiny leather clothes, holds a gun, and sports both a moustache and a beard. The longhaired woman in front of him looks rather sensual and incredibly thick-lipped; her breasts are scantily covered and her trousers skin-tight. She holds a dagger in her gloved hand. Her colours are blue and violet. Both of them appear to look in the face of the beholder.

On the second cover all four protagonists are represented in a rather abstract desert. Tier Nan Gorduin is in front, still black-clad – with an added cloak – but holding a crossbow and whiskerless. His lover is behind him. Now she is mounted, but without any trace of sensuality or weapons. In fact, she looks rather sad and a little boyish in her orange shirt and dark waistcoat. The others, the elf and the priest, appear to be relatively insignificant.

The third image portrays only Tier Nan Gorduin, again clean-shaven and in rather nondescript coloured clothes. The cloak is still there but the jacket has vanished. The protagonist is sitting on a rock with a sword on his knees, while abstract mountains lie in the background. He looks definitely younger than on the previous front covers.

I find it very interesting that the woman happens to be in the center of the first two front covers – particularly if we take the portrayal of women in the Chapman novels into consideration – and I will return to this question later.

When we compare the evolution of the blurbs and the pictures on the covers of the books, a tendency from ‘authentic’ to ‘mystic’ becomes clearly recognisable. The publicity text on the back cover of the first *Blood Season* emphasises that “the first volume of Wayne Chapman’s Ynev Cycle offers a detailed, elaborate, strange world, lots of excitement and romance.” The second one stresses the hero’s solitude, unbelief and dangerousness. While, the third one emphasises his atheism, success in his enterprises, including braving death itself, and his ‘chosenness’. The same trend can also be observed in the extended texts. For instance, the second edition of *Blood Season* contains a whole newly inserted chapter<sup>41</sup> in which

the four main characters meet the ghosts of three adventurers and a company of soldiers who died almost 7000 years before.

Wayne Chapman's popularity and that of fantasy in general must be explained in view of the failure of Griff Series as recently as 1991. We have to take into consideration that in keeping with international trends approximately seventy per cent of the novels published since 1992 have been labelled 'fantasy'. I believe this is due to the policy of the publishers specialising in the genre, who carefully select their novels in order to target different audiences. Yet, it also involves linking the stories with a fantasy role-playing game, choosing specific translators, establishing SF bookshops, and of course undertaking pseudotranslations.

In order to understand the social importance of these features, we need to form some concept of the nature of the novels concerned. In what follows I will try to sum up the main features of these novels in Hungary and establish their differences, if any, from English-language fantasy fiction.

The plots of all the Chapman – and M.A.G.U.S. – novels are set in a very well worked-out imaginary world called Ynev. Several of the novels include an Appendix giving data on the geography, history, politics, religions, and languages of Ynev. For example, the first *Blood Season* includes an appendix, two tables (pantheons and a calendar of Ynev), and two maps (topographical and political) of Ynev. The appendix is actually a sort of general encyclopaedia with about 150 brief entries. Of course, these elaborate data serve as base for the fantasy role-playing game.

The plot in the Chapman novels is a happy mixture of adventure, romance, thriller, and mystery. The earlier novels are more adventurous; the later ones are more mystical and thrilling. The main character Tier Nan Gorduin is almost superhuman: good-looking, strong, clever, intelligent, famous and musically gifted. He also has a second sight,<sup>42</sup> can handle magic as well as a sword or a bow, has friends everywhere to help him with his quest, is irresistible, and, most importantly, always victorious. Sometimes he is a mercenary fighting either for money (*Blood Season*, *Csepp és Tenger*, and *Karnevál*), or to save his hide (*Blood Season*), or to repay his friends for favours (*Banners of Flame*). However, he always turns to be on the right side, at least in the sense that 'rightness' (not quite righteousness) means he does not exhibit unnecessary cruelty. He simply kills or removes anyone who happens to be in his way. Furthermore, small obstacles, such as his own death (in *Carnival*), will not stop him. The depicted society is also rather conservative, a sort of idealised Middle Ages. It is quite similar to, say, Guy Gavriel Kay or David Gemmell alternative history/heroic fantasy novels.

In the case of *Blood Season* the plot can be adumbrated as follows: the bard and adventurer Tier Nan Gorduin, after successfully rescuing the Emir's only daughter, the vizier's bride, from being offered as a sacrifice to an evil god, has to kill

the vizier. Consequently he falls straight into the trap of a magician, who demands that he, along with three companions, go to the Haunted Region and get the Goddess Orwella's dagger from the witch who rules there. The companions are a priest, a half-elf necromancer, and a beautiful female thief, who also owes a favour to the magician. On their journey they are followed by a professional assassin sent by the deceased vizier's first concubine, face perils and temptations, and enter into various relationships with one another. For instance, Tier Nan Gorduin and the thief Eriel become lovers. The narration shifts back and forth between the four adventurers' and the assassin's stories. Reaching their destination, the adventurers succeed in disposing of the witch, her lover, the dagger, as well as the priest who turns out to be the magician himself in disguise and an ancient enemy of the witch's undead partner, whose real goal was simply revenge for his murder. The story ends with Eriel's desertion and the first steps of a tentative friendship between the hero and the necromancer.

Since the M.A.G.U.S. series and the linked role-playing games have gradually evolved from a single novel (the first version of *Blood Season*), there are certain chronological, historical, and ideological contradictions in the texts. For instance, at the end of *Csepp és tenger*, the publisher adds a note in which "Mr. Chapman" is reproached for his liberalism concerning historical dates. More importantly, Tier Nan Gorduin, who was a rather 'ordinary' fantasy hero in the beginning, has been turned into a supernatural being in human flesh. His transformation is by no means extraordinary. All Chapman heroes seem to have 'gained' additional positive or superhuman characteristics in the later editions or novels. For example, in *Csepp és tenger* Tier Nan Gorduin gives an unsuspecting goblin an elixir that will considerably extend his life. This goblin was just a spy, though a highly successful one, in *Banners of Flame*.

It also seems to be characteristic of the Chapman novels that the happy ending is always impaired in the same way. In *Blood Season* a love affair comes to an abrupt end. In *Two Moons* the woman abandons her partner and leaves behind only a farewell letter. While in *Banners* the man turns out to be a spy and a most hateful enemy, who must thus be killed by his lover. Whereas the ending of *Carnival* is exactly the opposite: Tier Nan Gorduin's lover proves to be a traitor, and she must thus die by his hand.

The message of these works would seem to be that life is nothing but continuous struggle, where only temporary victories can be achieved. No values or principles are lasting, and therefore they do not deserve appreciation. In fact, there is no essential difference between right and wrong. This relativistic attitude is also reflected in the cyclical and deterministic history of the fantasy world. Empires and religions rise and fall without leaving any lasting change or mark on the course of human history, which is simply divided into nine eras. Some unknown creator determines the beginning and end of each age. The only constant factor is the

existence of “nine chosen beings who can control their destiny, who are ruled neither by gods, nor by demons, nor by stars.” Of course, Tier Nan Gorduin is one of the nine (*Banners of Flame*).

This withdrawal from any ethical commitment seems related to the consequences of the recent socio-political changes in Hungary, or the general and deepening uncertainty regarding values. Nevertheless, the presence and increasing influence of mystical and occult topics, in both society and science fiction, should be perceived not just as a result of the loss of stable values but as part of the present cultural importation process as well.

The palpably cynical ideology manifest in these novels – comparable to Glen Cook’s *The Black Company* series – is partly concealed behind mystical or occult occurrences. In one episode Tier Nan Gorduin suddenly found himself among the legendary Kyr nobility about ten thousand years prior to his own era. “Shri-En Igron, Kyria utolsó uralkodója felemelte jobbját: kezdetét vette a tanácskozás. Gorduin, aki csak őt figyelte, idővel rátalálni vélt a lázadás valódi okára: a gyarló ember számára nincs bőszítőbb a nap alatt az ilyen szembeötlő tökéletességnél.” [Shri-En Igron, the last ruler of Kyria, held up his right hand and the council commenced. Gorduin, who watched only him, thought after a while that he had hit upon the real cause of the rebellion: for fallible humans there is nothing more exasperating under the sun than such striking perfection, p. 265]. Yet, some familiar stereotypes are also used. The people in power, the gods, the magi, the priests, and the politicians are never truly reliable; and the women are generally beautiful, treacherous and lustful. Salina in *Banners of Flame*, although very pretty, is different. But her character is just the exception that proves the rule. There are certain clichés in how men have depicted women, or acknowledged female roles in the course of time; and both of the female characters in *Blood Season* belong to the type that can only be described as succuba, or a demonic version of the *femme fatale*, the deadly seductress. None of them is wholly human. The other type, for instance in *Two Moons*, is the victim. This may be an individual trait, or perhaps springs from the rather conservative worldview that is so characteristic of Hungarian fantasy fiction. Nevertheless, it certainly deserves further investigation.

When I first started analysing these novels, their use of language and style did indeed make me wonder whether they could possibly be translations. The writing was excellent, inventive, yet not excessively so. Its touch of heroism and humour was very characteristic, and therefore easily recognisable. These characteristics made the reading easily intelligible and undemanding. These books do not require any effort from the reader; and particularly the second versions tend to include fashionable mystical strands. Since one of the ‘translators’ was an excellent SF writer, the translational status did not seem to be impossible. The many misspellings only serve to heighten the perception that these are after all translated works; and one geographical name was rendered differently in the two editions of

*Blood Season*. In the second edition the text and the appendices were extended, while the maps were omitted. All of these differences could, of course, also be explained by fictitious translation.

I have compared the three versions of *Blood Season* with one another, word by word, sentence by sentence. In comparing the first chapter of the first two editions – and this is typical – I have found fifty-one slight differences (eight omissions, eight additions, thirty refashioned and longer sentences, and five variations in punctuation). There are seventy-six modifications between the second and the third editions (twenty-one omissions, thirty-three refashioned sentences, three additions, and nineteen variations in punctuation). The differences seem to move toward a more familiar, less literary and less archaic language. By deleting idiosyncrasies, the later editions appear to lessen the effect of the unmistakable style of Wayne Chapman. I assume that it may be linked with the fact that other, less talented authors started to contribute to M.A.G.U.S. series, and this required a more generic style.

It seems likely that these changes reflect the genre's move from a new or 'peripheral' position to a more integrated or 'central' status, and that this move in turn reflects something of the overall process of cultural importation. In order to pursue this hypothesis I will briefly run through the main differences between the first, the second and the third editions of *Blood Season*, where the lack of external variables means that the changes are most clearly manifested.

1. The layout is completely different, particularly with regard to the font used and the page formatting. The use of italics is rarely the same. The 'Author's Note' has a different place in the second edition, moving from the very beginning of the text to the end of the book. It has been deleted from the third edition. In the second and third editions there is a serious grammatical mistake in Shakespeare's sonnet, *valld-valdd* (sic!), imperative of 'vall' [admit/confess], and a reference is provided to the tenth sonnet, as translated by Lőrinc Szabó.

2. The textual structure has been modified. For instance, the preface of the appendices has an added paragraph on cosmogony and philosophy in the second edition but its last part on the rules of transcription has been omitted from the third edition. It reads, "A különféle nyelvek neveit és szavait egységesen a dorani átírás szabályai szerint jegyeztem le, mert ez logikailag jóval közelebb áll az **angol**hoz..." [I have recorded the names and words of the different languages consistently according to the rules of transcription in Doran because this comes logically much closer to **English** ...] (my emphasis). The titles of the different parts of the novel have sometimes been altered, and poems have been added without references to all of the parts as mottoes. These include: 'Taba el-Ibara', instead of 'Dél' [South]; 'Úton' [On the road] instead of 'Taba el-Ibara'; the third, fourth and fifth are unchanged, then: 'Az elátkozott vidék' [The accursed region]; 'Tetemre hívlak ...' [approx. 'I call you to the ordeal of the bier'], which is in fact a very well-known



reference to ballad entitled ‘Tetemrehívás’ [Ordeal of the bier] by János Arany, a famous nineteenth-century Hungarian poet; ‘A bosszú hava’ [The month of vengeance, or (taking the fictitious English title into consideration) The Season of Vengeance]. No part has the same chapter division, nor the same divisions into paragraphs or sentences (see Table).

3. In the ‘encyclopaedia’ of the second edition two articles have been added (Gods and Gates), four have been modified (Henkel/Hergol, Kahre/Khare, Kyr birodalom [Kyr Empire]/Kyria, Pelin Ovierá/Pelin Ovieran), and six omitted (Witch Prison, Blue Fire, Symbol of Hopelessness, Larion, Sonion, Wendol). The changes within the entries are mostly added texts, but sometimes the spelling of a name is also different (Kyell – Kyel, Domwick – Domvik). Obviously, the more sophisticated this imaginary world and its history, the more elaborate the encyclopaedia. For instance, new pantheons (of the elves, dwarves, orks and goblins) are included in the second version, and the previously unnamed months are named and arranged according to three seasons. The encyclopaedia is different in *A fekete dalnok* since those of the three novels are merged into one.

4. As I mentioned above, the maps are omitted and a whole chapter has been inserted both in the second and the third editions, which include numerous other, more minor additions.

5. On the microtextual level the general tendency is to make the text more explicit and easier to digest; and this requires longer sentences and paragraphs. The first versions are ballad-like and leave a lot to the reader’s imagination; while the later ones are much more explicit, a feature that, interestingly, corresponds to a general characteristic of translations. (On explicitation, see Baker 1996.) On the other hand this also renders the text less enjoyable. Consider the following examples (the divergence is marked by bold, please also note the incorrect quotation marks in the second version):

- “Ha »szerencséje« kitart, talán még a legendás Jahrn-On Kryelt is láthatja, aki a végveszély esztendeiben, hadba szólította az anuriai sárkánylovasokat! Meglehet, már most is ehhez igyekszik megszerezni az engedélyt. És nem kapja meg. Pedig talán ...” [If his ‘luck’ lasts, perhaps he may see the legendary Jahrn-On Kryel, who in the years of distress summoned the dragon riders of Anuria to the fight! It is quite possible that he has already been seeking permission to do the same. But he will not get it. Although perhaps...] p. 88
- Ha »szerencséje« kitart, talán még a legendás Jahrn-On Kryelt is láthatja, aki **utóbb**, a végveszély esztendeiben, hadba szólította az anuriai sárkánylovasokat! Meglehet, már most is ehhez igyekszik megszerezni az engedélyt. És nem kapja meg. Pedig talán ...” [If his ‘luck’ lasts, perhaps he may see the legendary

Jahrn-On Kryel, who **later**, in the years of distress, summoned the dragon riders of Anuria to the fight! It is quite possible that he has already been seeking permission to do the same. But he will not get it. Although perhaps...] p. 171

- “Ha »szerencséje« kitart, talán még a legendás Jahrn-On Kryelt is láthatja, aki a végveszély esztendeiben, hadba szólította az anuriai sárkánylovasokat. Meglehet, már most is ehhez igyekszik megszerezni az engedélyt. És nem kapja meg. Pedig **ha szabad kezet adnak neki, talán minden másképp alakul; ha nem korlátozzák, új irányt szab az eseményeknek – megvolt benne az ehhez szükséges elszánás és erő.**” [If his ‘luck’ lasts, perhaps he may see the legendary Jahrn-On Kryel, who in the years of distress summoned the dragon riders of Anuria to the fight! It is quite possible that he has already been seeking permission to do it. But he will not get it. Although, **if he had been given a free hand, perhaps everything would have turned out differently; had he not been restrained, he might have determined the events in another way. He did have the resolve and might requisite for it.**] p. 264

There are also ideological and stylistic modifications in the later editions. Let me quote a brief passage from *Banners*:

- “**Nem** az acél ejtette sebek **fájdalma ez: azt** a kint egykettőre legyűri a **test**, feledésre ítéli az **emlékezet**. **Bizonyos** sérülések **sajna sokkal lassabban** gyógyulnak, **s jobban meggyötrik az áldozatot még a toroniak kristályhegyű nyílvesszőinél is**. Ilyen sebeket kizárólag a legnagyobb mágusok és a nők osztogatnak – a nemlétező istenek legyenek irgalmasak ahhoz, aki eléjük kerül ...” [This is not the **pain** of wounds inflicted by steel: **those** torments are rapidly overcome by the body, and **memory** sentences them to oblivion. **Alas, certain hurts heal much more slowly, and victimise the sufferer more than the crystal-tipped arrows of the Toronians**. Such wounds are distributed only by the greatest magicians and women. May the non-existent gods be merciful to those who encounter them.] p. 18
- “Az acél ejtette sebek **kínját** egykettőre legyűri a **lélek**, feledésre ítéli az **elme** – a **láthatatlan** sérülések **azonban lassan** gyógyulnak, **emlékük makacs kopó, mely esztendőkön át lohol az áldozat nyomában, s újra meg újra belemar**. Ilyen sebeket kizárólag a legnagyobb mágusok és a nők osztogatnak: a nemlétező istenek legyenek irgalmasak ahhoz, aki eléjük kerül ...” [The **soul** quickly smotheres the **agony** of wounds inflicted by steel, and the **mind** sentences them to oblivion. The **invisible** hurts, **however**, heal

slowly. **Their memory is a stubborn foxhound, which snaps at the heels the victim for years and bites into him again and again.** Such wounds are distributed by only the greatest magicians and women. May the non-existent gods be merciful to those who encounter them.] p. 19

- “Az acél ejtette sebek kínját egykettőre legyűri a lélek, feledésre ítéli az emlékezet, a másik, a láthatatlan fajta azonban – melyet csak varázstudók és nők osztogatnak – lassan heged, s gondoskodik arról is, hogy az áldozat ne lelje örömét gyógyulásában.” [The soul quickly smothers the agony of wounds inflicted by steel, and the **memory** sentences them to oblivion. But **the other**, the invisible sort of wounds, **those that only sa-vants of magic and women distribute, scab over** more slowly; **and the victims can take little enjoyment in their recovery.**] p. 364

Apart from the move towards the more mystical elements, the changes can be explained by the publisher’s preferred text length, which would seem to have called for extensions to the earlier versions. We should not forget that Wayne Chapman and the publishers of his novels are actually the same people! I also suppose that the audience consists of youngsters, mostly teenagers, who are devoted to this fantasy role-playing game, so that the earlier, ballad-like versions, which demand imaginative effort and background knowledge to fill the gaps, were considered less suitable.

At least in the case of the small Hungarian publishers the use of a pseudonym is said to be necessary in order to sell popular fiction. Hungarian names are still unattractive for teenagers, who are the main consumers. Even when they must know the real nationality of the author, they tend to favour books by ‘English’ or ‘American’ writers. This can mean that the very same popular author is not marketable when his or her Hungarian name appears on the front cover. This would explain why András Gáspár and Csanád Novák still prefer ‘Wayne Chapman’ on the front cover even when the imprint reveals the author’s true name.

The writers and publishers behind Wayne Chapman & Co. were clearly able to introduce a new (sub)-genre and come out on top because, having been SF fans for years, they knew the genre thoroughly; and having been translators specialising in SF, they had plenty of information on the demands and standards of the Hungarian readership. They selected a particular audience and produced ‘adequate’, culturally adapted novels and games in the right place at the right time.

I must admit my research owes a lot to Wayne Chapman. May God preserve him and his gang; and may they provide me with more data for further research.

## Notes

1. As defined in Toury 1995, 40.
2. See Sohár, 1999, 1998a, 1998b, 1997, 1996a, 1996b.
3. For instance, Frank Herbert's *Dune* was published in 87,800 copies in 1987.
4. Consider the 'cultural incident' [kulturális járulék], widely known as 'trash tax' [giccсадó] payable after any publication which is not textbook or does not serve educational purposes. This is usually one per cent of the cover price, although if the book includes any violence or eroticism the rate rises to twenty per cent.
5. See Bart 1998, 7.
6. For instance, Jonathan Wylie is in fact an alias of Julia and Mark A. Smith, John Wyndham is an allonym of John Beynon Harris, Megan Lindholm is now writing as Robin Hobb, et cetera.
7. For instance, John Brosnan's pseudonyms are Harry Adam Knight and Simon Ian Childer.
8. For instance, when writing detective fiction Stephen R. Donaldson becomes Reed Stephens, and Bridget Wood, when writing thrillers, is called Frances Gordon.
9. For instance, Sheri S. Tepper has three feigned names: E. E. Horlak, B. J. Oliphant and A. J. Orde.
10. As István Nemes claimed several times during the on-going discussions concerning pseudonyms of 'Solaria' Science Fiction Newsgroup on the Internet.
11. See Bart 1998, 9.
12. See Sohár 1999.
13. Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy and George Lucas' *Star Wars*.
14. See Aldiss 1986/1994–1995.
15. p. 604.
16. Attebery 1992, 1.
17. Fabyen, writer of popular novels, is the heroine of Fable's *My Fair Lord*, perhaps a sort of alter-ego. Fable sometimes refers to her own novels in her books, e.g. "I saw the latest Fable novel and bought it at once".
18. "A könyvben szereplő *fiktív* figurák makulátlanul vétkelen abban, ha esetleg élő vagy élőholt személyre emlékeztetnek. Ha valaki mégis úgy találná, hogy egyik-másik regényalak hasonlít hozzá vagy valamelyik ismerőséhez, az nem a Szerző, hanem kizárólag a Véletlen műve. A Véletlen ezúton kér elnézést szeszélyes tetteiért. [lit. the *fictitious* figures present in the book bear no responsibility for their possible resemblance to any persons, living or dead. If somebody might find that some character resembles them or any of their acquaintances, it is not the Author's but exclusively Chance's work. Chance apologises herewith for its whimsical deeds.]
19. pp. 95–97.
20. Pun, made of 'delej' [mesmerism] and 'televízió' [television].
21. Pun, made of 'Micimackó' [Hungarian version of Winnie-the-Pooh] and 'macho'.
22. Pun, made of 'fogy' [lose weight] and 'fagyalt' [ice-cream].
23. Pun, made of 'zsába' [neuralgia] and 'Sába királynője' [the Queen of Sheba].
24. e.g., Ohio Di Giacomo, Royal, Joker, Jerven, Kyle Zaza, Aura, Smilee, Heide Tills, Scarlett, Yaphet, Naqvi, Remo Lupon.
25. e.g., Poranyó [Gammer Dust], Hapsifüles [pun, made of 'hapsi' [approx. guy] and 'tapsifüles' [bunny].
26. e.g., Libero, Pampers, Golf, Vitara, Wrangler Jeep, Yamaha, Pontiac, Boeing 747.
27. e.g., Gerald Durrell, Csipkerózsika [Sleeping Beauty], Hófehérke [Cinderella], Dr Watson, Oz, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet and Ophelia, Káma Szútra, Stephen King, Anyegin, Shakespeare, Dickens, *Blown with the Wind*, Cassandra, Cipolla.

28. e.g., Tom Hanks, Forrest Gump, Terminátor, Jessica Lange, Jack Nicholson, Al Pacino, Mad Max, Bridget Fonda, King Kong, Sharon Stone, Michael Douglas, Kim Basinger, de Niro, Rambo, Hegylakó [Highlander], Schwarzenegger.
29. e.g., David Copperfield, Dr Hay, Dr Grafenberg, Elvis, Al Capone, Dzsingisz kán [Ghengiz Khan].
30. e.g., Scotland Yard, Ritz.
31. e.g., Barbie, Tycoon, Garfield magazine, Lennon-glasses, Cindy Crawford's fitness videotape, Callanetics book.
32. e.g., Number One, Top Gun, jeep, press, no smog!, rent a kid, light, hard, joint, jogging, show, blues, fucking, no comment, teddy bear, happy, drink, fair, VIP, IQ.
33. e.g., aerobic/aerobik, demó [demo], dzseki [jacket], dzsessz [jazz], fitt [fit], imidzs/imázs [image], biznisz [business], derbi [derby], tréning [training], szexepil [sex appeal], spícs [speech], csíz [cheese], hendikep [handicap], szleng [slang], jard [yard, meaning 'cop'], sztár [star], tinédzser [teenager], start.
34. e.g., vaslédi [iron lady], Teljesség Tours [Completeness], csók-time [kiss], konditime [fitness], shoppingolás [shopping], Road Ördöge [devil of the road].
35. anyó, asszony, bajadér, bige, bringa, csaj, dáma, füge, hölgy, igézet, lány, leány, kurva, liba, lina, lonya, lotyó, massa, moha, némbér, néni, nimfa, nő, picsa, rongy, satrafa, spiné, szárcsa, szépség, szirén, szüfrazsett, tehén, teremtés, tyúk.
36. alak, api, bácsi, bika, csóka, egyén, ember, fazon, férfi, férfiú, fickó, figura, fiú, flótás, fráter, hapek, hapi, hapó, hapsi, ipse, jampi, klappec, krapec, legény, mandró, melák, ördög, pacák, pali, pasas, pasek, pasi, pofa, suhanc, srác, spóra, strigó, szivar, tag, ürge, versenyző.
37. Information from an interview with Miklós Héjjas, editor of Valhalla at that time (1995).
38. Valhalla also published *Profundis* by Ed Fisher, in which Tad Newport and the Network, introduced in *The Quest of Two Moons*, play the central role.
39. 'Mágus' means magician, wizard in Hungarian.
40. Needless to say, meaningless in Latin.
41. Chapter Three of Part Three (Az Elátkozott Vidék [The Haunted Region]), 186–206.
42. A 'third eye' which enables the characters to see the spiritual world.

## Bibliography

- Aldiss, Brian Wilson – Wingove, David. 1994–95. *Trillió éves dáridó. A science fiction története* [Trillion Year Spree. The History of Science Fiction]. Translated by Ernő Nemes. Szeged: Szukits Könyvkiadó (Paladin Books, 1986).
- Amis, Kingsley. 1961. *New Maps of Hell. A Survey of Science Fiction*. London: Victor Gollancz.
- Attebery, Brian. 1992. *Strategies of Fantasy*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 152 pp.
- Bart István. 1998. 'Magyar könyvkiadás 1989–1998' [Hungarian Publication 1989–1998]. *Kritika*, 1998/7, pp. 5–9 (in Hungarian)
- Bartus Zsolt – Paralla János. 1991. *A fantasztikus irodalom bibliográfiája. I. Könyvek* [The Bibliography of Fantastic Literature. I. Books]. Miskolc: ASTREIA Miskolci Sci-Fi Club.
- Clute, John – Nicholls, Peter, eds. 1995. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. New York: St. Martin's Green.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Articles on science fiction, novel, literary genres. <http://www.eb.com>.
- Encyclopedia Americana*. 1987. Article on science fiction by Theodore Sturgeon. Vol. 24. pp. 390–392. Danbury, Con.: Grolier Incorporated.
- Fehér Géza. 1988. *Supernova 6. Fanzin-katalógus*. Manuscript.

- Gross Péter. 1988. *SF művek bibliográfiája. Fantasztikus, tudományos-fantasztikus, utópisztikus, misztikus művek bibliográfiája* [Bibliography of SF Works. Bibliography of Fantastic, Science Fiction, Utopistic and Mystical Works]. Budapest.
- Jackson, Rosemary. 1981. *Fantasy. The Literature of Subversion*. London – New York: Methuen. 211 pp.
- James, Edward. 1994. *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.
- Magyar Nemzeti Bibliográfia. *Könyvek bibliográfiája* [Hungarian National Bibliography. Bibliography of Books]. 1989–1996. Vol. 44–51: 1–24. Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár.
- Malmgren, Carl D. 1991. *Worlds Apart. Narratology of Science Fiction*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Parrinder, Patrick, ed. 1979. *Science Fiction. A Critical Guide*. London – New York: Longman.
- Pierce, Hazel Beasley. 1983. *A Literary Symbiosis. Science Fiction/Fantasy Mystery*. Westport, Con. – London: Greenwood Press.
- Scholes, Robert. 1975. *Structural Fabulation. An Essay on Fiction of the Future*. Notre Dame – London: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Simon Zoltán. 1990. *Az irodalom peremvidéke* [The Periphery of Literature]. Budapest: Múzsák.
- Sohár Anikó. 1996. 'Cultural Importation of Genres. The Case of SF & Fantasy in Hungary', in: Klaudy Kinga – Lambert, José – Sohár Anikó, eds. *Translation Studies in Hungary*. Budapest: Scholastica, pp. 125–134.
- Sohár Anikó. 1998a. 'Pseudotranslations', in: *Translation Review*, No. 54. pp. 18–25.
- Sohár Anikó. 1998b. 'Genuine and Fictitious Translations of Science Fiction in Hungary', in: Bowker, Lynne – Cronin, Michael – Kenny, Dorothy – Pearson, Jennifer, eds. *Unity in Diversity? Current Trends in Translation Studies*. Manchester: St. Jerome, pp. 39–46.
- Sohár Anikó. 1999. *The Cultural Transfer of Science Fiction and Fantasy in Hungary 1989–1995*. Hamburg: Peter Lang GmbH. 276 pp.
- Toury, Gideon. 1995. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 311 pp.
- Világirodalmi Lexikon*, 1–18. 1970–1995. Király István (1970–1991) – Szerdahelyi István (1991–), general editors. Szócikkek: bestseller; fantasztikum; fantasztikus irodalom; fantázia; ponyva; rémmese; rémtörténet; science fiction [The Encyclopaedia of World Literature. Articles on best-seller, fantastic, fantastic literature, fantasy, pulp fiction, horror, thriller, science fiction]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

## Fictions

- Fable Vavyan. *Tűzvarázs* [Fire Magic]. 1996. Budapest: Fabyen Kiadó.
- Wayne Chapman: *A Halál Havában/Blood Season*. Copyright: 1987 Wayne Chapman, Pendragon Publishing Co., Inc., London, translated by András Gáspár – Csanád Novák (1990). Hungarian edition: 1989. Budapest: Unikornis Kiadó. ISBN 963 7519 14 9
- Wayne Chapman: *A Halál Havában/Blood Season* [first, complete, unabridged edition]. Copyright: 1987 Wayne Mark Chapman, translated by András Gáspár – Csanád Novák (1990–1994). Hungarian edition: 1994. Budapest: Valhalla Páholy Kft. ISBN 963 8353 13 9
- Wayne Chapman: *Észak lángjai/Banners of Flame*. Copyright: 1988 Wayne Mark Chapman, Pendragon Books, Pendragon Publishing Co., Inc., London, translated by András Gáspár – Csanád Novák (1992). Hungarian edition: 1992. Budapest: Valhalla Páholy BT. ISBN 963 7632 02 6
- Wayne Chapman: *Két hold/The Quest of Two Moons*. Copyright: 1994 Wayne Mark Chapman, 'The Hungarian edition is based on the agreement with Thor Universal Corp.', translated by András

Gáspár – Csanád Novák (1994). Hungarian edition: 1994. Budapest: Valhalla Páholy Kft. ISBN 963 8353 55 4

Wayne Chapman: *Észak lángjai/Banners of Flame*. [2nd, 'deluxe' edition]. Copyright: 1988–89 Wayne Mark Chapman, 'The Hungarian edition is based on the agreement with Thor Universal Corp.', translated by András Gáspár – Csanád Novák (1992–994). Hungarian edition: 1995. Budapest: Valhalla Páholy Kft. ISBN 963 8353 64 3

Wayne Chapman: *Csepp és tenger* [Drop and Sea]. Copyright: 1996 Valhalla Holding. 1996. Budapest: Valhalla Holding Kft. ISBN 963 9039 02 0

Wayne Chapman: *Karnevál* 1–2. [Carnival]. A novel by András Gáspár, copyright: András Gáspár – Csanád Novák 1997. Budapest: Valhalla Holding Kft. ISBN 963 9039 16 0

Wayne Chapman: *A fekete dalnok* [The Black Songster]. in: *A Halál havában/Blood Season, Észak lángjai/Banners of Flame, Csepp és tenger/Drop and Sea*. Copyright of *Csepp és tenger*: András Gáspár, copyright of *A Halál havában & Észak lángjai*: András Gáspár – Csanád Novák (1990, 1991, 1996, 1997). 1997. Budapest: Valhalla Holding Kft. ISBN 963 9039 26 8





# ASPEKTE DES (UN)VOLLKOMMENEN

## FRAGMENT UND VOLLENDETES KUNSTWERK IM HORIZONTWANDEL DER SPRACHLICHKEIT

ERNŐ KULCSÁR SZABÓ

Eötvös-Loránd-Universität, Budapest,  
Ungarn

Das ursprüngliche Anliegen dieses Beitrags war es, einen kurzen Überblick über die Geschichte der Fragmentarität von der Romantik bis zur Postmoderne zu geben, der vom Konzept einer nur an Diskontinuitätsstellen in Erscheinung tretenden Dichtungsgeschichte ausgeht und das Problem der Fragmentarität in bezug auf ein temporales System der „epochalen“ Wandel von literarischer Sprachgebrauch und Subjektauffassung untersucht. Daß auf dieses Vorhaben verzichtet werden mußte, lag vor allem daran, daß es in Form einer umfassenden Analyse derjenigen tiefgreifenden Funktionswandel, die die moderne Geschichte des Fragments geprägt haben, kaum zu bewerkstelligen war. Und zwar deshalb, weil die Folgen der sprachhermeneutischen Wende um die 30er Jahre an den Fragerichtungen der Fragmentforschung erst Anfang der achtziger Jahre zu beobachten sind. Ihren Niederschlag fanden sie vorerst in einer deutlichen methodologischen Zäsur, die sich zwischen einem historisch-strukturell ausgerichteten bzw. einem wirkungsgeschichtlich orientierten Frageanliegen einstellte. Da sich die überwiegende Mehrheit der einschlägigen Fachliteratur jedoch einer Vorgehensweise bedient, die zumeist der dichotomen Wahrnehmung von Problemkomplexen eigen ist, kann es kaum verwundern, daß eine wirkungsgeschichtliche Annäherungsweise ziemlich wenig von den Ergebnissen dieser – noch so niveaувollen – Forschung profitieren konnte.

Ohne die Verdienste dieser Forschung herabzuwürdigen, tut man sich nämlich gerade dort schwer, wo eine erneuerte Form des Fragens an die vorausgehenden Antworten anzuschließen wäre. Antworten, die das ganze Fragmentproblem in einem Kontext verortet haben, der sich kaum mehr dazu eignet, einem Frageinteresse, das jenseits der Ganzheitsansprüche der ästhetischen Ideologien liegt, neue Ansätze zu geben. In diesem – mittlerweile historisch gewordenen – System zeichnet sich ein zweigliedriges Konstrukt von logisch-strukturellen Gegenseitigkeiten ab, das den methodologischen Umgang mit dem Fragmentarischen nur in Form einer Gegenüberstellung von Unvollendetheit und Totalität ermöglicht. Die maßgebenden Definitionen des Fragmentarischen gehen dementsprechend unreflektiert immer wieder davon aus, daß jede aktuelle Deutung des Fragmentari-

schen vornehmlich (praktisch aber beinahe ausnahmslos) in bezug auf den Totalitätsbegriff erfolgen könne. Teilt man nämlich die Ansicht, daß sich die Unzertrennlichkeit des Beziehungspaares von Fragment und Totalität im Bereich der Literaturwissenschaft damit erklären läßt, daß das Lesen an ein anthropologisch fundiertes Bedürfnis nach Sinn Ganzheiten gebunden sei, kann sogar die neuformulierte Frage nach dem Fragmentarischen sehr leicht im alten Horizont verfangen bleiben. Während sich sogar renommierte Literaturwissenschaftler von der obigen „unerfreulichen Alternative“ zu distanzieren bemühen, kann man sich dabei dennoch des Gefühls nicht erwehren, daß ihre Argumentierung nicht selten in eine ungewollte Reproduktion der ursprünglichen Frage mündet: „Literaturgeschichtliche Diskurse (...) müssen vor dem Horizont (...) integrativer Geschichtsdiskurse geschrieben werden. (...) Noch viel wichtiger ist es freilich, daß der Autor einer neuen Literaturgeschichte eine kritisch-normative Orientierung nicht aus dem Blick verliert, unter der die Prozeßdarstellungen der verschiedenen historischen Sektorwissenschaften im Bezug auf ihre eigene Sprachhandlungspragmatik die Möglichkeit wechselseitiger Anschließbarkeit wahren. Denn ohne diesen Bezugspunkt gerät die Arbeit des Historikers (...) unweigerlich zum Fragment eines – ganz nach Geschmack: ‚ethisch‘ oder ‚politisch‘ – blinden wissenschaftlichen Interaktionsgefüges.“<sup>1</sup> An diesem Beispiel ist kaum zu übersehen, daß durch eine schiere Umbenennung der Dichotomie die ganze Problematik als eine methodologische Frage behandelt und ungelöst in die Problematik des möglichen Totalitätsersatzes verwiesen wird.

### **Das Fragment – zwischen Verräumlichung und Versprachlichung**

An die Funktionen der „ästhetischen Ideologie“ zu erinnern ist hier insofern nötig, als Paul de Mans Begriff den Totalitätsanspruch des Verstehens gerade im Akt der Aufhebung der Unterschiede von Welt und Sprache bloßstellt: „Was wir Ideologie nennen, ist genau die Verwechslung von Sprache mit natürlicher Realität, von Bezugnahme auf ein Phänomen mit diesem selbst. Daraus folgt, daß die Linguistik der Literarizität, mehr als alle anderen Untersuchungsmethoden, einschließlich derer ökonomischen Wissenschaften, ein wirkungsvolles und unentbehrliches Instrument zur Entlarvung ideologischer Irrwege ist und daß ihr ein maßgeblicher Anteil bei der Erklärung ihres Auftretens zukommt.“<sup>2</sup> Es besteht Grund zu der Annahme, daß sich gerade das romantische Zeitalter dem Problem des Fragmentarischen unter völlig veränderten historischen Bedingungen gegenübergestellt sah als die ihm vorausgehenden Epochen. Und zwar in einer Form, die die klassische Opposition von Fragment und Totalität zwar nicht aufhob, sie aber – und darin besteht der grundlegende Unterschied zu den früheren Epochen –

erst in einer Struktur der gegenseitigen Wahrnehmbarkeit zugänglich machte, die – ginge es um Ersetzung einer ehemaligen vermeintlichen Ganzheit bzw. um Erschaffung von semantisch dezentrierten oder gattungsübergreifenden Texte – die neue Erfahrung der Unvollendetheit nicht mehr vom literarischen Selbstverständnis abscheiden ließ. Lehrreich ist dabei jedoch zu beobachten, daß die meisten Klassiker der Romantik das Fragment zwar als eine neue Kunstform entdeckt haben, letzten Endes jedoch nicht bereit waren, ihm solch ein sinnbildendes Potential zuzuschreiben, das die poetologischen Möglichkeiten des ganzheitlichen Kunstideals hätte überbieten können. Offensichtlich weigerten sie sich der dezentrierten strukturellen Gestaltung (in ihrem Wortgebrauch „dem Chaotischen“) mehr zuzuerkennen als nur die Freilegung des poetischen Raums für die größtmögliche sprachlich-modale Fülle. Während Friedrich Schlegel im *Athenäum* zwar nie aufhörte zu betonen, daß „die romantische Dichtart (...) noch im Werden“ (ist), und sogar „das (...) ihr eigentliches Wesen (ist), daß sie ewig nur werden, nie vollendet seyn kann“,<sup>3</sup> weist dem Fragment gleichzeitig einen Geschlossenheitscharakter zu, der gerade der offenen Bedeutungsbildung im Wege stehe: „ein Fragment muß gleich einem kleinen Kunstwerke von der umgebenden Welt ganz abgesondert und in sich selbst vollendet seyn wie ein Igel“.<sup>4</sup> Nicht nur der Anspruch auf Ganzheit bleibt hier erhalten, sondern auch dasjenige klassische Kunstideal, das das gelungene Kunstwerk selbst – und das heißt: das jeweilige Kunstwerk oder das Kunstwerk schlechthin – auf eine normativ verstandene Vollendetheit zurückführt.

So blieb, begleitet von gewissen Widersprüchen zwar, jene durch die Klassik vermittelte aristotelische Vorstellung dennoch in einigen Elementen weiter gültig, nach der das Kunstwerk das Ergebnis des authentisch harmonisierten Welt- und Selbstverständnisses des einheitlichen schaffenden Ich sei und als solches für seine eigene organische Vollkommenheit bürge. Zwischen den Bestandteilen des Kunstwerks müsse „der Zusammenhang (...) ein derartig geschlossener sein, daß, wenn man einen Teil versetzt oder wegnimmt, das Ganze zusammenbricht oder doch erschüttert wird. Denn ein Bestandteil, dessen Dasein oder Fehlen sich nicht bemerkbar macht, ist auch kein wesentlicher Teil des Ganzen.“<sup>5</sup> Und auch wenn die Betonung von Ganzheit und makelloser Vollkommenheit in der Antike notwendigerweise auf das Werk als Gebilde zielte (was die späte Klassik dann mit dem Ideal von der zweckdienlichen Umsetzung der „natürlichen Eigenart“<sup>6</sup> in Verbindung brachte), so hat doch vor allem die Goethesche Auffassung vom Individuum dazu beigetragen, daß diese als „zweite Natur“ begriffene ästhetische Organizität in der Romantik nicht mehr losgelöst von ihrem Schöpfer, dem Ebenbild Gottes, gedacht werden konnte. Von der Empfängerseite aus betrachtet war also das (hier noch immer formale<sup>7</sup> Prinzip des „Vorgriffs der Vollkommenheit“<sup>8</sup> das kontinuierlich bildende Traditionselement, das die Klassik, entsprechend ihres eigenen Individualisierungshorizonts umgewertet, an die Romantik weitergab und

das die Romantik – all ihren traditionsfeindlichen Zügen zum Trotz – weiterführte, indem sie es im Grunde auch zur Instanz der Fragmentarität, einer ihrer wichtigsten eigenen neuen Erfahrungen, erhob.

Trotz aller romantischen Gleichstellung von Fragment und Totalität scheint also für das ganze Zeitalter charakteristisch zu sein – und dasselbe soll auch für die herausragendsten Werke der Romantik zutreffen –, was Rainer Nägele am Beispiel von Hölderlin verdeutlicht hat: „Hölderlins Werk ist geprägt und motiviert von der Sehnsucht nach Ganzheit. (...) ...überwiegend stößt man auf Texte, die stichwortartig oder auch ausführlicher durchkomponiert sind, deren Kontur oder Skelett von Anfang bis Ende sich abzeichnet, nur fehlt es da und dort zwisehendrin.“<sup>49</sup>

Der eher verborgene denn reflektierte Totalitätsanspruch der Romantik untermauerte den Hegelschen Gedanken von der „Partialisierung“ der Kunst auf eigene Weise, quasi von der Kehrseite der Zusammenhänge her. Die Romantik stützte dessen Gültigkeit zumindest insoweit, als die poetische Fundierung des von ihr bevorzugt reflektierten Fragment-Prinzips im virtuellen Horizont eines (bereits oder noch) als unerreichbar und unrealisierbar betrachteten Ganzheitsideals vollzogen wurde. Man ging also – wie das nicht nur das Hölderlin-Beispiel zeigt – davon aus, daß die werkbildenden Prinzipien des Fragments notwendigerweise aus der Erfahrung des Mangels einer vorstellbaren Ganzheit erwachsen. Verglichen mit der sprachlichen Wende der Spätmoderne besteht der entscheidende Unterschied hier offensichtlich darin, daß das Repertoire der möglichen Antworten auf die Mangelerfahrung allein als Folge des Abgelöstseins von der Totalität zugänglich wurde – und zwar von einer Form der Totalität, deren Perspektive auch in Hinblick auf die poetologische Episteme von einer Art Objekt-Subjekt-Dichotomie gebildet wurde. Infolgedessen verhinderte die Struktur der „Sichtbarkeit“ der Dinge selbst, daß sie – und gerade darin zeigt sich die sonst vielfarbige Romantik von Tieck über Novalis bis Friedrich Schlegel auffallend einmütig – die als Wertziel begriffene organische Ganzheit und universale Harmonie anders interpretiert denn als ein mögliches Existierendes, das sich außerhalb, jenseits des sich selbst über die Subjektivität begreifenden Ichs „plaziert“. Und da der Romantik ausschließlich dieser metaphysische Horizont der Teilhaftigkeit am Ideal zur Verfügung stand, begründete die notwendigerweise normative Figuration der Ideale gerade im Gefühl, das Wissen über sie nicht realisieren zu können, die für diese Periode charakteristischen modalen Stimmlagen: die der Melancholie, der Elegie und der ironischen Resignation

Da das sprachhermeneutische Potential dieser Periode, das die Romantik vor allem Schleiermacher und (in wirkungsgeschichtlicher Hinsicht mehr noch) Humboldt zu verdanken hatte, sich erst viel später entfalten konnte, kommt der Verdienst, dieses zwiespaltige Erbe bereits um die Jahrhundertwende kritisch überprüft zu haben, eindeutig Nietzsche zu. Denn das Erbe, das die Romantik in dieser

Hinsicht weitergab, war nicht nur durch die in den Vordergrund gerückte Tradition eines ganzheitlichen Denkens gekennzeichnet, sondern auch von der Ideologie des Ästhetischen belastet. Ganz bis Maurice Blanchot wurde kaum jemand darauf aufmerksam, daß die historische Universalisierung des Einheitsgedankens nicht nur bei Hegel vonstatten geht, sondern – in einer typisch subtilen Form der ästhetischen Ideologie – selbst bei Friedrich Schlegel aufzufinden ist. Im bereits zitierten 116. *Athenäumsfragment* liest sich nämlich der auf die romantische Dichtung bezogene Satz wie folgt: „Sie allein (*nämlich die romantische Dichtart – E. K. Sz.*) ist unendlich, wie sie allein frey ist, und das als ihr erstes Gesetz anerkennt, daß die Willkür des Dichters kein Gesetz über sich leide.“<sup>10</sup> Obwohl Blanchot aus diesem Fragment keine weiterführenden Konsequenzen zieht, ist es kaum zu übersehen, was für eine hochgradige Eigenständigkeit (*sie allein*) und welchen ideologischen Sonderwert (*unendlich, frei*) Schlegel dieser historischen – und auch von ihm selbst historisch aufgewerteten – Form von Literatur zukommen läßt. Das romantische Erbe also, dem Nietzsche entgegenzusehen hatte, war nicht nur vom – zugegeben: durch eine Hinterfragbarkeit stark problematisierten – Totalitätsgedanken geprägt, sondern auch tief von dem Universalitätsanspruch der ästhetischen Ideologie durchdrungen.

Der Zweifel an der ästhetischen Versöhnbarkeit der in Funktion und Charakter unterschiedlichen Diskurse war vermutlich eine der notwendigen und grundlegenden Voraussetzungen für die sprachliche Wende der literarischen Moderne, die die Frage der Fragmentarisierung der Kunstwerke in einem neuen Zusammenhang mit der Erfahrung der Partialität des Verstehens stellte. Von hier aus betrachtet kann die spezielle Logik des Traditionsbruchs, die in dem besagten Zusammenhang nicht nur der Hegelschen Tradition der diskursiven Versöhnung, sondern auch der romantischen literarischen Tradition der totalen Ästhetisierung prospektive dichtungsgeschichtliche Indizes zuschrieb, nur unterstrichen werden. Während nämlich die Ästhetik auf der Einheit des Schönen, Guten und Wahren beharrte, bezog das 252. Athenäum-Fragment nicht nur entgegengesetzt Stellung,<sup>11</sup> sondern läßt laut einer seiner wichtigen Explikationen – allen ästhetischen Totalitätsansprüchen zum Trotz – auch die Notwendigkeit der Trennung der Diskurse einsichtig werden. Denn, so schreibt Friedrich Schlegel, „Sittliche Reizbarkeit ist mit einem gänzlichen Mangel an poetischem Gefühl sehr gut vereinbar“.<sup>12</sup>

Nietzsches außerordentliche Leistung liegt – wie bekannt – vor allem im Eröffnen eines denkgeschichtlichen Horizonts, der es ermöglichte, die Codes der Welterschließung von der als eine Tradition der eloquenten Rede verstandenen Rhetorik bis hin zum global-metaphysischen Logosmythos gerade von der Seinsweise der kulturellen Überlieferung her kritisch zu überprüfen. Hervorzuheben ist dabei Nietzsches Hinwendung zur *temporalen Seinsweise* der kulturellen Tradition von Daseinsdeutung. Denn Nietzsche hat diese tiefgreifende Wende vom ganzheitlichen Denken zur Unvollkommenheit des jeweiligen Verstehens in die Wege ge-

leitet, ohne *damals* vom Humboldtschen Partialitätsgedanken erwähnenstwerte Unterstützung bekommen zu haben. Wie bei Friedrich Schlegel, so kommt auch bei Hegel das Prinzip der Partialität sogar an solchen Stellen zu kurz, wo ihrer methodologischen Aufwertung eigentlich nichts mehr im Wege stehen sollte. Obwohl diese Stellen des Hegelschen Erbes bei Nietzsche – wie später auch gerade bei Derrida – nicht unreflektiert bleiben, muß sich Nietzsche jedoch ziemlich viel bemüht haben, die berufenen Hegel-Passagen in einen neuen wirkungsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang zu stellen, in welchem sie dann zum Ausgangspunkt einer Kritik am Universalisierungsgedanken haben werden können. In Abwendung von dieser Tradition lehnt sich Nietzsche paradoxerweise sehr oft bewußt an Hegel an, um die von ihm gestifteten Horizonte – wie es im Falle des *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* geschieht – konstruktiv umzukehren. Dieter Henrich macht durchaus zu Recht darauf aufmerksam, daß selbst in der These vom Vergangenheitscharakter der Kunst ein wirksames Potential steckt, das – Kunst von Krise und Utopie trennend – sogar den ästhetischen Ideologien der Moderne entgegenwirken konnte.

Nietzsche, dessen *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* mit einigem Vorbehalt sogar die These vom Vergangenheitscharakter der Kunst teilt, nimmt auch in der *Götzen-Dämmerung* Bezug auf die platonischen Wahrheitsphilosophien, wobei seine Ausführungen zum Fragmentproblem (unmarkiert) konkrete Verbindungen zu Hegels *Phänomenologie des Geistes* herstellen. Er distanziert sich hier von der berühmten Hegelsche These „Das Wahre ist das Ganze“,<sup>13</sup> ohne sie jedoch völlig zu widerlegen. „Ich mißtraue allen Systematikern und gehe ihnen aus dem Wege. Der Wille zum System ist ein Mangel an Rechtschaffenheit“<sup>14</sup> – lesen wir in einem der einleitenden Aphorismen, den Nietzsche weiter unten folgendermaßen ergänzt: „Aber es gibt nichts außer dem Ganzen! – Daß niemand mehr verantwortlich gemacht wird, daß die Art des Seins nicht auf eine *causa prima* zurückgeführt werden darf, daß die Welt weder als Sensorium noch als ‚Geist‘ eine Einheit ist, dies erst ist die große Befreiung, – damit erst ist die Unschuld des Werdens wieder hergestellt.“<sup>15</sup> Die Zwiespältigkeit dieses Auf-Distanz-Gehens läßt sich darin erblicken, daß Nietzsche schließlich doch noch zur Hegelschen These zurückkehrt. In einer Form aber, in welcher er die Interpretierbarkeit des Fragmentarischen vom Ganzen im Sinne der Eigenständigkeit abscheidet. Diese selbständige Setzung des Fragmentarischen, die das Partiale bzw. das Unvollendete von der gängigen Dichotomie von Fragment und Totalität befreit, hat deshalb so enorme Bedeutung, weil dadurch gerade die Frage nach der Identität der Dinge neu gestellt werden kann. Während nämlich *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes* davon ausgeht, daß „das Wahre nur als System wirklich“<sup>16</sup> sein kann und folglich alle Identität in einer – als stabiler Endzustand aufgefaßten – wahren Ganzheit<sup>17</sup> zu erzielen sei, wird der Identität bei Nietzsche nicht nur eine neue, prozessuale Seinsweise zugeschrieben, sondern eine Desideologisierung des Weltverstehens selbst

vorgenommen. Diese Aufhebung der Dichotomie ist nun die Bedingung dafür, daß die Schwerpunkte der Deutung des Fragmentarischen von der strukturell ganzheitsbezogenen Gegenständlichkeit auf das Sprachlich-Diskursive verlegt werden können. Die fragmentarische *Rede* – und nicht mehr das als Objekt verstandene Bruchstück – „kennt kein Genügen, sie genügt nicht, sie spricht sich nicht im Hinblick auf sich selbst aus, sie hat nicht ihren Inhalt zum Sinn. Doch ebensowenig fügt sie sich mit den andern Fragmenten zusammen, um ein vollständigeres Denken, eine Gesamterkenntnis zu bilden. Das Fragmentarische geht dem Ganzen nicht voraus, sondern spricht sich außerhalb des Ganzen und nach ihm aus.“<sup>18</sup>

Erst durch diese Neusituierung des Fragmentproblems wird ersichtlich, daß die Dichotomie von Fragment und Totalität auf eine eigenartige und höchst wirk-same Weise aufgehoben wurde. Denn Nietzsche ging es offensichtlich nicht um eine *ontologische* Destruktion des Ganzen, sondern um dessen andersartige Erfahrbarkeit. Die bekannten Gegensätze also, die im Vordergrund von Nietzsches Philosophie stehen, „sprechen eine bestimmte vielfältige Wahrheit aus und die Notwendigkeit, das Vielfältige zu denken, wenn man, dem Wert gehorchend, die Wahrheit sagen will, – aber eine Vielfalt, die noch Beziehung zum Einen hat, die noch vervielfältigte Affirmation des Einen ist“.<sup>19</sup> Die Aussprechbarkeit (und nicht mehr die „Darstellbarkeit“) der notwendig vielfältigen Welterfahrung wird in der Moderne – die das Erbe der Romantik bereits mit dieser Erfahrung belastet antrat – sehr bald zu einem Problem der Sprache, in der sich der sich von der spätromantischen Subjektivität her verstehende Mensch in seiner ehemaligen singulären Identität immer weniger wiedererkennt. „Die Sprache spricht“ – erschließt Heideggers berühmte *Maxime* diese veränderte Situiertheit. – „Der Mensch spricht, insofern er der Sprache entspricht.“<sup>20</sup> In grober Vereinfachung kam es im weiteren Verlauf der literarischen Moderne größtenteils also darauf an, wie diese Erfahrung des „Wohnen(s) im Sprechen der Sprache“<sup>21</sup> – bis hin zu Paul de Mans genauso berühmt gewordener *Gegenmaxime*<sup>22</sup> – wahrgenommen, bearbeitet und beantwortet wurde.

Die Erfahrung, daß die Sprache in ihrer Unhintergebarkeit immer dem Subjekt vorausliegt, hatte zur Folge, daß die Literatur der Moderne auf eine zentrale Position des schaffenden Subjekts, dem der Akt der Bedeutungsbildung spontan verfügbar wäre, durchaus verzichten mußte. Damit geriet zugleich auch ein zweites Moment aller ästhetischen Ideologie ins Wanken: Die Unbeherrschbarkeit der Vermittlung zwischen Produktion und Rezeption trennt die künstlerische Aussage sozusagen zwangsweise von dessen romantischer Affirmation ab, damit über die Zerrissenheit der Welterfahrung hinaus eine freie innere Einheit – die ohnehin nur als ein imaginärer Raum des Abwesenden und des Mangelnden zu deuten ist – im Akt des autonomen Schaffens zu erringen wäre. „So ist ihre Vermittlung, als unvordenkliche“ – stellt Dieter Henrich fest –, „nicht die Versöhnung des Bewußt-

seins mit dem ihm Entgegengesetzten in der Anschauung eines Absoluten.“<sup>23</sup> (Damit ist natürlich nicht gemeint, daß diese Form der künstlerischen Vermittlung als typisches Symptom der ästhetischen Ideologie im weiteren Verlauf der Moderne nicht mehr in Erscheinung träte.)

Ohne diesen Vorgang bis in die Postmoderne zu verfolgen, läßt sich mit ziemlicher Sicherheit feststellen, daß die globale Erfahrung der neuen, vor allem sprachlich wahrnehmbaren Situiertheit das Denken über Subjekt, Kunstwerk und Literatur schlechthin tief beeinflußt hat. Allerdings immer im Zusammenhang damit, wie zur berühmten, immerhin erst im *Humanismus-Brief* in Worte gefaßten These von Heidegger – „Der Mensch ist nicht der Herr des Seienden“<sup>24</sup> – Stellung genommen wurde. In der Zwischenphase, also etwa vom späten Joyce über Musil bis hin zu Kosztolányi bieten sich genügend textuelle Belege dafür, daß diese Erfahrung – wenngleich unter Vorbehalt – immer öfter als Gewinn und weniger als Verlust empfunden und aufgenommen wurde. Es „verhält sich so“ – vermerkt Musil 1931 –, „daß der Mensch bei sehr vielen und gerade den persönlichsten Handlungen nicht von seinem Ich geführt wird, sondern dieses mit sich führt, das auf der Lebensreise durchaus eine Mittelstellung zwischen Kapitän und Passagier innehat.“<sup>25</sup> Offensichtlich wird dabei nicht nur die Geteiltheit des Subjekts, sondern auch das mit ihr in Verbindung gebrachte Fragmentarische – hier bereits als zentraler werkbildender Faktor – aufgewertet. Kosztolányis Novellenzyklus, der ebenfalls aus den 30er Jahren stammt, läßt zwei Protagonisten auftreten, die sich nicht nur als Alterego des Anderen verstehen, sondern das aktuell reflektierte Schreibwerk gemeinsam zu vollbringen haben. In der ersten Novelle ist die folgende Passage zu lesen:

Wir schreiben also ein Reisejournal?“ wollte ich wissen. „Oder eine Biographie?“

„Nichts von beiden.“

„Einen Roman?“

„Herr Behüte! Alle Romane fangen an: ‚Ein Junger Mann ging auf dunkler Straße fürbaß, sein Kragenaufschlag war zerknittert.‘ Dann stellt sich heraus, dieser junge Mann mit dem zerknitterten Kragenaufschlag ist der Romanheld. Deine Erwartungen werden auf die Folter gespannt. Schrecklich.“

„Was soll es dann werden?“

„Alles in einem. Ein Reisejournal, in dem ich berichte, wo ich gern hingefahren wäre, eine romanhafte Biographie, in der ich Rechenschaft darüber ablege, wie oft der Held im Traum den Tod erlitt. Eines jedoch bedinge ich mir aus: Verkleistere meine Geschichte nicht mit irgendwelchen schwachsinnigen Märchen. Alles soll bleiben, wie es dem Dichter geziemt: ein Fragment.“

(...)



Ich war schon im Erdgeschoß. Da fiel mir etwas ein.  
 „Kornél!“ rief ich hinauf. „Und wer wird unseren Band zeichnen?“  
 „Ist mir Wurscht!“ rief er herunter. „Du vielleicht. Gib deinen Namen dafür her. Mein Name soll den Titel bilden. Titel werden größer gedruckt!“

Im weiteren sollte nun auf den Aspekt der Erfahrung von Partialität detaillierter eingegangen werden, um an einem plausiblen Beispiel zu zeigen, wie das Problem des Fragmentarischen in die Frage nach dem Status, nach der Seinsweise des Kunstwerks umgewendet und im Paradigma der Spätmoderne zum Problem des statuarischen bzw. transitorischen Kunstwerks wird.

### Das „vollendete“ Kunstwerk im Horizont der Temporalität

Das wohlbekanntes Dogma der statuarischen Seinsweise des Kunstwerks wird – und indirekt zeigt sich darin die Zusammengehörigkeit der einander natürlich negierenden Theorien ästhetischer Repräsentation und mimetischer „Glaubwürdigkeit“ – auch heute noch von einer Kunstwissenschaft gestützt, die zwar in den 20/30er Jahren ein eigenes, „soziologisches“ Paradigma entwickelte, deren durchscheinender ästhetischer Essentialismus sich aber erkennbar aus der (westlichen) Moderne der Jahrhundertwende herleitet. „Wenn nämlich die visuelle Beziehung des Menschen zu den Naturgegenständen, zu ihrem Ensemble eine sittliche ist – wir erinnern erneut an das, was wir über die Widerspiegelung des Stoffwechsels der Gesellschaft mit der Natur ausgeführt haben –,“ lesen wir zum Beispiel in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, „so bricht in die Wirkung, die ihr künstlerisches Abbild hervorruft, auch eine mit Fug als sittlich charakterisierbare Erschütterung ein.“<sup>26</sup> Dieses die Katharsis „ethisierende“ Verfahren veranschaulicht den „zwingenden“ Charakter der (nur frei denkbaren) ästhetischen Erfahrung mit der berühmten Schlußzeile aus *Archaischer Torso Apollos*: „Du mußt dein Leben ändern!“ Die Katharsis würde die Subjektivität des Empfängers demnach in dem Sinne durchrütteln, „daß seine im Leben sich betätigende Leidenschaften neue Inhalte, eine neue Richtung erhalten, daß sie, derart gereinigt, zu einer seelischen Grundlage von ‚tugendhaften Fertigkeiten‘ werden“.<sup>27</sup> Das Wesentliche ist hier nicht die offensichtliche Fehldeutung, die dem Wort „müssen“ den Charakter eines moralischen Gebots zuschreibt (das ethische Element der Katharsis kann nämlich modal nie durch „müssen“, sondern höchstens durch das Verb „sollen“ getragen werden). Aus der unmittelbaren sprachlichen Form können wir vorläufig nur ableiten, daß in diesem Gedicht die ästhetische Erfahrung nicht als ethische Frage enthalten ist, sondern mit einer unumgänglichen Veränderung in Zusammenhang gebracht wird, die sich aus aktiver rezeptiver Teilnahme ergibt.

Viel charakteristischer ist, daß Lukács den Sinn der kommunikativen ästhetischen Funktion in der Erfüllung der monologischen Wirkung des „neuen, jeweiligen individuellen Werkes“ sieht. In dieser Sicht ist die kathartische Wirkung entscheidend abhängig davon, wie weit die ästhetische Autorität zur Geltung kommt. Wobei es in dem Gedicht nicht nur darum geht, daß die Statue es ist, die den Betrachter anblickt, sondern auch darum, daß sie ihn, ohne daß er sich aktiv rezipierend beteiligt, überhaupt nicht „ansprechen“ könnte. Denn es handelt sich – und bereits die Überschrift weist mit Nachdruck darauf hin – um einen Torso, d. h. einen „Kunstgegenstand“ ohne Kopf und Gliedmaßen, der im Sinne der klassisch-idealistischen Ästhetiken gerade nicht „vollkommen“ genannt werden kann. Ohne eine vorrangige Betrachtung der Rezeption – der rezeptiven Interessiertheit des Verstehens – kann daher auch in diesem Fall keine ästhetische Kommunikation zustande kommen. Das heißt: wenn der Torso sich im gegenständlichen Sinn wie eine Statue verhalten würde, könnte er nicht zu der Erkenntnis verhelfen, daß die ontologische Voraussetzung der ästhetischen Erfahrung stets die Aktivität des Rezipienten ist, die die „Unabgeschlossenheit“ des Kunstwerks sinngebend vervollständigt und dieses gerade dadurch neuschafft. Verständlicher Weise ist die Form dieser Erkenntnis nicht nur im geschichtlichen, sondern auch im strukturphänomenologischen Sinn eine dialogische. Und so wird eine Erfahrung mitteilbar, die zwar nur frei gemacht werden kann, deren Konsequenzen wir uns aber – da es die Konsequenzen des geschehenen Verstehens sind – nicht entziehen können: Du *mußt*..., d. h.: „du bist gezwungen“, „du kannst nicht anders“. Oder: Die ästhetische Erfahrung ist immer nur in dem Maße ästhetisch, wie sie – als sich ereignendes Verstehen – mit der Applikation einhergeht. Das Geschehene kann nämlich nur dann als wirkliches Ereignis erkannt werden, wenn seine Konsequenzen – als *ästhetisches Verstehen* – in einem neuen Verstehen unserer selbst auftauchen.

Das Rilke-Gedicht stammt nun aus einer Zeit, in der einer der grundlegenden Horizontwandel der ästhetischen Erfahrung in der Moderne bereits seinen Anfang genommen hatte. Es läßt sich nicht übersehen, daß von Rilke bis Valéry, von Heidegger bis Wittgenstein und von Kosztolányi bis Bachtin immer mehr eine Sprachauffassung zur Grundlage des Literaturverständnisses gemacht wird, die den Rezipienten nicht als passives Subjekt irgendeiner „Kontemplation“ betrachtet, sondern – wie das obige Beispiel bezeugt – als die letzte Instanz des ästhetischen Grundverhältnisses. Eine ähnliche Sicht wird auch von Valérys bekanntem Statement vertreten (wenn wir dieses nicht zu einem Fall hermeneutischen Nihilismus’ verzerren): „Meine Verse haben den Sinn, den man ihnen gibt. Der, den ich in sie hineingelegt habe, ist richtig nur für mich, er kann niemandem als der einzig wahre entgegengehalten werden.“<sup>28</sup> Vor allem in diesem Zusammenhang zeigt sich, warum eine Lukács folgende Analyse, die auf die (stets) „gegebene“ Wirklichkeit Bezug nimmt – und die Katharsis auch deshalb „ethisiert“ – in der objektivistischen Illusion des künstlerischen „Anblicks“ steckenbleibt. Denn die-

ser Argumentation liegen solche monologischen Prämissen des Sprachverständnisses zugrunde, die besonders im Prinzip der nur „in einer Richtung“ gedachten ästhetischen Wirkung dingfest zu machen sind. Jene „Bereicherung und Vertiefung“<sup>29</sup> nämlich, von der Lukács spricht, beschränkt sich ausschließlich auf die Rezeption: das Verstehen vollzieht sich demnach nicht in der Form von Frage und Antwort, sondern unter Aufrechterhaltung der Autorität des Werkes. Die vom Kunstgegenstand ausgehenden Wirkungsimpulse erreichen und verändern den der Wirkung ausgesetzten, ja ihr *unterworfenen* Rezipienten. Dieser hat in einer solchen Konstruktion keine Möglichkeit, auf das Kunstwerk zurückzuwirken, das – als Partitur,<sup>30</sup> d. h. hier konkret: als Erinnerung seiner einstigen Vollkommenheit – schon von vornherein auf eine *konstruktive* Rezeption angewiesen ist. Das Torso-Dasein betont diese Angewiesenheit noch: das Werk ist bei Rilke um der Ergänzung, um der temporären Vervollständigung seiner „Bedeutung“ (hermeneutisch gesprochen: ihrer jeweiligen Konkretisierung) willen nicht nur abhängig von der (aktiven) Rezeption, sondern fordert sie ausdrücklich ein.

Damit nun diese Dialogizität das Verstehen der ästhetischen Erfahrung der Spätmoderne voranbringen konnte, bedurfte es zu dieser Zeit längst einer anderen als der Lukácsschen Sprachauffassung. Nämlich einer, welche die Sprache nicht als Mittel, nicht als lexikalischen und grammatischen Vorrat<sup>31</sup> und vielleicht nicht einmal als generalisiertes semantisches Gebilde<sup>32</sup> mit der neuen historischen Form ästhetischer Erfahrung in Verbindung bringt, sondern im Zeichen der Humboldtschen Ganzheit des Sprechens. „Wir gingen mit Wilhelm v. Humboldt“, schreibt Heidegger 1959, „vom Sprechen aus und versuchten, das Wesen der Sprache erst vorzustellen, dann zu ergründen.“<sup>33</sup> Und in der Tat läuft ein temporales Denken der stets entstehenden und wieder vergehenden Sprache jeder vorrat-aktualisierenden strukturalistischen Sprachauffassung völlig zuwider. Die wichtigste anticartesianische Erkenntnis bei Humboldt lautet: „Denn die Sprache kann ja nicht als ein da liegender, in seinem Ganzen übersehbarer oder nach und nach mittheilbarer Stoff, sondern muss als ein sich ewig erzeugender angesehen werden, wo die Gesetze der Erzeugung bestimmt sind, aber der Umfang und gewissermassen auch die Art des Erzeugnisses gänzlich unbestimmt bleiben. Das Sprachenlernen der Kinder ist nicht ein Zumessen von Wörtern, Niederlegen im Gedächtniss und Wiedernachlallen mit den Lippen, sondern ein Wachsen des Sprachvermögens durch Alter und Uebung.“<sup>34</sup>

Es dürfte von der Wahrheit nicht allzuweit entfernt sein, wenn wir aus der literarischen Praxis der Zwischenkriegszeit die Lehre ziehen, daß das Humboldtsche Paradigma einer so verstandenen Sprachlichkeit eigentlich erst in der spätmodernen Literatur zur Geltung kam. Und dies über einige grundlegende Erneuerungen des Literaturverständnisses, die zugleich sichtbar machten, welche Konzeptionen des Individuums im 20. Jahrhundert von der dialogischen Auffassung der Sprache angeregt worden sind. Das selbstgenügsame ästhetizistische Kunstideal einer iden-

tischen Textualität konnte sich nämlich nicht bereitfinden, das Subjekt an eine sprachliche Seinsweise auszuliefern. Und historisch war es völlig ungeeignet dazu, das Subjekt in seiner dialogisch-sprachlichen Konstituiertheit als ein temporal angelegtes poetologisches Subjekt der Rede anzuerkennen. Was in dieser Periode seinen Anfang nimmt, ist daher nicht einfach die Revision des herkömmlich verstandenen Kunstobjekts bzw. der auf sich selbst zurückbezogenen nachromantischen Subjektivität. Von der Geschichte des Denkens über die Kunst her gesehen ist vielmehr jene Wende von außerordentlicher Bedeutung, die aufgrund der obigen Konzeption antrat, den jahrhundertealten kunstwissenschaftlichen Gegensatz zwischen Produktion und Rezeption zu beseitigen.

Wenn die genannte literaturhistorische Epoche eine vereinheitlichende Eigenheit hat, ist diese am ehesten zu sehen in einem europaweit sich verstärkenden Anspruch, literarische Texte als eine Art Ursprungspotential der offenen und unabschließbaren Bedeutung (und nicht selten sogar auch als Zwischenstation – als „Übergangsstelle“ – der unabschließbaren Bedeutungsbildung) zu betrachten, d. h. darin diese Unabgeschlossenheit bzw. Unabschließbarkeit überhaupt mit der dialogischen Struktur der Rede, der Sprache, des Kunstgenusses und des Bewußtseins in Verbindung zu bringen. Folglich gelangt die klassisch-moderne Idee des statuarischen Kunstwerkes immer mehr in jenen Heideggerschen Horizont, in dem das Konzept der sprechenden Sprache zugleich die Aufhebbarkeit einer *anderen* traditionellen Opposition begründet. „Der Zusammenhang der Rede mit Verstehen und Verständlichkeit“, schreibt Heidegger schon in *Sein und Zeit*, „wird deutlich aus einer zum Reden selbst gehörenden existenzialen Möglichkeit, aus dem Hören. (...) Das Hören ist für das Reden konstitutiv.“<sup>35</sup> Und er formuliert 1959 womöglich noch radikaler: „das Hören begleitet und umgibt nicht nur das Sprechen, wie solches im Gespräch stattfindet. Das Zugleich von Sprechen und Hören meint mehr. Das Sprechen ist von sich aus ein Hören. Es ist das Hören auf die Sprache, die wir sprechen. So ist das Sprechen nicht zugleich, sondern *zuvor* ein Hören.“<sup>36</sup> Doch in im Grunde ähnlicher Form analysiert Valéry – bereits 1928 – die ästhetische Erfahrung selbst: Der Dichter „stellt Pseudomechanismen aus sich heraus, die imstande sind, ihm die Energie, die sie ihn gekostet haben, zurückzugeben oder sogar noch mehr (denn, wie es scheint, sind hier die Prinzipien durchbrochen). Sein Ohr spricht zu ihm. Wir erwarten das unerwartete Wort – das nicht vorhergesehen, wohl aber erwartet werden kann. Wir sind die ersten, die es hören. Hören? das heißt aber *sprechen*. Man versteht das Gehörte erst, wenn man es selbst gesagt hat, von einem anderen Ansatzpunkt her. *Sprechen* heißt *hören*.“<sup>37</sup>

Mit dieser auf sprachlichem Wege erreichten Aufhebung des Antagonismus von Produktion und Rezeption konnte sich eine Perspektive auf das Verstehen des „Kunstgegenstandes“ mit seinem visuellen Begriffssystem (Wohlgefallen als ästhetische Erkenntnis, Kontemplation, Re/Konsideration usw.) eröffnen, in der die Prämissen der dialogischen Seinsweise zuerst den transitorischen Charakter des

Kunstwerks sichtbar machten. Zumindest vom strukturphänomenologischen Gesichtspunkt aus. Zu einer Frage literarischer Hermeneutik wurde die Fremdheit des von uns getrennten Werkes dementsprechend nicht so sehr als gegenständliche Fremdheit, sondern als Andersheit der fremden Rede. Bachtin zum Beispiel konstatiert nicht nur, daß das Wort über eine „ursprüngliche Dialogizität“<sup>38</sup> verfügt, sondern auch, daß „jedes Wort (...) auf eine Antwort gerichtet *ist* und keiner (...) dem tiefgreifenden Einfluß des vorweggenommenen Wortes der Replik entgegen *kann*. (...) Obwohl das Wort im Umfeld von schon Gesagtem Gestalt annimmt, ist es gleichzeitig vom noch ungesagten, aber notwendigen und vorweggenommenen Wort der Replik bestimmt. (...) Gewöhnlich gilt diese Einstellung sogar als die grundlegende konstitutive Besonderheit des rhetorischen Wortes.“<sup>39</sup> Die Erfahrung, daß in der eigenen Rede die fremde bereits mitklingt, wird daher gleichfalls aus der Tradition der nach-avantgardistischen Moderne an eine Hermeneutik weitergereicht, die die Bedingung allen Verstehens in der vorübergehenden Überwindung der intersubjektiven Distanz, in der Überbrückung solcher Alteritäten sah: „Ebenso meint die babylonische Sprachverwirrung nicht nur, wie nach biblischer Überlieferung, die Vielheit der Sprachfamilien und die Vielheit der Sprachen, die menschliche Hybris heraufgeführt hat. Sie umfaßt vielmehr das ganze der Fremdheit, die zwischen Mensch und Mensch sich auf tut und immer neue Verwirrung schafft. Aber darin ist auch die Möglichkeit ihrer Überwindung eingeschlossen. Denn die Sprache ist Gespräch.“<sup>40</sup>

Zur gleichen Zeit aber, als die ästhetische Theorie des für sich stehenden Kunstgegenstands ins Wanken geriet, verliert das geschlossen-vollkommene, vollendete Kunstwerk seinen klassisch-modernen Wertstatus. Valéry bedenkt eine rezeptive Mentalität, welche im Werk die Welt als eine eigene Schöpfung genießt, ganz offensichtlich deshalb mit Kritik, weil jene die produktive Tätigkeit der Poiesis stets nur aus Mustern, nur aus gegebenen Wirklichkeiten zu abstrahieren vermag. Damit verbunden ist jedoch eine unbewußte Beschränkung der Poiesis-Funktion, indem die Kunstschöpfung letztlich stets an einem außerhalb der Kunst liegenden Faktor instanziiert wird. Die Natur erscheint auf diese Weise als transzendiertes „Ziel“ der Kunst, und zwar so, daß sie letzterer immer Normen vorgibt, d. h. Grenzen setzt: „Es ist nicht auszuschließen, daß das, was wir in der Kunst Vollkommenheit nennen (und was nicht von jedem gesucht, von einigen sogar verachtet wird), nichts anderes ist, als das Gefühl, daß wir das Vollkommene der Natur (das z. B. einer Muschel anzusehen ist) im menschlichen Werk zu erblicken wünschen.“<sup>41</sup>

Vielleicht ist es nicht übertrieben zu sagen: Valérys Erkenntnis hat deshalb so kardinale Bedeutung, weil sie die beschränkende Wirkung einer bis dahin kaum in Zweifel gezogenen ästhetischen Norm sichtbar macht. Im spätmodernen Erfahrungshorizont nämlich – von Joyce bis Musil, von Pound bis Gottfried Benn – wird die Forderung der geschlossenen formalen Vollendung tatsächlich zu einem

restriktiven Prinzip. Wir werden hier zum Zeugen eines Augenblicks historischer Diskontinuität, in dem ein transepochales Formprinzip der Kunst plötzlich historisch indiziert wird, „re-historisiert“, zurückverweist und zu einer das Schaffen behindernden Form der Transzendenz wird. In dieser plötzlich möglich gewordenen Nachträglichkeitserfahrung zeigt sich erst, welcher literarischen Epoche es in Wirklichkeit angehört. (Und es wird nun verständlich als *eine* der *geschichtlichen* Forderungen an das Kunstwerk.) Im Sinne der Blumenbergschen „Umbesetzung“: Was in der klassischen, sich von der romantischen Innerlichkeit abwendenden Moderne ein vorwärtsweisender Faktor der Dichtungsgeschichte war, erweist sich nun, in der ästhetischen Praxis der Spätmoderne, als eine rückwärts gerichtete Kraft. Und tatsächlich: Lukács, der in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* die Gültigkeit und die Wirkung des Rilke-Gedichtes ins Ethische transzendieren will, beschränkt die künstlerische Bedeutungsbildung genau dadurch, daß er die Wirkung des Werkes um den Preis der Vernachlässigung seiner immanenten Dialogizität auf etwas außer ihm richtete. (Das fingierte „Gesehenwerden“ – als eine Art Gegenseitigkeit – ist hier nämlich eine Erfahrung der Rezeption, derer sie nur durch aktive Aufhebung der Fremdheit des Torsos habhaft werden kann, d. h.: für ein *tätiges* Selbstverstehen bedarf sie unerläßlich der Erfahrung dieser Fremdheit. So wird verständlich, daß Valéry – mit scharfsinniger Konsequenz – gerade um der dieser Tätigkeit vorausgehenden Abgetrenntheit und Separation willen einer formalen Vollendung keinen besonderen Wert zuweist.)

Lukács war hier selbstverständlich nicht zum ersten Mal auf ein derartiges Dilemma der Transzendierbarkeit der Kunst gestoßen. Dem mit Leo Popper geführten *Dialog über Kunst* zufolge wies er den Gedanken eines „in der Unfertigkeit fertigen“ Kunstwerks damit zurück, daß in der zugrundeliegenden These „das Transcendente (*eigtl.: das Transcendentale*) nirgends Raum (hat). (...) Die Frage ist ja unser absolutes, sie muß all unsre Kontraste in sich tragen; all unser Ja und Nein und was dazwischen liegt, hat in der großen Frage Platz zu finden. Wir bauen die Tore nur zu kommendem Leben ...“<sup>42</sup> Das Vollkommenheitsprinzip weist also auch hier wegen seiner auf die Transzendenz gerichteten Bindung jede Gestaltung von sich, die – statt sich aus der Gegenständlichkeit herzuleiten – prinzipiell auf eine aktive Rezeption hin offen bleiben. Dieser „heilgeschichtliche“ Formgedanke wiederum – schlußfolgert (Bonyhai folgend) Jauß – steht unter der platonischen Absicherung, die in ihrer „monologischen Wahrheit dem Empfänger nurmehr die Rolle des kontemplativen Verstehens beläßt“.<sup>43</sup> Angesichts dieser Beispiele kann kaum ein Zweifel bestehen, warum gerade die Abwertung der Rezeption als gemeinsame Axiomatik dazu diente, im Zeichen einer Norm der zeitlosen Vollendetheit bzw. Vollkommenheit des Werkes die Grenzen zwischen dem Ästhetismus des Jahrhundertbeginns und den marxistischen Mimesis-Ästhetiken sehr leicht passierbar zu machen.

Als Folge davon haben beide Nachfolgerrichtungen in Ungarn noch heute mit der Erkenntnis dieser, ein halbes Jahrhundert alten Epochenschwelle des Denkens über Kunst zu kämpfen. Mit der Tatsache nämlich, daß sich die ästhetische Erfahrung nicht mehr einfach in der einseitigen Tätigkeit eines Genießens des Gegenstandes erschöpft, sondern selbst zu einer Form des gegenseitigen Verstehens, des „Sich-Verstehens im andern“<sup>44</sup> wird. Im Horizont jener literarischen „Episteme“ jedoch, der sich mit Abschluß der Spätmoderne herausgebildet hatte, wird die identische Erfüllung des Kunstwerks (im Sinne einer vollendeten Form) nicht zufällig zu einem primär rezeptionsgeschichtlichen Problem. „Für den Autor“, schreibt Jauß, „könne das Produkt seiner ästhetischen Tätigkeit nie ganz vollendet sein; das vollendete Werk sei vielmehr die Illusion des Rezipienten, aber auch Ansatz seiner notwendig inadäquaten Interpretation.“<sup>45</sup> Die Vollendetheit und Vollkommenheit des Werkes stellen insofern auch für den Dekonstruktivismus eine offene Frage dar, als er sie auch als zwiespaltige Konstrukte der jeweiligen Bedeutungsbildung ansieht. Die „Allegorie des Lesens“ kann von der „Unmöglichkeit des Lesens“<sup>46</sup> erzählen, weil das Lesen die Bedeutung und das Verstehen nie zur einen einzigen großen Einheit zusammenfassen vermag. „Die Lektüre ist nicht ‚unsere‘ Lektüre, sofern sie ausschließlich solche sprachlichen Elemente heranzieht, die der Text selber darbietet; die Unterscheidung zwischen Autor und Leser ist eine jener falschen Unterscheidungen, die die Lektüre ausleuchtet. Die Dekonstruktion ist nichts, was wir dem Text hinzugefügt hätten, sondern sie ist es, die den Text allererst konstituiert hat. Ein literarischer Text behauptet und verneint zugleich die Autorität seiner eigenen rhetorischen Form ...“<sup>47</sup> So wird leicht einsichtig, warum die Vollendetheit des Werkes im dekonstruktiven Horizont als Frage einer Rhetorizität im doppeltem Sinne auftaucht. „Indem der Text“, schreibt Paul de Man an anderem Ort, „für seinen eigenen notwendig ‚rhetorischen‘ Charakter einsteht, postuliert er auch die Notwendigkeit, mißverstanden zu werden.“<sup>48</sup>

Das hermeneutische und das dekonstruktivistische Interesse an der Frage der Unvollendetheit des Werkes (die auch die Frage nach der organischen Variante der formalen Vollkommenheit mit einschließt) nimmt von hier an je einen anderen Weg. Nicht nur, weil beide aus zum Teil unterschiedlichen Gründen die Geltung der in sich geschlossenen autonomen ästhetischen Gegenständlichkeit als unhaltbar ansehen. Sondern auch, weil sich vom Gesichtspunkt der am Text vollziehbaren Operationen her die Frageanliegen selbst unterscheiden. Das eine ist interessiert an der Aufdeckung derjenigen Möglichkeiten von Bedeutungsbildung, die einer Blendung der Sehkraft zum Opfer gefallen sind. Das andere hingegen ist aus auf ein Erhören des Anspruchs vom Text, welches Bedeutungen so an dem Text erprobt, daß in der neuen Bedeutungsbildung zugleich die vorgängige Verstehensform alles bereits Gesagten und aller bisher entstandenen gültigen Bedeutungen erkennbar werden. Will die eine Seite durch die Vermehrung der se-

mantischen Differenz nicht-identischer Textualität die Temporalität der menschlichen Mitteilung *beseitigen*, so will die andere sie *bewahren* in der durch Rede und Gegenrede gebildeten Gegenseitigkeit der nicht abschließbaren Bedeutung. Deshalb tritt die Dekonstruktion in den Horizont einer strukturell-polygraphischen Textualität, die Hermeneutik hingegen in den eines anthropologisch-polylogisch fundierten Gesprächs. Diese Verschiedenheit schließt dabei von ihrem Charakter her die Herausbildung eines methodologischen Dialogs keineswegs aus (und kann ihn sogar vorteilhaft bedingen!), in dessen Mittelpunkt die Frage (eigtl. die Sache) gestellt ist,<sup>49</sup> und das deshalb Chancen für die Verständigung bereithält, weil die Verschiedenheiten zwischen den Gesprächspartnern „nicht von der Art sind, die sich durch ein ‚falsch oder richtig‘ definitiv entscheiden lassen“.<sup>50</sup>

### Anmerkungen

1. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht: Literaturgeschichte – Fragment einer geschwundenen Totalität? In: Lucien Dällenbach–Christiaan L. Hart Nibbrig (Hg.): *Fragment und Totalität*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1984, 45.
2. Paul De Man: Der Widerstand gegen die Theorie. In: Volker Bohn (Hg.): *Romantik. Literatur und Philosophie*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1987, 92.
3. *Athenaeum*. Hg. von A. W. Schlegel und F. Schlegel (photom. Nachdruck) Bd. I. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1960, 205.
4. A. a. O. 230.
5. Aristoteles: *Hauptwerke*. (Ausgew., übers. u. eingel. von W. Nestle.) Stuttgart: Kröner 1977 (8), 350.
6. „Natur erschien ihm“ – schreibt Dilthey über Goethe – „als gesetzlich, zweckmäßig wirkende Kraft, die in Metamorphose, Steigerung, in der Architektonik typischer Formen, in der Harmonie des Ganzen sich äußert. Und daher mußte die Kunst ihm die höchste Manifestation solchen Wirkens der Natur sein.“ Wilhelm Dilthey: *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*. Leipzig/Berlin: Teubner 1919 (5), 196.
7. Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Wahrheit und Methode*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr 1975 (4), 278.
8. Über den Unterschied zwischen dem inhaltlichen und formalen Prinzip des Vorgriffs der Vollkommenheit s. Gadamer *ebenda* 277–278.
9. Rainer Nägele: *Friedrich Hölderlin: Die F(V)erse des Achilles*. In: Dällenbach–Hart Nibbrig (Hg.): *Fragment und Totalität* 200.
10. *Athenaeum* 206.
11. „Eine Philosophie der Poesie überhaupt aber, würde mit der Gleichständigkeit des Schönen beginnen, mit dem Satz, daß es vom Wahren und Sittlichen getrennt sey und getrennt seyn solle...“ *Ebenda* 245.
12. *Ebenda* 319.
13. G. W. F. Hegel: *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*. (Neu hrsg. von Hans-Friedrich Wessels und Heinrich Clairmont mit e. Einl. von Wolfgang von Siepen.) Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1988, 15.
14. Friedrich Nietzsche: *Werke* IV. Wien: Caesar 1980, 376.
15. A. a. O. 393.



16. Hegel: *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes* 18.
17. „Das Ganze aber ist nur das durch seine Entwicklung sich vollendende Wesen. Es ist von dem Absoluten zu sagen, daß es wesentlich *Resultat*, daß es erst *am Ende* das ist, was es in Wahrheit ist; und hierin eben besteht seine Natur, Wirkliches, Subjekt, oder sich selbst Werden, zu sein.“ *Ebenda*.
18. Maurice Blanchot: Nietzsche und die fragmentarische Schrift. In: W. Hamacher (Hg.): *Nietzsche aus Frankreich*. Frankfurt a. M./Berlin: Ullstein 1986, 50.
19. *Ebenda* 52.
20. Martin Heidegger: *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Stuttgart: Neske 1993 (10), 32–33.
21. *Ebenda* 33.
22. „Die Sprache verspricht sich.“ De Man: *Allegorien des Lesens*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1988, 21.
23. Dieter Henrich: Kunst und Kunstphilosophie der Gegenwart. In: Wolfgang Iser (Hg.): *Immanente Ästhetik – Ästhetische Reflexion*. München: Fink 1966, 30.
24. Heidegger: *Wegmarken*. Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann 1976, 342.
25. Robert Musil: *Tagebücher, Aphorismen, Essays und Reden*. Hamburg: Rowohlt 1955, 715.
26. Georg Lukács: *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen I*. Berlin/Weimar: Aufbau 1981, 779.
27. *Ebenda*.
28. Paul Valéry: *Zur Theorie der Dichtkunst*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1987, 193.
29. Lukács a. a. O.
30. So bei Hans Robert Jauss, vgl.: „Das literarische Werk ist kein für sich bestehende Objekt, das jedem Betrachter zu jeder Zeit den gleichen Anblick darbietet. Es ist kein Monument, das monologisch sein zeitloses Wesen offenbart. Es ist vielmehr wie eine Partitur auf eine immer erneuerte Resonanz der Lektüre angelegt, die den Text aus der Materie der Worte erlöst und ihn zu aktuellem Dasein bringt: ‚parole quit doit, en meme temps qu’elle lui parle, créer un interlocuteur capable de l’entendre‘.“ Jauss: *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1979 (6), 171–172.
31. Letztere Sprachauffassung ist in Ungarn noch heute derart lebendig, daß sie auch eine sich als poststrukturalistisch verstehende Literaturbetrachtung gefangenzuhalten vermag. Hier zeigt sich beispielhaft jenes nicht hintergehbare wirkungsgeschichtliche Ereignis, daß die Applikation selbst die Naivität der unkontrollierten hermeneutischen Voraussetzung aufdeckt, in diesem willkürlich gewählten Fall die – unreflektierte – Fortschreibung einer ur-strukturalistischen Axiomatik in einer dekonstruktionistisch figurierenden Rede: „Ich lerne gern Sprachen. Auch beispielweise die Sprachen der Wissenschaft. Die Lexik, die Grammatik erlernen und dann ‚los‘.“ (László Szilasi: Turgor és ozmózis: a szilva példája. *Jelenkor* 1996/5, 468.)
32. „Die Sprache ist in ihrem Wesen nicht Äußerung eines Organismus, auch nicht Ausdruck eines Lebewesens. Sie läßt sich daher auch nie vom Zeichencharakter her, vielleicht nicht einmal aus dem Bedeutungscharakter wesensgerecht denken.“ (Martin Heidegger: *Gesamtausgabe I. Abt., Bd. 9*, Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 326.) Doch bereits *Sein und Zeit* stellt fest: „Die Bedeutungslehre ist in der Ontologie des Daseins verwurzelt. Ihr Gedeihen und Verderben hängt am Schicksal dieser.“ (Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: Niemeyer 1986 (16), 166.)
33. Heidegger: *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Stuttgart: Neske 1993 (10), 256.
34. Wilhelm von Humboldts *Gesammelte Schriften* (Hg. von der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften). Bd. VII/1. Berlin: Behr 1907, 57–58.
35. Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit* 163.
36. Heidegger: *Unterwegs zur Sprache* 254.
37. Valéry a. a. O.
38. Michail Bachtin: *Ästhetik des Wortes*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1979, 168.

39. *Ebenda* 172–173.
40. Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Gesammelte Werke II (Hermeneutik 2)*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr 1986, 364.
41. Paul Valéry: Az ember és a kagyló. *Műhely* 1992/5, 9.
42. Leo Popper: *Dialog über Kunst*. In: R. Lachmann (Hg.): *Dialogizität*. München: Fink 1982, 254. I.
43. Jauss: *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1984 (4), 678.
44. *Ebenda*.
45. Jauss: *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik* 677.
46. Paul de Man: *Allegorien des Lesens*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1988, 111.
47. *Ebenda* 48.
48. de Man: *Die Ideologie des Ästhetischen*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1993, 220.
49. Die „Rückverwandlung in Sprache – wir erinnern daran – stellt aber immer zugleich ein Verhältnis zum Gemeinten, zu der Sache her, von der da die Rede ist. Hier bewegt sich der Vorgang des Verstehens ganz in der Sinnsphäre, die durch die sprachliche Überlieferung vermittelt wird. Bei einer Inschrift setzt daher die hermeneutische Aufgabe erst ein, wenn die (als richtig vorausgesetzte) Entzifferung vorliegt.“ Gadamer: *Wahrheit und Methode* 368.
50. Jauss: *Wege des Verstehens*. München: Fink 1994, 297.

# METAPHORISCHE GESCHICHTENINTERAKTION

## DIE TAUBE IM KÄFIG DES KÁLMÁN MIKSZÁTH

PÉTER HAJDU

Institut für Literaturwissenschaft, Budapest,  
Ungarn

Seit es durch die Untersuchungen der Metapher klar und allgemein anerkannt wurde, daß die Metapher keine Erscheinung ist, die in den Grenzen eines einzigen Wortes erklärt werden kann,<sup>1</sup> ist es theoretisch möglich, größere Textabschnitte oder ganze Texte metaphorisch zu interpretieren. Solche Interpretationsversuche sind trotzdem selten, obwohl ein solches Verfahren nicht nur für die Textinterpretation, sondern auch für die Metapherforschung fruchtbar sein könnte. Wie kann aber ein einziger Text metaphorisch interpretiert werden, wenn die Metapher eine Identifizierung zwei verschiedener Sachen ist und folglich zwei verschiedene Sachen voraussetzt? Ich sehe zwei theoretische Möglichkeiten. 1. Der Text ist die erste Sache, die zweite muß sich anderswo finden. Diese Erscheinung wäre in Zusammenhang mit der Metapher nicht überraschend, und auf Grund der Interaktionstheorie müßte eine solche Auffassung nicht bedeuten, daß der Text in Stelle eines – etwa diskursiven – Inhalts dasteht. 2. Man kann beide Elemente und vielleicht auch die Geste der Identifikation im Text selbst auffinden. Ich glaube, daß beide Möglichkeiten mit Nutzen ausgearbeitet werden können; ich werde mich im folgenden nur mit der zweiten – am Beispiel eines Textes, der die zwei Elemente und die Geste der Identifikation offensichtlich innehat – beschäftigen.

Kálmán Mikszáth experimentierte sehr gerne mit dem Nebeneinanderstellen zwei verschiedener Geschichten. Es geht nicht um zwei parallel vorwärtsgelende Geschichten die abwechselnd erzählt werden. Die Geschichten kommen nacheinander: wenn die erste beendet ist, beginnt die zweite. Diese Form kann natürlich ganz didaktisch sein, wenn beide Geschichten von einem einzigen, konsistenten Wertsystem beherrscht werden und die Gegenüberstellung der Geschichten dieses System demonstriert.<sup>2</sup> Manchmal sind solche Kurzgeschichten Mikszáths wirklich didaktisch, aber durchaus nicht alle. Besonders nicht im Falle seines anspruchsvollsten Versuches dieser Art, *Die Taube im Käfig*. Wir haben hier zwei Geschichten, die durch Untertitel (*Die erste Erzählung* und *Die zweite Erzählung*) sind. Die erste Geschichte spielt vierhundert Jahre früher in Italien, die zweite zu des Autors Lebzeiten in Budapest. In beiden treten zwei Freunde und ein Mädchen

auf, aber kaum könnten wir auch nur ein einziges gemeinsames Handlungselement in ihnen finden. Trotzdem lesen wir am Ende:

Ich muß nur eins verraten, denn jeder rechtschaffene Schriftsteller spart sich irgendeine Überraschung für den Schluß seiner Erzählung auf. Übrigens machte ich schon zu Beginn derselben kein Geheimnis daraus.

Der Leser meint nämlich, er habe zwei Erzählungen gelesen. Und dies ist die Überraschung. Denn er hat nur eine gelesen, aber zweimal hinter einander. (S. 110)<sup>3</sup>

Es erinnert einen an die Metapher. Nennen wir denn nicht genau das eine Metapher, wenn jemand von zwei offensichtlich verschiedenen Sachen behauptet, sie wären identisch? Es gibt aber einen scheinbar wichtigen Unterschied. Im Fall der Metapher wird von einer Sache gesagt, daß sie mit einer anderen identisch ist, und diese Relation ist irreversibel. Richards hat diese Teile der Metapher *tenor* und *vehicle* genannt.<sup>4</sup> Wir können diese Teile identifizieren und dürfen sie nicht verwechseln. Von den beiden Erzählungen von *Die Taube im Käfig* wäre es unmöglich zu sagen, welche der Tenor und welche das Vehikel seien. Beide können beide Rollen spielen. Es sei aber daran erinnert, daß nicht einmal die bedeutungstiftende Funktion der Metapher einbahnig ist. Wenn wir sagen: der Mensch ist ein Wolf, erscheint nicht nur der Mensch in neuem Licht, sondern auch der Wolf als nunmehr anthropomorphes Wesen.<sup>5</sup> Wenn wir diese Interaktion in der Wirkung der Metapher beobachten, werden wir mit Recht auch solche Identifizierungen Metaphern nennen, in denen Tenor und Vehikel untrennbar sind, andererseits nähern wir uns der Bachtinschen Theorie des Dialogischen an. Bachtin meint, „das, was die sprachliche Definition eines Gegenstandes erschwere, sei, daß sich in ihm dialogische Wechselwirkungen abspielen, die auf Momente der über den besagten Gegenstand sich heranbildenden sozialen und sprachlichen Bewußtmachungen beziehungsweise Erklärungen hinweisen.“<sup>6</sup> In dieser Wechselwirkung, das heißt, bei jedem Gegenstand, setzen die verschiedenen Sprachen den Dialog fort.

Das Metaphorische und das Dialogische sehen wie verwandte Begriffe aus, besonders dann, wenn es um die Interaktion von zwei angeblich identischen Geschichten geht. Nach der Konzeption von Ankersmit<sup>7</sup> enthält die Metapher gleichzeitig ein deskriptives Element und einen Vorschlag zu einem Gesichtspunkt. Einerseits beschreibt sie den Tenor, andererseits macht sie einen Vorschlag, wovon und wie wir ihn ansehen sollten, um sein Wesen ergreifen zu können. Mittels der Kategorien Ähnlichkeit und Unterschied können beide Faktoren vielleicht noch besser getrennt werden: die Beschreibung muß sich auf die Ähnlichkeiten gründen, während der neue Gesichtspunkt von den Unterschieden eingegeben wird. Das würde im Fall zweier Geschichten bedeuten, daß wir auf Grund der Ähnlich-

keiten die sozusagen virtuelle Originalgeschichte rekonstruieren oder besser konstruieren können, deren die zwei Geschichten zwei Verwirklichungen zu sein scheinen, während die Unterschiede die Positionen zeigen, von denen aus die Geschichten angesehen werden sollen. Das heißt, die eine Geschichte soll von der zweiten her gelesen werden und umgekehrt.

Diese Doppelansicht kommt auch in der Position des Erzählers zum Ausdruck. Sooft er die Ereignisse kommentiert, tut er es aus Sicht der jeweiligen anderen Geschichte, diese reflektierend, und manchmal so, daß er einfach Fragen stellt im Namen eines hypothetischen Publikums. Es gibt keinen fixierten autorischen Gesichtspunkt, welcher sich über beiden Geschichten befinden würde und beide Geschichten auf Grund eines homogenen Wertsystems schätzen könnte.

Die Anschauungsweise einer Geschichte, wenn ich so sagen darf, kann von der Anschauungsweise der Erzählung getrennt werden, welche durch die Kommentare des wahrnehmbaren Erzählers auch die Anschauungsweise derselben enthält. Die Ereignisse und die Gestalten – fast an sich, präsentiert von einem unwahrnehmbaren Erzähler – bilden eine Welt, auf die sich der wahrnehmbar gewordene Erzähler beziehen, und der er seine eigene Anschauungsweise (wenn er eine solche hat) gegenüberstellen kann. Die Welt der Geschichte ist folglich dadurch definiert, welche Gestalten und Ereignisse in ihr vorkommen können. Die Welt schreibt auch eine Anschauungsweise vor, weil diese Welt fremd den Erscheinungen gegenübersteht, die dort nicht vorkommen können. (Wie eine Sprache durch die Dinge beschrieben werden kann, für die sie keine Begriffe hat.) Diese Fremdheit kann auf verschiedenen Stufen erscheinen, die aber von dem Ereignispotential der eigenen Welt und dem an ihr gemessenen Unterschied determiniert sind. Die ethischen Wertsysteme sind mit diesen Anschauungsweisen nicht identisch, sondern bilden deren Teile. Im Falle von *Die Taube im Käfig* identifizieren sich die Erzähler mit den Wertsystemen der Geschichten nicht, obwohl beide Geschichten ihre als immanent dargestellten Wertsysteme haben, wenn auch die zweite ein recht heterogenes.

Meines Erachtens gibt es keinen einzigen Erzähler mit einer absoluten Anschauung, an der er beide Geschichten einzeln messen könnte, sondern er adoptiert beide Male die Anschauungsweise der jeweiligen anderen Geschichte. Es heißt, die Geschichten lesen einander und der Erzähler versucht nur, diese Leseprozesse zu kanalisieren oder sichtbar zu machen. Die Rezeption war nur gegenüber einer Richtung dieser Wechselwirkung empfindlich, insofern sie das Werk als Gesellschaftskritik betrachtete. Es ist nur die zweite Geschichte von der ersten her gelesen, ohne die erste zu relativieren. Natürlich ist der Prozeß, in dem die für den Leser noch unbekannt zweite Geschichte die erste liest, viel schwerer zu realisieren und deshalb auch schwerer wahrzunehmen. Die zweite Geschichte mit der ersten, schon bekannten Geschichte zu vergleichen ist selbstverständlich. Möglicherweise erschließt sich der erst genannte Prozeß erst

durch wiederholtes Lesen, aber es ist unbestreitbar, daß die erste Erzählung von einer Präsenz der zweiten durchdrungen ist, obwohl dies erst später ganz deutlich wird.

Ich möchte hier nur ein kurzes Beispiel hervorheben, das uns auch auf ein ständiges Merkmal des Fiktiven in der ersten Erzählung aufmerksam machen kann. Der Erzähler versucht nicht, seine Geschichte glaubwürdig zu machen. Er distanziiert sich von den erzählten Ereignissen und gibt sie immer als literarisches Material an.

Zudem war unsre Held ein leichtsinniger, närrischer Junge. Wenn er jemandem begegnete, der kein Geld hatte, so bot er ihm welches an. In Bezug auf diesen Punkt bin ich indessen nicht ganz im klaren, denn aus den Werken der Schriftsteller jener Zeit kann ich durchaus nicht ersehen, daß die damaligen Menschen jemals auch Geld benötigt hätten, denn die Leute aus der guten alten Zeit führten Krieg, zogen auf Abenteuer aus, spielten die Laute unter dem Fenster der Angebeteten, trugen Achselbänder in den Farben derselben und übten den Bedrückten gegenüber stets die größten Wohlthaten, warfen das Geld mit vollen Händen auf die Straße, – doch woher sie es nahmen, darüber kann ich nieregends Aufschluß erhalten. (S. 18–19)

Wo die Leute ihr Geld her haben? – lautet die Frage des Erzählers an die erste Geschichte. Diese Frage ist aber für die Welt dieser Geschichte fremd, sie ist die Hauptfrage der Welt der zweiten und organisiert dort fast alle Handlungselemente. Der Erzähler sieht die erste Geschichte von dem Gesichtspunkt der zweiten aus an. Andererseits regt sich bei ihm Zweifel, ob das damalige Leben durch die damalige Literatur erreicht werden kann. Aber er kennt keinen anderen Weg. Folglich beziehen sich die Vorbehalte, die er in seinen Reflexionen äußert, nicht auf die Leute, sondern auf die Literatur von damals. Oder der Erzähler nimmt als Werkhypothese an, daß die damalige Literatur die damalige Wirklichkeit treu wiedergibt, und das ermöglicht ihm, sich auf das damalige Leben zu beziehen, aber er deutet ständig an, daß dieses Leben für ihn nur durch die Literatur existent wird und daß die Annahme der Homogenität der damaligen Welt bzw. ihres in der Literatur dargestellten Bildes zu komischen Ergebnissen führt. Dann aber können diese Welten auch als literarische Gattungen oder Richtungen aufgefaßt werden. Ein philologisches Indiz für diese Auffassung ist, daß die erste Ausarbeitung der ersten Erzählung, die nur einen Teil der Geschichte enthielt, eine literarische Stilparodie war. Ihr erster Satz hieß: „Sie hassen Zola und haben die Romantiker gern.“<sup>8</sup> Die Richtungen können wir danach als Naturalismus und zeitgenössisch aufgefaßte Romantik (Romantizismus, wie es bei Mikszáth heißt) identifizieren.

Die Geschichten lesen sich nicht allein in den narratorischen Kommentaren, sondern auch in dem metaphorischen System, das einen gemeinsamen Subtext beider Geschichten liefert und das auch von dem Titel akzentuiert wird.

Zwei leidenschaftliche Blumengärtner sind die Helden der ersten Erzählung. Der eine hat ein Gartenhaus, das der andere Käfig nennt. „Und was hältst Du wohl in diesem Käfig?“ – fragt Balduin. Im Gartenhaus lebt Esre, die Pflgetochter und Flamme des Albertus. Er will davon nichts sagen, und gibt eine ausweichende Antwort: „Ja, das ist ein Geheimnis. In diesen Pavillon setze ich selbst nie einen Fuß. In diesem Käfig, mein Freund, befindet sich eine Taube.“<sup>9</sup> Doch wir wollen nicht weiter davon sprechen.“ (S. 6) Nach einigen komischen Mißverständnissen lassen Balduin und Esre Albertus allein, der nach einer Periode von Leid und Mißgeschick als armer Kerl Balduins Haus erreicht. Dort sieht er ein Gartenhaus, das dem seinen von früher ähnlich ist. „Dieser Käfig hat Dich so erschreckt? – lächelte Balduin. – Was gibt es denn daran zu staunen? Er gleicht ja vollkommen dem Deinigen, und enthält gleichfalls eine Taube“. (S. 41) Auch in diesem Gartenhaus lebt Esre, die Balduin nicht geheiratet hat, weil er noch rechtzeitig draufkam, daß sie Albertus liebt.

Der Titel macht den Taubensubtext auffallender. Von diesem Gesichtspunkt aus betrachtet scheint die Bewegung der Geschichte zirkulär zu sein: in der Ausgangssituation ist die Taube im Käfig und ist die Verlobte des Albertus. Die Situation am Ende ist dieselbe. Zwischen diesen Punkten sehen wir die Taube nicht. Nachträglich erfahren wir aber, daß sie nur eine ganz kurze Zeit außerhalb des Käfigs verbracht hatte, dann sowohl den Käfig, als auch Albertus zurückforderte. Die Erzählung folgte Albertus, dessen Weg aus der Welt des Gartens, des Wohlstandes und der Geborgenheit in die Welt des Elends, des Kerkers und des Ausgeliefertseins führt. Am Beginn und Ende der Geschichte sind die drei Hauptpersonen zusammen, und dieser Zustand ist harmonisch; in der Mitte bleibt einer von ihnen allein, und dieses Geteiltsein ist schlecht für jeden. Der Käfig gehört zu dem harmonischen Zustand, und ist das Symbol der Sicherheit: er steht im mit einer Mauer umgebenen Garten, und die Männer treten nicht hinein.

Diese zirkuläre metaphorische Struktur wiederholt sich in der zweiten Erzählung, doch ihre Elemente gewinnen neue Bedeutung. Diese Metaphorik ist eigentlich nur dadurch so auffallend in der zweiten Erzählung, daß sie schon aus der ersten bekannt ist.

Als Koriáthy den Pflegevater der Verlobten seines Freundes um Erlaubnis bittet, dem Mädchen den Hof machen zu dürfen, antwortet dieser:

Du könntest am Ende noch den Verdacht in mir regen machen, daß Du jenem Täubchen dort eine Falle legen willst. Allein der Käfig, in dem sich die Taube befindet, gehört mir, und die Taube selbst dem Stephan. Hm! Aber unmöglich ist nichts. Hm. Was für eine Provisi-on würdest Du mir denn geben, Frater, hehehe? (S. 68)

Der Käfig, der in der ersten Geschichte der Sicherheit der Taube diente und über dessen Schwelle dort niemand trat, scheint hier das Symbol der Herrschaft

über die Taube zu sein. Der Pflegevater, der Besitzer des Käfigs, gibt die Taube, wem er will, oder wer ihm mehr bietet. Die Taube im Käfig scheint aller Welt ausgeliefert zu sein. Esre, die Heldin der ersten Erzählung durfte über ihr Schicksal entscheiden; Eszter ist nur das Objekt von ihr unabhängiger Männermanipulationen.

Korláthy entführt Eszter, der Pflegevater unterschlägt den Großteil ihrer Erbschaft. Korláthy, nachdem er den Rest vergeudet hat, haut ab und läßt die Frau ohne einen Heller zurück. Sie, um ihm nachreisen zu können, fälscht auf den Namen ihres Pflegevaters einen Wechsel, fährt nach Hamburg, doch einstweilen umsonst. Da ihr das Geld ausgeht, muß sie ihr Dasein als Blumenmädchen fristen. Dann aber trifft sie durch Zufall doch noch ihren Mann, den gerade eine reiche Amerikanerin aushält, und wird von diesem wegen der Wechselfälschung angezeigt. Zum Schluß der Erzählung sehen wir Korláthys Freund Altorjay in Budapest in seinem Klub wieder, wo er sich nach der „schönen Frau Korláthy“ erkundigt:

„Das Täubchen sitzt jetzt im Käfig“, bemerkte de Obergespan Gravinczy.

„Wie das?“

„Man verhaftete sie in Hamburg in der bewußten Wechselfälschungsgeschichte.“ (S. 108)

Die Situation „Die Taube im Käfig“ bildet den Rahmen auch in der zweiten Erzählung. Zu Beginn waren die drei Hauptpersonen zusammen, und vielleicht können wir diese Situation mit Recht harmonisch nennen. Allerdings ist es klar, daß diese Anfangssituation auch hier der Welt des Wohlstands angehört, von wo aus uns der Erzähler im mittleren Teil in die Welt des Elends führt, und im letzten Abschnitt wieder hinauf zur Elite, nämlich in den Klub, den wir ja schon kennen. Die drei sind auch hier zusammen, wenn auch nur virtuell, nämlich Korláthy und Altorjay in zwei verschiedenen Räumen desselben Gebäudes und Eszter als Nachricht ebenda. Sie ist physisch abwesend und aus der Welt des Wohlstandes endgültig ausgeschlossen. Ihre Abschiede und Begegnungen sind hier viel komplizierter strukturiert als in der ersten Erzählung, können aber durch ein vereinfachtes Schema beschrieben werden, das mit dem der ersten Erzählung identisch ist: Am Anfang und am Ende sieht der Erzähler die drei zusammen in der Welt des Wohlstands. Zwischen diesen beiden Endpunkten aber begleitet er jedesmal nur eine Person auf ihrem Weg in das Elend, was in beiden Fällen auf einen schweren Konflikt mit dem Gesetz hinausläuft. Diese strukturelle Ähnlichkeit wird durch den *Die-Taube-im-Käfig*-Subtext sichtbar bzw. von ihm geschaffen.

Es wurde schon gesagt, daß die beiden Geschichten in den Kommentaren der Erzähler einander lesen, und auch in den Bedeutungsänderungen der Metaphorik, wo sich genau die Entfernung von der Welt der jeweils anderen Geschichte in der



unterschiedlichen Bedeutung desselben Wortes manifestiert. Das kann man aber auch an den Bedeutungsänderungen etlicher Begriffe beobachten.

Das auffallendste Beispiel (und das einzige, das wir hier behandeln dürfen) ist die Freundschaft. Beide Geschichten beginnen mit der Auslegung des Begriffs der Freundschaft. Balduin beschreibt seine Beziehung zu Albertus wie folgt: „Nein, gesehen haben wir uns noch niemals. Allein er schrieb ein Buch über die Blumen und ich auch, und seither stehen wir in fortwährender Korrespondenz mit einander, so daß wir die besten Freunde geworden sind.“ Der Erzähler fügt nur hinzu: „Ja, vor vierhundert Jahren gab es noch derartige Freundschaften.“ (S. 4) Es bedeutet, daß es heutzutage keine solche Freundschaft gibt, also es andersartige gibt. Der Erzähler kommentiert die erste Geschichte von dem Gesichtspunkt der zweiten aus, und er meint, die Eigenart dieser Freundschaft sei das, was ihm in der Welt der ersten Geschichte fremd ist. Erst beim Lesen der zweiten Geschichte wird es klar, warum, und was die Freundschaft in der anderen Welt bedeutet. Dort definiert der Erzähler die Freundschaft gleich am Anfang:

Im übrigen sind die beiden die besten Freunde, was sich nicht in überströmenden Worten und Thaten kundgibt, wie in der vorangegangenen einfältigen Erzählung, denn Worte verhallen und Thaten werden vergessen; doch will *scripta manent*, – sind ihre Namen an vielen Stellen neben einander zu sehen, nämlich auf Wechseln, bald der eine, bald der andere zu oberst. (S. 53)

Der Erzähler definiert den Begriff *Freundschaft* in der Welt der zweiten Geschichte im Vergleich zu dem in der ersten. Der Ausdruck *die besten Freunde* bringt die Welt der ersten Erzählung mit und mutet an wie ein Fremdkörper im Leib der zweiten. Es ist als wollte der Erzähler die Beziehung zweier Personen in einer Fremdsprache formulieren. (Die erste Geschichte liest die zweite.) Deshalb fängt der Erzähler sofort an, den Ausdruck umzudeuten, was aber zugleich Wertung und Deutung der ersten Erzählung ist. (Die zweite Geschichte liest die erste.) Diese Deutung aber, nämlich die neue Bedeutung, die er dem Ausdruck verleiht, ist offenbar ironisch gemeint: als ob das Wort in der Welt der zweiten Geschichte trotzdem gebräuchlich wäre, doch diesen Gebrauch der Erzähler für unvertretbar hielte. (Die erste Geschichte liest die zweite.)

Die Freundschaft ist wirklich ein Schlüsselbegriff der ersten Erzählung: das Wort *Freund* und seine Derivate kommen 25 mal auf den 22 Seiten der kritischen Ausgabe vor. (In der zweiten nur 4 mal auf 36 Seiten.) Als ob die ganze erste Geschichte eine Illustration zur Freundschaft wäre wie sie vor 400 Jahren war, mit (manchmal höchst parodistischen) Sätzen wie: „Ich habe gegen Dich gesündigt, als ich auch nur eine Sekunde lang an Deiner Freundschaft zu zweifeln wagte“ (S. 14) und „Erst jetzt bist Du Deines Freundes in Wahrheit würdig geworden“ (S. 38). Das Wort *Freund* wird gewissermaßen zum Emblem der ersten Geschich-

te, dessen seltenes Vorkommen in der zweiten auch ohne Hilfe des Erzählers die Welt der ersten heraufbeschwören kann.

Es gibt ein anderes Wort für die freundliche Beziehung in der zweiten Erzählung, das ich mit *Spezi* zu übersetzen versuche. Könnte *Spezi* vielleicht das geeignete Wort in dieser Welt sein und *Freund* seine Metapher, sofern es aus einer anderen Welt hierherkommt? In einer Szene muß Korláthy, von Altorjay zum Duell herausgefordert, sein Tarockspiel unterbrechen. Die Partner beginnen darüber nachzusinnen, was es für das Spiel bedeuten soll, daß er, nachdem er einen Ultimo angekündigt hat, den Spieltisch verläßt. „Die Spezis interessierte es nicht, was aus dem Kollegen werden sollte; was aus dem Ultimo werden soll, war eine weit wichtigere Frage.“<sup>10</sup> Dieser in Klammern gesetzte Kommentar des Erzählers kann ironisch aufgefaßt werden, aber auch die Definition des Wortes *Spezi* darstellen: Die Spezis sind Personen, die sich oft treffen und sich in der Regel freundlich verhalten, die sich aber (und hier steckt der Unterschied zwischen *Spezi* und *Freund*!) nicht darum kümmern, wie es dem anderen ergeht. Von diesem Gesichtspunkt aus wird das einzige Vorkommen des Wortes in der ersten Erzählung so vielsagend:

Nach den in scharlachrote Gewänder gehüllten Henkern kamen zwei Gefängniswächter mit schwarzen Fahnen, denen die Verurteilten vorangetragen wurden. Auf den schwarzen Flächen der Fahnen sind je sieben flatternde Raben in blutroter Farbe zu sehen, die wohl ein Sinnbild der Verurteilten darstellen sollen. Sieben Raben! Sieben Spezis, mit denen sie noch in nähere Berührung kommen sollen.<sup>11</sup>

In der ersten Erzählung waren die Verbrecher und die Raben *Spezi*, in der zweiten waren es die Glieder der Hautevolee. Auch dieser Zusammenhang ist dialogisch: beide Geschichten lesen einander unter der gleichen Nennung zwei verschiedener Beziehungen. Ist das eine Metapher? Zwei verschiedene Dinge unter demselben Namen genannt. Beide Welten scheinen aber, jede für sich, die für sie gegebene Bedeutung wortwörtlich zu nehmen. Die Spannung entsteht, wenn die Welten nebeneinander kommen und der Unterschied zwischen den Bedeutungen desselben Namens sichtbar wird. Von dem Gesichtspunkt der ersten Erzählung aus betrachtet wird das Wort *Spezi* in der zweiten metaphorisch gebraucht, von dem der zweiten aus ist es in der ersten der Fall. An dieser Stelle schafft der Diskurs des Erzählers die Spannung, er allein ist es, der die Bedeutungen einander gegenüber stellt, zitiert aber das Wort offensichtlich aus der Umgangssprache der gegebenen Welt.

Der Dialog der Geschichten, durch Erzählen hörbar, durchdringt das ganze Werk. Am meisten fällt er auf in den narratorischen Kommentaren zu den Ereignissen, die sich von dem Gesichtspunkt der jeweiligen anderen Geschichte aus lesen, ist aber tiefsinniger in jenen Metaphern, welche sich durch beide Erzählun-

gen ziehen und deren gemeinsamen Subtext bilden. Die Bedeutung der Metapher ändert sich grundlegend im neuen Kontext, und der Leser kann in den Änderungen die grundlegenden Unterschiede zwischen diesen Geschichten, zwischen diesen Welten erkennen. Die Tatsache, daß die Betonung auf den Unterschieden legt, widerspricht keineswegs meinem Ausgangspunkt, daß die Beziehung der Geschichten eine metaphorische sei. Denn nicht nur auf Ähnlichkeiten basiert die Metapher. Wenn der Erzähler behauptete, die Geschichten seien identisch, gab er dem Leser die Aufgabe, die Ähnlichkeiten und Gleichheiten zu finden. Aber die Gleichheiten haben auch die Unterschiede sichtbar gemacht. Die Äußerung, daß wir hier eine Metapher haben, machte die Geschichten kommensurabel, die sonst kaum etwas miteinander zu tun hätten. Nachdem wir erkannt hatten, daß die Metapher der Taube beide Geschichten auf dieselbe Weise strukturiert, müssen wir auch erkennen, wie sehr verschieden die Metapher selbst in jeder Geschichte und wie sehr verschieden jede Geschichte trotz der gemeinsamen metaphorischen Struktur ist. Wenn wir beobachten, welcher intensiven Diskurs die Personen und Erzähler über einige Zentralbegriffe (wie z.B. Freundschaft) führen, werden wir unbedingt auch entdecken, welche verschiedenen Bedeutungen diese Begriffe in den verschiedenen Kontexten haben. Dieser Prozeß ist insoweit metaphorisch, daß beide Geschichten einander gegenseitig mit dem Gesichtspunkt versehen, von dem aus diese Fremdheit wahrgenommen und beurteilt werden kann.

### Anmerkungen

1. Die wichtigsten Initiativen dieser Richtung waren: I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Oxford 1936; M. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, Ithaca 1962.
2. P. K. Garrett, *The Victorian Multiplot Novel: Studies in Dialogical Form*, New Heaven–London 1980, 9.
3. Die Zitate – wenn nur mit Nummer der Seite angegeben – folgen Ludwig Wechslers Übersetzung: *Koloman Mikszáth, Die Taube im Käfig: Zwei Geschichten in einer*, Berlin–Leipzig o.J.
4. Richards, a. a. O. 96.
5. Black, a. a. O. 44.
6. Meine Übersetzung: M. M. Bakhtin, *Discourse in the Novel*. In: *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin–London 1981, 277.
7. F. R. Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language*. The Hague–Boston–London 1983, 209–220.
8. *Mikszáth Kálmán összes művei* 4,157:1, meine Übersetzung.
9. Die Bedeutung des Ausdrucks „meine Taube“ auf Ungarisch ist dem deutschen „mein Liebchen“ ähnlich.
10. S. 78, wo aber statt *Spezis Kameraden* steht.
11. S. 29, wo aber statt *Spezis „gute Freunde“* steht.



# MYTHES DES ORIGINES ET HYPOTHÈSE LINGUISTIQUE CHEZ SÁNDOR KŐRÖSI CSOMA

PÉTER ZIRKULI

Université de Bordeaux, Bordeaux,  
France

## 1

L'époque où vécut ce linguiste-voyageur, devenu, un peu malgré lui, l'un des fondateurs des études tibétaines, est celle de la Sainte-Alliance, des « traités de 1815 » qui – pour citer la dernière Histoire de l'Europe – « symbolisent la réaction autoritaire des rois qui veulent enfermer les peuples ». <sup>1</sup> Il est donc inévitable que « l'Europe romantique » soit en même temps celle de « l'éveil des peuples » où se conjuguent libéralisme et élan national. <sup>2</sup> Dans la banlieue de cette Europe romantique, en Transylvanie, deux hommes issus du peuple sicule, c'est à dire pauvres, mais libres, sont tous deux en relation avec le même cercle d'intellectuels et de savants du centre de la région, Kolozsvár (Cluj en roumain, Klausenburg en allemand). L'un, le notaire, y resta plus longtemps que l'autre, le linguiste et éternel étudiant, qui n'y fit qu'un bref séjour. Ils se préparent à voyager – avant de mourir dans la même année, en 1842. Voyages bien réels, laïques même, sans aucune quête mystique de l'identité nationale et ses assises mythologiques, mais initiatiques tout de même, en mesure de se constituer en allégories par leurs directions pour ce peuple coincé entre l'Ouest et l'Est, dont les sicules furent les gardes frontière depuis des siècles dans leurs lisières montagneuses, « à la porte de l'Orient ».

C'est le linguiste qui part le premier. Après des études suivies à Nagyenyed (en roumain: Aiud), à l'université de Göttingen, après un séjour à Kolozsvár, puis dans le Banat et en Croatie pour apprendre les langues slaves, Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (ou Alexandre Csoma de Kőrös) prend la route le 23 novembre 1819. Il a trente cinq ans et, auparavant, tout n'était pour lui que préparation à ce long voyage qui l'amènera en Asie, à la recherche de l'ancien pays de ses ancêtres et les traces de leur langue – comme à la recherche d'une ombre perdue. « Ce n'était pas une résolution que je prenais de moi-même » – aurait-il pu dire avec la héros d'une autre *Etrange Histoire*, relatée par un autre voyageur autour du monde en 1815–1818, Chamisso. – « Je n'ai fait (...) dans mon zèle silencieux, austère, infatigable qu'essayer de donner une image fidèle de ce qui apparut (...) à mon esprit, en pleine lumière et perfection, dans sa forme première, et, si je fus satisfait de moi-

même, ce n'a été que dans la mesure où les images que je traçais ressemblaient à la vision première. »<sup>3</sup>

Kőrösi Csoma a déjà trouvé ce qu'il n'avait pas cherché, les études tibétaines, quand son compatriote, le notaire, Sándor Bölöni Farkas part à son tour en voyage, en 1830, également à l'âge de trente cinq ans. D'abord en Europe Occidentale comme, avant lui, nombre d'intellectuels transylvains, puis en Amérique. « Ce fut la plus belle période de ma vie » – écrit-il dans l'introduction de son ouvrage, publié à Kolozsvár en 1834, où « le Tocqueville hongrois » donne la présentation minutieuse « des aspects de la vie civile et sociale (...) qui, au moins en hongrois, ne sont pas encore connus », mais qui « étaient développés à la perfection » en Amérique. Le ton est donné dès le départ, au moment où le voyageur traverse la frontière française et se tourne vers Paris, capitale du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle vers laquelle tout habitant d'une « Habsbourgie » figée<sup>4</sup> doit tourner « ses yeux vigilants » s'il veut suivre les conseils de Batsányi, poète hongrois des Lumières, sévèrement puni par la cour de Vienne justement à cause de tels conseils de révolte.<sup>5</sup> Dans la France turbulente de l'année 1830, le voyageur-écrivain entend des propos qui avant de franchir le fleuve à Strasbourg étaient pour lui « des marchandises interdites ». Ici, « les relations entre les supérieurs et les subalternes sont complètement dépourvues de l'orgueil de celui qui donne des ordres et de l'humilité de celui qui les accepte » – fait son premier bilan le voyageur parti à la découverte de la démocratie, du futur tangible dans sa forme déjà présente ailleurs, comme point de repère pour tout modelage moderne de sa propre communauté dans cette Europe romantique de « l'éveil » des peuples et des nations.<sup>6</sup>

## 2

Dans le contexte de cet « éveil », deux doctrines de la nation se profilent: la doctrine française que certains appellent « classique » et la doctrine allemande ou « romantique ». En opposition avec la première qui « fait de la nation un phénomène conscient et volontaire » et préconise que les habitants d'une région, « quelles que soient leur langue, leur religion », « doivent être maîtres de leur appartenance nationale qui s'exprime par un vote », la doctrine allemande ou « romantique » estime que « sont membres d'une nation, qu'ils veuillent ou non, ceux qui ont pour langue maternelle la langue commune, les mêmes traditions populaires ». <sup>7</sup> À la définition citée (d'après un dictionnaire thématique), il convient d'ajouter, pour lui enlever toute connotation axiologique ou morale, qu'aucune de ces deux doctrines n'est à l'abri d'interprétations totalitaires. La première, dans sa version jacobine en tant que préfiguration du modèle bolchevique, la seconde, par son passéisme créateur de mythes racistes, par ce qui relève de l'inconscient dans les traditions déterminantes, réelles ou inventées.

De ces deux doctrines, c'est Raymond Aron qui, en examinant la *Diversité des nationalismes*, esquisse l'approche la plus lucide: chez les allemands, « on a hypostasié le peuple et son essence unique, non seulement à cause de traditions philosophiques mais par réaction contre la multiplicité des États allemands. Le peuple devait avoir par lui-même une âme singulière, même s'il ne s'était pas donné un État. »<sup>8</sup> En France, « la plus nationale des nations d'Europe », écrit Aron, si « le type idéal d'un État national est celui d'une unité politique, dont les citoyens appartiennent tous à une même culture et manifestent la volonté de vivre en une communauté autonome », on « discerne des minorités dont la langue (basque, celte) et la culture ne sont pas les mêmes que celles de la majorité », et « l'homogénéité de culture est le résultat de l'histoire, c'est à dire souvent de conquêtes ».<sup>9</sup>

Par ailleurs, si l'Europe centrale et multinationale est en général considérée comme terrain privilégié pour une conception ethniste de la nation, le juriste Yves Plasseraud parle d'une « doctrine originale » créée sur la base de concepts mêlés d'origine allemande et française, que l'on pourrait qualifier de « nation ethnique de volonté ».<sup>10</sup> (Il suggère ensuite d'interpréter dans cette perspective le projet de « Déclaraiton hongroise de l'homme et du citoyen » élaboré en 1793.)

L'intérêt porté à la langue, fin XVIIIème, début XIXème siècle et plus tard, est signe non seulement d'une conception ethniste selon laquelle – et en citant Jakob Grimm – la langue est le témoignage le plus vivant sur les peuples (« ein lebendigeres Zeugnis über die Völker als Knochen, Waffen und Gräber »). Mais c'est simultanément une préoccupation pratique, et même utilitaire. Tourné vers la modernisation à travers la réforme de la langue, il se propose de fournir aux changements les règles gravées dans l'histoire de la parole pour qu'ils soient des changements assimilés. Tout débat linguistique deviendra donc idéologique, et Kőrösi Csoma sera, à titre posthume, l'acteur d'une pièce historique où il sera considéré de deux manières différentes (en schématisant les divergences et, du point de vue adopté pour ces considérations, en faisant abstraction d'autres aspects de son oeuvre, de son apport décisif aux études tibétaines). Soit comme héros mythique de l'âme hongroise la plus profonde parce qu'il partit chercher en Asie et dans la nuit des temps l'inexprimable: héritage obscur, passé refoulé, parenté peut-être oubliée, mais conservée dans l'inconscient des traditions. Néanmoins, ce personnage de légende est critiqué par Ármin Vámbéry qui, faute d'avoir raison, eut de l'imagination et qui prôna la parenté turque lors de la « guerre » linguistique « turco-ougrienne » des « fantaisistes » et des « réalistes » dans la seconde moitié du siècle dernier. Ce turcologue qui par ses recherches et voyages tenta, lui aussi, dans les années 1860, de retrouver le pays d'origine des Hongrois, parle d'opinions philologiques « irréflechies » dont le « pauvre Kőrösi » a été la victime.<sup>11</sup> Soit comme voyageur romantique qui fut considéré comme un linguiste « très compétent », certes, mais relegué, notamment et récemment dans la *Bio-*

*graphie de la langue hongroise* du professeur Bárczi,<sup>12</sup> parmi ceux qui suivaient des mirages, les déviationnistes de la voie royale de la linguistique comparée et finno-ougrienne.

Or, Kőrösi Csoma, quand il prend la route, ne suit ni mirages, ni bornes, ni dogmes. Et il n'a pas de thèse. Juste une hypothèse dont il a hérité et qu'il veut vérifier.

### 3

Selon cette hypothèse, très connue à l'époque et – comme le souligne Gyula Németh en analysant « le but de Kőrösi Csoma » – soutenue par les meilleurs spécialistes, les Ouïgours sont les ancêtres des hongrois. Certains ont cru voir des relations entre cette tribu turque de Turkestan et les Tibétains. Par conséquent, le but du voyage de Csoma et de ses recherches est d'aller dans le pays des Ouïgours, « pour retrouver les parents des hongrois ». N'ayant pas eu accès, à cause des circonstances, au Turkestan Oriental, et ayant eu la possibilité de mener des recherches tibétaines, Csoma se consacre à ce domaine – résume Németh ses conclusions,<sup>13</sup> basées sur l'étude du biographe et éditeur de Csoma, Tivadar Duka.<sup>14</sup>

Kőrösi Csoma en fournit lui-même la preuve dans la longue lettre sur son voyage et son projet de recherche qu'il adresse au capitaine et chargé de mission britannique Kennedy.<sup>15</sup> Peu avant, son protecteur, William Moorcroft, tint à souligner dans une lettre de recommandation que le linguiste venu de Transylvanie mérite tout soutien non seulement pour des raisons chères au gouvernement britannique, mais aussi à cause de « son enthousiasme » qui le guide dans la réalisation de son projet: éclairer « certains aspects obscurs de l'histoire de l'Asie et de l'Europe ».<sup>16</sup>

L'origine des hongrois en était un. A la fin du XVIIIème, les travaux de Sajnovics (1770) et de Gyarmathi (1799) ont, une fois pour toutes, mis en évidence l'appartenance de la langue hongroise à la famille finno-ougrienne. Cela n'a pas résolu pour autant les interrogations sur les origines ethniques des Hongrois, d'une part, et, d'autre part, conformément à la logique de toute découverte scientifique, n'a pas écarté définitivement les autres hypothèses anciennes ou plus récentes. Parmi ces dernières, Kőrösi Csoma a suivi, outre les enseignements de l'orientaliste Eichorn,<sup>17</sup> les indications de son autre professeur de Göttingen, l'anthropologue Blumenbach. D'après lui, les hongrois seraient les descendants des ouïgours, souvent mentionnés dans les annales chinois.<sup>18</sup> Avant lui, un ouvrage français (De-guignes: *Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mogols et des autres Tartares occidentaux*, 1756; traduction allemande en 1768), connu en Hongrie (v. Székér, Joákim: *Magyarok eredete*, 1791) – dont les hypothèses coïncident avec celles de l'allemand Fischer, publiées la même année (*De origine Ungrorum*, 1756), repri-



ses par les hongrois György Pray (*Dissertationes...*, 1775) et Ézsaiás Budai (*Magyar ország históriája...*, I–III, 1805–1812), – croit découvrir des liens entre les Hongrois et les Ouïgours.<sup>19</sup>

Kőrösi Csoma, selon toute vraisemblance, a déjà pris connaissance de ces opinions au collège de Nagyenyed,<sup>20</sup> où professeurs et étudiants débattaient régulièrement les problèmes de l'origine des Hongrois.<sup>21</sup> Là, l'historien Sámuel Hegedüs professa la parenté-identité des Huns et des Hongrois, mais sans prendre les Sicules, cette « tribu » à part du peuple hongrois, pour des Huns d'Attila.<sup>22</sup> Néanmoins, dans sa lettre citée, Kőrösi Csoma se dit « issu du peuple sicule qui appartient à la partie de la nation hongroise laquelle partie s'est établie au quatrième siècle du christianisme » en Transylvanie.<sup>23</sup> Ses propos, faisant allusion à une tradition orale des Sicules, sa communauté plus restreinte, témoignent de la motivation personnelle de ses recherches, nourries d'une hypothèse aucunement originale, certainement erronée, néanmoins digne de toute attention.

#### 4

Chercheur suivant, pour un *oui* ou pour un *non*, une hypothèse devenue vitale, intériorisée, Kőrösi Csoma n'a pas trouvé sa réponse. D'où le regard méfiant de beaucoup de spécialistes du domaine finno-ougrien. D'où l'occasion de tant de rêveries identitaires, parfois inventées de toutes pièces, qui le revendiquent – ou le critiquent car, malgré tout, il n'a pas apporté les preuves si attendues. Ce qui, justement, prouve le bienfondé de sa démarche.

Le linguiste Miklós Zsirai (en 1943, moment où les hypothèses les plus fantaisistes sur l'origine des Hongrois et du hongrois étaient, pour d'autres raisons, à la mode) a donné une liste non exhaustive des langues avec lesquelles le hongrois avait été comparé et mis en relation. Parmi les cinquante-six langues énumérées, il cite, évidemment, la langue sanskrite.<sup>24</sup> Idée qui a hanté l'esprit de Csoma. Mais les souvenirs de l'un de ses confrères anglais, Torrens, confirment qu'il a tenu cette hypothèse pour « de la spéculation pure ». Hypothèse qu'il voulait vérifier, éventuellement prouver, mais dont il ne voulait parler en aucun cas avant d'aboutir à un résultat. Quand son collègue anglais voulut faire état dans une note de l'une de ses communications de ce que Kőrösi Csoma avait dit quand ils partageaient des divagations savantes sur ce sejut qui, tout comme les problèmes du bouddhisme, les préoccupaient longuement, la réponse de Csoma a été brève: « je ne m'en souviens plus ». <sup>25</sup> Et son petit recueil de mots lié à ces « spéculations », comme l'éditeur-biographe le met en évidence dans une note liminaire, n'était nullement destiné à la publication, du moins sous cette forme.<sup>26</sup>

Nombreux sont les exemples qui, dans ce sens, pourraient être cités, y compris un paragraphe de sa lettre de 1825, compte rendu où il fait état d'une approche

contrastive du hongrois et de quelques langues orientales, soulignant que sa « langue maternelle » n'est pas « inférieure » aux autres (notamment au sanskrit et à l'arabe).<sup>27</sup> Cette constatation correspond à ce qui a été dit – d'une manière à la fois modeste et ambitieuse, concernant la nation en tant que communauté de langue donnée et projet à réaliser – par Széchenyi, l'une des figures de proue, en Hongrie, de cette époque « des réformes », romantique et nationale, et qui montre l'aspect émancipateur de tout un mouvement, dont fait partie le travail de Kőrösi Csoma.

Ce travail ne serait effectivement qu'un épisode dans l'élaboration des mythes politiques aux références linguistiques, s'il n'était situé à l'intérieur d'une logique de la découverte scientifique dans la mesure où les hypothèses héritées et non-vérfiées étaient censées être soumises à un examen. Or, dans la construction des mythologies nationales, c'est l'inverse qui est pratiqué. L'époque du romantisme est, sans aucun doute, générateur de tels mythes. Ils ont, dans leur premier contexte, des fonctions multiples, parfois similaires, et ils sont présents dans tous les pays d'Europe. C'est de leurs emplois politiques ultérieurs que dépendra, dans les pays concernés et dans chacun selon ses propres particularités, le sort de la modernité naissante avec le romantisme. Parmi les particularités de ces emplois politiques en Hongrie, à partir de l'écrasement de la révolution de 1848/49, une tension de plus en plus exacerbée entre un statut autoritaire de mythes à connotation politique et leur examen se fait remarquer. Ce qui explique les divergences mentionnées et les débats psychodramatiques, voire même pathologiques notamment autour des questions d'identité, des problèmes des origines. Depuis, de tels débats se succèdent, avec une intensité variable en fonction du moment historique. Leurs échos retentissent dans l'article du poète symboliste Ady consacré à Csoma et ses semblables, dont le poète lui-même pense faire partie: voyageurs impatients, munis d'expériences vouées à l'attente de leur intégration dans un pays où, pur l'instant, écrit-il au début du siècle, c'est le commencement qui est juste commencé, et ceux qui ne sauront pas attendre que leur place encore inexistante soit, enfin, préparée, ne connaîtront que « le sort des Kőrösi Csoma ».<sup>28</sup>

La référence emblématique de l'article cité, Kőrösi Csoma, n'a fait qu'une hypothèse scientifique, un projet de travail, et a créé, finalement, un mode de vie de la tradition qui lui a été léguée par ses études et ses lectures et par ce qu'on appelle « mémoire ethnique ».<sup>29</sup> Ses contemporains voient dans cette entreprise – selon la formule du romancier-politologue Zsigmond Kemény (en 1842) – « un impératif du moment » qui a préféré que les hongrois « recherchent leur orgueil » non pas « sur le terrain de la vie pratique ou dans les chroniques », mais « chez les ancêtres asiatiques dont ils ne savaient rien ».<sup>30</sup> Dans ce sens, le discours d'un autre romancier et fondateur de la pensée libérale en Hongrie, József Eötvös est d'autant plus probant qu'il témoigne de la mutation qui s'opère à l'époque des réformes, tournée plutôt vers le futur, vers ce qui est à réaliser. Le discours de József Eötvös, hommage de l'Académie des Sciences à son membre correspon-

dant, Csoma, fait le bilan de l'activité du linguiste, et conclut: « l'origine de notre peuple est à jamais voilée devant nous », « le passé, triste, sans lumière, s'étend derrière nous ». Ce qui prouve que les Hongrois sont avant et non après l'heure de « gloire ». Il faut donc qu'ils se tournent « d'un enthousiasme redoublé, vers l'avenir »,<sup>31</sup> poursuit Eötvös, évoquant ainsi l'autre dimension utopique de « l'éveil » des nations.

Au-delà de son aspect national, qui fut ressenti comme une dette envers sa communauté, le projet de travail de Kőrösi Csoma visant l'éclaircissement des origines est, d'une façon programmatique, universaliste dans la mesure où il considère que les connaissances concernant les origines asiatiques des Hongrois peuvent mettre en lumière les bouleversements historiques universels dûs aux migrations des peuples. « C'est dans le plus haut intérêt de l'humanité », a écrit à ce sujet son ancien professeur de Nagyenyed.<sup>32</sup> Et c'est ainsi qu'il en parle dans sa lettre, son compte rendu déjà cité, où il ajoute que c'est une sorte d'archéologie des connaissances qui l'attire; il aimerait « communiquer avec toutes les nations renommées », s'identifier avec « toutes les époques ».<sup>33</sup> Élément démesuré d'un programme qui le pousse à retrouver d'autres origines, en dehors de la « sainteté des générations passées » (B. Constant) et plutôt dans un mode de vie, mélange de bouddhisme et d'archaïsme sicule, qui se détache de la notion de « l'avant » pour se rapprocher d'un temps « non daté ».

Ce temps non daté, écrit Raoul Girardet en étudiant les *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, est « non mesurable, non comptabilisable, dont on sait seulement qu'il se situe au début de l'aventure humaine et qu'il fut celui de l'innocence et du bonheur ».<sup>34</sup> De son hypothèse, Kőrösi Csoma a fait aussi à titre individuel, donc plutôt littéraire, un mode de vie et une personne. Son propre personnage, inspirant de nombreuses oeuvres, romans et poèmes, s'intégrant à un mythe des origines pures, simples et universelles. Et prouvant, s'il en était besoin, que de tels mythes trouvent leur places dans l'univers sans bornes de l'individu solitaire, de la littérature, mais ils sont toujours douteux, souvent désastreux dans celui de la politique, domaine des bornes et autres entraves utiles et indispensables.

### Notes

1. Jean Carpentier-François Lebrun (dir.): *Histoire de l'Europe*. Seuil-Points, 1992. 315.
2. Ibid., 317.
3. Adalbert von Chamisso: *La Merveilleuse Histoire de Peter Schlemihl*. Trad. de René Riegel. Aubier, 1948. 225.
4. « Le géographe Jacques Ancel présente (...) une conception plus restreinte de l'Europe Centrale. Elle coïncide avec l'Europe danubienne, terme 'géographique' pour nommer un ensemble géopolitique qu'il nomme 'Habsbourgie'. Michel Foucher: « L'Europe centrale. Actualité d'une représentation à géométrie variable. » *Le Débat*, 1991 janvier-février (nr. 63). 41.

5. Batsányi, János: « Sur les changements survenus en France. » (« Ouvrez plutôt les yeux: vous verrez apparaître / Le destin que pour vous on écrit à Paris ». Trad. Guillevic et Jean Rousselot.) In: Ladislav Gara (éd.): *Anthologie de la poésie hongroise*. Seuil, 1962. 106.
6. Bölöni Farkas, Sándor: *Utazás Északamerikában*. Officina, 1943. 25. et 28.
7. Denis Brand-Maurice Durousset: *Dictionnaire thématique. Histoire-Géographie*. Sirey, 1989. 309–311.
8. Raymond Aron: *Dimensions de la conscience historique*. Plon, Agora, 1985. (1. éd.: 1961.) 205.
9. *Ibid.*, 216., 153–154.
10. Yves Plasseraud: *Les nouvelles démocraties d'Europe centrale*. Montchrestien, 1991. 49.
11. Vámbéry, Ármin: « Lettre à Ralston. » *Vasárnapi Újság*, 1882. nr. 24. Cité par Duka, Tivadar: *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor dolgozatai*. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1885. 149–150.
12. Bárczi, Géza: *A magyar nyelv életrajza*. Gondolat, 1996. 361.
13. Németh, Gyula: *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor célja*. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1935. 3.
14. Duka, Tivadar: *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor dolgozatai*. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1885. 34.
15. *Ibid.*, 23–30.
16. *Ibid.*, 32–33.
17. *Ibid.*, 7–8. Németh, Gyula: *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor lelki alkata és fejlődése*. Az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület kiadása, 1943. 8. cf. Musnai, László: *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor*. Bethlen Nyomda, 1942. 13. (Ce dernier met l'accent sur l'influence de Hegedüs, professeur de Csoma à Nagyenyed.)
18. Németh, Gyula: *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor célja, op. cit.*, 4.
19. *Ibid.*, 7–9.
20. *Ibid.*, 9. cf. Németh, Gyula: *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor lelki alkata és fejlődése*. Az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület kiadása, 1943. 7.
21. Musnai, László: *op. cit.*, 14–15.
22. Hegedüs, Sámuel: « Egy hazafi szó és egy baráti könyv (sic!) Kőrösi Csoma Sándor sírja fölött. » In: Terjék, József (éd.): *Emlékek Kőrösi Csoma Sándorról*. Kőrösi Csoma Társaság/Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára, 1984. 177–184.
23. Duka, Tivadar: *op. cit.*, 23.
24. Zsirai, Miklós: « Östörténeti csodabogarak. » In: Ligeti, Lajos (éd.): *A magyarság östörténete*. Magyarságtudományi Intézet/Franklin, 1943. 269.
25. Duka, Tivadar: *op. cit.*, 146. (cf. Németh, Gyula: *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor lelki alkata és fejlődése, op. cit.*, 12–13.)
26. Duka, Tivadar: *op. cit.*, 412–420.
27. « Kőrösi Csoma Sándor levele C. P. Kennedyhez. » In: Terjék, József: *op. cit.*, 71.
28. Ady, Endre: « Jelkyek és Csomaiak. » *Nyugat*, 16.11.1911. In: Ady, Endre *Publicisztikai írásai*. (Éd. Vezér, Erzsébet.) Szépirodalmi, 1987. 789–791.
29. Jacques Le Goff: *Histoire et mémoire*. Gallimard/Folio, 1988. 111–115.
30. Kemény, Zsigmond: « Necrolog. » In: Terjék, József: *op. cit.*, 189–190.
31. Eötvös, József: « Emlékbeszéd Kőrösi Csoma Sándor levelezőtag felett. » In: Terjék, József: *op. cit.*, 191–204.
32. Hegedüs, Sámuel: *op. cit.*, 183.
33. « Kőrösi Csoma Sándor levele C. P. Kennedyhez. » In: Terjék, József: *op. cit.*, 71.
34. Raoul Girardet: *Mythes et mythologies politiques*. Seuil/Points, 1990. 101.

# ZU PÉTER LENGYELS *COBBLESTONE*

MIRKO DOMBROWSKY

Universität zu Köln, Köln,  
Deutschland

Im Berlin der zwanziger Jahre war mitunter von *Asphaltliteratur* die Rede. Damit bezeichnete man – nicht ganz ohne Wertung – jene Texte vornehmlich aus jüdischer Tradition, die sich den Themen *Großstadt* und *Zivilisation* zuwendeten. Diese Diskurspolitik diente nicht zuletzt der Abgrenzung von „wahrer“ Dichtung oder „Weltliteratur“, wobei man in beiden Fällen gerne an Goethe dachte. Das vielleicht prominenteste Beispiel von „Zivilisationsliteratur“ aus dieser Zeit ist Alfred Döblins Roman *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, welcher freilich trotz der Absage Döblins an das klassisch-bürgerliche Bildungsideal selbst bald Einzug in die sogenannte Weltliteratur hielt. 1988 nun veröffentlicht der ungarische Autor Péter Lengyel den Großstadtroman *Macskakő*, in dem wiederum der Straßenbelag eine Rolle zu spielen scheint. Der Titel der englischen Übersetzung von 1993 lautet *Cobblestone*.\* Schauplatz der Haupthandlung ist Budapest während der ungarischen Millenniumsfeier im Jahr 1896. Da liegt es nahe, an Musils *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* zu erinnern, in dem die andere Metropole der habsburgerischen Doppelmonarchie keine zwanzig Jahre später ebenfalls das Epizentrum einer patriotischen Jubiläumsveranstaltung ist (welche sich hier freilich nur wortreich ankündigt). Welchen Aufschluß geben diese literarischen Assoziationen?

Ein Blick auf die Romananfänge läßt vermuten, daß auch Lengyel durch die Wahl des Sujets *Großstadt* dem Gang der *Zivilisation* nachspürt. Es geht hinaus auf die Straße. Dort spielt sich das moderne Leben ab, und dort sind es jeweils die neuen Verkehrsmittel, die als Signifikanten rasanter Veränderungen Verunsicherung und Krisenerfahrung mit sich bringen.

Er stand vor dem Tor des Tegeler Gefängnisses und war frei. [...] Er ließ Elektrische auf Elektrische vorbeifahren, drückte den Rücken an die rote Mauer und ging nicht. Der Aufseher am Tor spazierte einige Male an ihm vorbei, zeigte ihm seine Bahn, er ging nicht. (*Berlin Alexanderplatz*: S. 8)

\* Eine deutsche Übersetzung liegt nicht vor.

Schon einen Augenblick vorher war etwas aus der Reihe gesprungen, eine quer schlagende Bewegung; etwas hatte sich gedreht, war seitwärts gerutscht, ein schwerer, jäh gebremster Lastwagen war es [...] Die Dame fühlte etwas Unangenehmes in der Herz-Magengrube, das sie berechtigt war für Mitleid zu halten; es war ein unentschlossenes, lähmendes Gefühl. (*Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*: S. 10f.)

It was on the afternoon of this day that back home, on the Pest side of our city, the first automobile put-putted past the thieves' dens of Cemetery Road [...]. Eventually it would reach the traces of the lesser branch of the Danube [...]; where, as it turned, a guardian of the law, with the feathergrass in his hat, attempted to arrest this suspicious contraption speeding by without the aid of visible horses. (*Cobblestone*: S. 9)

Auf vergleichbare Weise taucht somit eine zentrale Frage der Moderne in allen drei Romanen bereits auf den ersten Seiten auf: es geht um Bewahrung oder Wiederherstellung von Ordnung in der Unüberschaubarkeit der Metropole. Durch die Episode mit dem ersten Auto wird in *Cobblestone* vorweggenommen, daß hier den Hütern des Gesetzes diese Aufgabe zukommt. So ist auch allen Texten gemein, daß das Durchbrechen der Ordnung die Form des Verbrechens annimmt. Begegnen uns in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* und im *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* die Frauenmörder Biberkopf und Moosbrugger, so haben wir es in *Cobblestone* mit einer Gang von Edelganoven zu tun, die sich auf dem Kopfsteinpflaster Budapests einen kriminologischen und nicht zuletzt technologischen Wettstreit mit dem *Special Investigator* Dr. Dajka liefern. Allein durch die in Europa völlig neue Fingerabdrucktechnik kann letzterer dem Kopf der Bande auf die Schliche kommen. Einen existentiellen oder gar philosophischen Hintergrund läßt das Safeknacken an sich jedoch vermissen. Ebenso wenig wird die Tat an moralischen Maßstäben gemessen. Bei *Cobblestone* handelt es sich durch und durch um einen Krimi, der durchaus Spannung aus der Frage bezieht, ob die Gangster zum Schluß geschnappt werden. Insofern scheint es etwas hochgestochen, wenn im Untertitel von einem „philosophical mystery for the Millennium“ die Rede ist. Zwar liefert der Roman eine detailgetreue Milieustudie der Budapester Unterwelt. Er porträtiert „life's richest variety along the cobblestone streets of our capital city“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 436). Dabei geht es aber offensichtlich weniger darum, die moralische Verunsicherung der sich rasant wandelnden Gesellschaft der Jahrhundertwende zu reflektieren. Die Frage, ob dann aber der Hinweis auf die Asphaltliteratur und ihren zivilisationskritischen Impetus gerechtfertigt ist, soll zunächst zurückgestellt werden.

Ein hervorstechendes formales Merkmal des Romans ist das Inhaltsverzeichnis. Dort werden die Kapitelüberschriften, die stets schon ein thematisches Ele-

ment des Kapitels ankündigen, durch eine ausführliche Liste von Stichwörtern ergänzt. Diese – wenn auch kryptische – Vorausschau erinnert an die Tradition der Synopsen, die auf den vorbürgerlichen Roman zurückgeht. Bei diesem Typ Roman handelt es sich stets auch um eine Art Nachschlagewerk, denn das Wichtigste wird durch die moritätenhafte Ankündigung des Inhalts bereits vorweggenommen. Das ermöglicht eine andere Art des Lesens, ein wissendes, enzyklopädisches Lesen, das weniger auf Einfühlung als auf Reflexion setzt. Man kann sich anhand des Inhaltsverzeichnisses aussuchen, zu welchem Thema man sich „informieren“ will. Döblin und Musil, und freilich auch Brecht, greifen auf dieses Verfahren als Mittel der Illusionsdurchbrechung zurück, getreu Musils Motto, daß es im 20. Jahrhundert nicht um die Bildung der Charaktere im Sinne der realistischen Tradition, sondern um die Bildung der Ideen gehe. Es wird kein Zufall sein, daß Lengyel sich in diese Tradition des An- und Vorausdeutens stellt – und sie zugleich ironisiert. Denn das Stichwortverzeichnis stellt sich dem Leser als ein Puzzle dar, aus dem er erst nach sorgfältigen Lesen schlau wird. Zugleich deutet sich durch die verwirrende Vorwegnahme des Rohmaterials in den Überschriften an, daß auch in diesem Roman der Reflexion eine besondere Rolle zukommt.

Tatsächlich handelt es sich bei *Cobblestone* um eine ausgesprochen selbst-reflexive Konstruktion. Lengyel flicht in die Haupterzählung einen Metadiskurs in Form von Kommentaren und Reflexionen eines fiktionalen Alter Egos ein. Die Einschübe nehmen die Form von einzelnen Sätzen bis zu ganzen Kapiteln an und sind stets durch Klammern markiert. Diese Rahmenhandlung fingiert eine narrative Vermittlungssituation, in der ein Schriftsteller seiner Tochter, die er stets mit „Du“ anredet, über etliche Jahre hinweg die Geschichte des Juwelenraubs aus der Perspektive des Kopfs der Bande erzählt. Diese Vorgehensweise des Autors erfüllt mehrere Funktionen, durch welche der historische Krimi sich dann doch als sehr nachdenkliche Auseinandersetzung mit den zivilisatorischen Entwicklungen dieses Jahrhunderts entpuppt:

Erstens wird die Zuhörerin darüber aufgeklärt, welchen Namenswechselln und Veränderungen die Schauplätze des Geschehens unter kommunistischer Herrschaft unterzogen wurden. Damit werden diese zu realen Orten, die einen (unglücklichen) geschichtlichen Prozeß bezeugen. Nur in wenigen Fällen kann der Erzähler wie folgt feststellen, daß die alten Namen als Bestandteil des kulturellen Gedächtnisses der Bevölkerung nicht durch die irgendwelcher Funktionäre ersetzt wurden: „For you: still Izabella, this lucky one has survived.“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 134) Interessanterweise widmet der Erzähler bei seiner Skizzierung der sich wandelnden Topographie der Stadt der Straßenoberfläche große Aufmerksamkeit. Natürlich müssen im Lauf der Zeit die Pflastersteine an unzähligen Stellen dem Asphalt weichen. Ironisch beschreibt er ihn als „the new miracle surface [...] easy to keep marvelously clean“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 101.) Der Siegeszug des neuen Straßenmaterials wird immer wieder zynisch kommentiert. Ausnahmen bestätigen die

Regel: „These trees are here to stay, making this one spot where the asphalt, and all its pimps, will not triumph.“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 134). Durch die leitmotivische Beschreibung der Straßenoberfläche rückt Lengyel die zentrale Bedeutung der materiellen Gegebenheiten für das moderne Leben in der Stadt in den Vordergrund. Im Gegensatz zum Pflasterstein ist der Asphalt Kennzeichen von Sterilität und Kälte. Es stellt sich heraus, daß Lengyel doch – in einem sehr wörtlichen Sinne – Asphaltliteratur geschrieben hat.

So liefert der Ich-Erzähler der Rahmenhandlung zweitens Eindrücke des zeitgenössischen Lebens auf den asphaltierten Plätzen und Straßen Budapests. *Cobblestone* ist vor allem auch ein Roman über die Geschichte einer Stadt und funktioniert über den Kontrast zwischen der atmosphärischen, abenteuerlichen und weltläufigen Metropole der Jahrhundertwende und der Bescheidenheit der Verhältnisse nach vierzig Jahren Kommunismus. Welch ein Unterschied, ob man im dunklen Umhang durch das nächtliche Budapest streift und das Verbrechen des Jahrhunderts vollbringt oder ob man sich sorgt, weil die Tochter Probleme im Leichtathletikverein hat. Die Safeknacker übernachten in den prachtvollen Hotels an der Riviera. Bei einer Pragueise kommt der Erzähler in eine Schule unter, dabei hätte die Tochter so gerne einmal im Hotel übernachtet. Diese Gegensätze bewirken eine melancholische Grundstimmung. So bleiben auch gelegentliche Seitenhiebe auf das kommunistische System nicht aus. Zynisch erinnert der Erzähler an die Marxismusvorlesungen „in those fine days when the Piarists were no longer allowed to drug the workers' susceptible minds with the opiate of religion“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 143).

Drittens reflektiert der Erzähler die Bedingungen und Möglichkeiten des Erzählens. Dabei wird deutlicher, weshalb er einer historischen Bestandsaufnahme als Folie einen Krimi unterlegt:

*Cobblestone* birgt in sich auf vielfache Weise den Prozeß des Registrierens, Ordnen und Verstehens von Informationen. Da sind zum einen die Ermittlungen Dajkas. Seine Aufgabe besteht darin, Fakten zu sammeln und zu einem sinnvollen Ganzen zusammensetzen. Der Rekonstruktion des Tathergangs hat er sich mit Leib und Seele verschrieben. Um einen vergleichbaren Vorgang handelt es sich jedoch auch beim Erzählvorgang des Ich-Erzählers der 1896-Handlung selbst, der nicht nur die Ereignisse, die seinem Wissensstand entsprechen, sondern auch die der Gegenseite zu einer kohärenten Erzählung zusammenfügen will. Seine Glaubwürdigkeit als Erzähler gewinnt er nur teilweise dadurch zurück, daß im letzten Teil „The Way it Was“ im *Chinese-Box*-Verfahren der pensionierte Dajka und sein Nachfolger dem Erzähler die Ereignisse aus ihrer Sicht mitteilen. Daß in ihrer Erzählung der Ich-Erzähler, der ihnen gerade zuhört, bei einem Schiffsuntergang ums Leben kommt, ist schon herrlich vertrackt. Über diese erzähltechnischen Schwierigkeiten reflektiert wiederum der fiktive Autor, der Ich-Erzähler der



Gegenwartshandlung, und setzt sich dabei grundsätzlich mit den Problemen des Romanschreibens auseinander:

In seiner langen Tradition wurde der Roman immer wieder als Abbild des Lebens in seiner ganzen Komplexität definiert. Für Friedrich Schlegel sollte der Roman die „Enzyklopädie eines gesamten Lebens“ darstellen, also bei *A* anfangen und bei *Z* aufhören. Aber was ist das *A* und was das *Z* im Leben, und was kommt in der Mitte? „Well then, what are you going to put into your book“ wird der Schriftsteller von seiner Tochter gefragt. Seine zutreffende Antwort lautet: „That is what we're going to have to sort out. [...] Perhaps the whole book is going to be about that.“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 155f.) So lauten die Leitfragen dieses metafictionalen Diskurses, den der Erzähler zwischen den Klammern führt „what to include in our story?“ und „at what point to begin?“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 192). Wie beantwortet er sie? Lawrence Sterne geht schon recht weit zurück und fängt nicht bei der Geburt, sondern bei der Zeugung Tristram Shandys an. Der Erzähler von *Cobblestone* treibt es auf die Spitze und beginnt mit dem Urknall. Parallel zum narrativen Strang der Hauptidee beginnt er eine zweite Erzählung und überfliegt die gesamte Menschheitsgeschichte. Er zeigt uns, wie er unter Einsatz seines wichtigsten Instruments, „the zoom lens“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 301), die Einstellung verkleinert, bis er Budapest im 1896 im Sucher hat und der Stand der Dinge dort eingeholt ist. Dies weckt den Eindruck, daß Fokussierung stets nur ein Zufallsprodukt ist. Man hätte ebenso gut jeden anderen Ort zu jeder anderen Zeit heranzoomen können. Die Motivation, so lernen wir, bleibt hingegen immer gleich: „to arrest the unstoppable flow of time, to recall a piece of it, to tear it out and store it away for all of us...“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 32).

Informationsselektion ist aber nicht nur ein poetologisches Problem des Romans. In *Cobblestone* taucht es auf allen Ebenen auf. Der Kriminologe Dajka muß entscheiden, was für den Fall relevant ist und dann die Teile des Mosaiks zusammenfügen, „as one continuous narrative“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 427). Die Geschichte, die er sich zusammenreimt, muß stimmig und glaubhaft sein. So ist sein Problem tatsächlich ein narratologisches. „Detective work is like writing fiction.“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 395) Der zentrale Unterschied besteht darin, daß der Autor „in advance“, der Ermittler jedoch „in hindsight“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 453) weiß, was passiert. Was anderes tut aber ein Vater, der versucht, seinem Kind die Welt zu erklären (die er nicht versteht)? Sein übertriebener Versuch, alles in eine große Erzählung der Menschheitsgeschichte zu integrieren und auch wirklich mit dem Anfang anzufangen, wird konterkariert durch seine zerstreuten Notizen über den Alltag, die angesichts von Themen wie Aids, Obdachlosigkeit, Alkoholismus, Jugendgewalt, Zensur, die also angesichts einer „horrendous new world“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 211). Ausdruck seiner Orientierungslosigkeit sind. Mit Hayden White ließe sich sagen, daß Geschichten und Geschichtsschreibung wohl dem

fundamentalen Wunsch entspringen, der Offenheit des Lebens etwas entgegenzusetzen, „to put an image of continuity, coherency, and meaning in place of our fantasies of emptiness, need, and frustrated desire that inhibit our nightmares the destructive power of time“ (White: S. 15). In *Cobblestone* setzt Lengyel den Welt-Erklärungsnoten des Vaters Dajkas unermüdliches „striving for completeness“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 197) entgegen und reflektiert damit, daß das Mosaik des Lebens nur in der Fiktion (nahezu) vervollständigt werden kann. „Life is always more multi-dimensional than theories of literary esthetics.“ (*Cobblestone*: S. 428.)

*Cobblestone* stellt sich somit in die Reihe der Romane der Gegenwart, die sich als historiographische Metafiktion bezeichnen lassen und die die Bedeutung narrativer Strukturen für die Verarbeitung nicht-fiktionalen Geschehens reflektieren. Dies tut auch Lengyel, explizit, indem er sein fiktionales Alter Ego Überlegungen über die Schwierigkeiten des Erzählens anstellen läßt, und implizit, indem er für seine Geschichte des vergangenen Jahrhunderts die Form des Krimis wählt, eine narrative Form, die nach Geschlossenheit drängt und die im Kontrast zum Diskurs des Vaters um so mehr die Unwägbarkeiten des Alltags sowie die Absurditäten der Menschheitsgeschichte zu Tage legt. Dieser Kontrast funktioniert auch über das plastisch vor Augen geführte Gegensatzpaar von Pflasterstein und Asphalt. Nicht zuletzt soll die Geschichte des Jahrhundert-Verbrechens jedoch (die Tochter) in ihren Bann ziehen und ein anschauliches Porträt der Weltstadt Budapest aus vergangenen, vorsozialistischen Tagen liefern.

Adam Makkai (ed.)

**In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag': The Poetry of Hungary.  
An Anthology of Hungarian Poetry from the 13th Century  
to the Present in English Translation. Vol. I.**

Chicago–Budapest: Atlantis–Centaur, M. Szivárvány and Corvina,  
1996. Lxvi + 964 pp.

## I

One is hard pressed not to read this book with what Hamlet's uncle describes as "an auspicious and a dropping eye". The publication in English translation of nearly 900 pages of Hungarian poetry dating from the thirteenth century to the very recent past is undeniably a remarkable achievement and, for anyone with an interest in the international dissemination of Hungarian culture, a major event. The anthology is a labour of love, some thirty-three years in the making, and is only the first of two planned volumes. The focus of the second volume is not altogether clear, partly because hints as to its contents are scattered throughout the first. In his Introduction, the editor explains that "a large number of excellent poets I wanted to include in Volume I will instead appear in Volume II, due to severe space limitations" (xxv); in the introductory remarks to the extensive essay by László Cs. Szabó on "A Nation and Its Poetry" at the end of the anthology we are told that the second volume "will present in detail the work of living Hungarian poets, regardless of their domicile or citizenship" (867), and a footnote to the same essay further suggests that a "complete list of Hungarian poets who have lived abroad will appear in Volume II of *The Poetry of Hungary*" (947). In any case, one can but applaud the energy and dedication of an editor who promises us more, after already having given us, in the quantitative sense at least, so much.

"To edit an anthology of translated poetry invites the fury of the gods", writes Árpád Göncz in his Foreword to the anthology. While the nobility of this undertaking can only inspire admiration, the quality of the translations themselves sadly invites, if not exactly celestial fury, at least mortal disappointment. In his Introduction to the volume, Professor Makkai explains the method of translation adopted for the anthology. He calls it the "Gara Method of Translation", because it was inspired by the procedures followed in producing Ladislav Gara's *Anthologie de la poésie hongroise* published by Les Éditions du Seuil in 1962. According to this method, poets working in the Target Language are given a literal translation of the poem in question, a free prose translation, mock stanzas reproducing the "rhythmic and rhyming pattern" of the original ("without regard for the meaning"), and a tape-recorded reading of the poem in the original Source Language. Gara, we are told, would not only have his poets produce several versions of the same poems but also "often gave the same piece to several poets, sometimes ten or more... then judiciously compared all the possible versions harvested in this manner and only included what he and his team thought were of the highest quality" (xxii). A rigorous enough method, to be sure, and in the case of Gara's *Anthologie* it undoubtedly produced some excellent results. It is hard, however, to believe that the method was applied with much rigour in preparing *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'*. About a third of the translations were produced by authors who could read Hungarian without the above mentioned aids – Makkai alone is responsible for about a hundred translations – and the best of the native-speaker poets, inevitably

perhaps, only make a handful of contributions. One imagines that Makkai's chief problem lay in finding usable translations at all, rather than in "judiciously" selecting between competing versions; hence the resuscitation of so many translations by the stalwart Watson Kirkconnell (the extent of whose contribution is second only to that of the editor), a great and noble friend to Hungarian poetry, but hardly a major poet in English. The unfortunate result is that the bulk of the translations in the anthology are depressingly weak, and much of the poetry simply reads like doggerel. Too often the translators fail to make the crucial leap from fidelity to the sense and sound of the original to the creation of anything one might recognize as poem in its own right in the target language. Consequently, the translations read, for the most part, like translations, and not even very accomplished translations at that.

It may appear ungenerous to single out examples, but in the light of Professor Makkai's footnote to his own translation of Sándor Petőfi's famous "Nemzeti dal", there is perhaps some justification in reproducing a couple of stanzas here. "Translated many times in the past," Makkai writes, "former English renditions failed to bring out the natural flow and rhythm of the poem, whose aesthetic value lies less in its political message than in the fine arch the belligerent tone weaves towards the religious end" (319). Here is the translator's opening stanza, followed by stanza four:

Rise up, Magyar, the country calls!  
 It's 'now or never' what fate befalls...  
 Shall we live as slaves or free men?  
 That's the question – choose your 'Amen'!  
 God of Hungarians, we swear unto Thee,  
 We swear unto Thee – that slaves we shall no longer be!  
 [...]  
 Sabers outshine chains and fetters,  
 It's the sword that one's arm betters.  
 Yet we wear grim chains and shackles.  
 Swords, slash through the damned manacles!  
 God of Hungarians, we swear [etc.]

It is precisely the sense these lines reveal of trying to make English words fit a pattern the translator has all too rigidly in his head that is so characteristic of the volume. Petőfi undoubtedly was, as we are told "a genius of language, who mastered any form he chose", but what is to be gained by contorting English syntax for the sake of forcing such stilted anapaests as the ones offered by these lines from "At the End of September" (Szeptember végén):

but notice my dark hairs – to white streaks I lose them –  
 as the hoarfrosts of autumn my head's winter start.

This, again, is all too typical of the laboured, awkward, stilted and altogether unpoetic verse that characterizes the anthology as a whole.

There are better things in *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'*, but they are unfortunately few and far between. One gets, as one would expect, respectable poetry from the likes of John Fuller (translating Batsányi) and his late father (translating György Sárközi), and George Szirtes seven contributions come as a breath of fresh air (why was he only given snippets of Vas and Jékely?). Peter Zollman's translations are occasionally inspired; parts of Babits's "Questions at Night" and "The Danaids" are splendidly done in his translation, and there are lines and

cadences in his “The Approaching Winter” which really do strike the note of Berzsenyi. The late Ted Hughes’s Pilinszky translations have justly been celebrated and it is quite appropriate that they should be included here – but why only two translations, when the alternative versions offered are so clearly inferior? Compare, for example, the first nine lines of Hughes’s version of “Fish in the Net”:

We are tossing in a net of stars.  
 Fish hauled up to the beach,  
 gasping in nothingness,  
 mouths snapping dry void.  
 Whispering, the lost element  
 calls us in vain.  
 Choking among edged stones  
 and pebbles, we must  
 live and die in a heap.

with the version given in the anthology:

We write in a star-net  
 fish, hauled onto land;  
 we gasp into the emptiness  
 we bite dry nothing’s end.  
 The Element we’ve left and lost  
 whispers in vain to return,  
 ‘midst prickly stones and pebbles  
 suffocating, we must  
 live and die next to each other!

From the confusing punctuation of the first two lines and the twisting of syntax for the sake of half a rhyme (“we bite dry nothing’s end”), to the unforgivably stilted “midst” in line seven, the anthology version simply fails to convince as poetry. One also wonders why one of Pilinszky’s central masterpieces, “Apokrif”, was not included, and why for that matter Pilinszky is so under-represented in the volume. Gyula Illyés, for example, is given almost three times as much space; supposedly because the editor considers him “[p]erhaps the most important, politically committed Hungarian intellectual of the 20th century” (625) – another case of rather questionable punctuation.

The question of selection is, of course, always a thorny one in the compilation of an anthology of this kind. It would be pointless to grumble about the omission of personal favourites; one is at least consoled by the thought of the fate they may fortuitously have escaped in having been left to rest in peace. (Although the complete absence of Pál Ányos, Gábor Dayka and László Szentjóni Szabó from the “Enlightenment” section of such an extensive anthology strikes me as utterly inexplicable.) *In Quest of the ‘Miracle Stag’* raises, however, a still thornier question. With so little Hungarian poetry available in good translation, are more bad translations better than no translations at all? And what kind of service does an anthology like this do either to Hungarian poetry or to its potential readership in the English-speaking world? There is enough good material in this anthology to have formed a slim volume of convincing versions of Hungarian poetry in English. It would not, of course, have been as systematic, comprehensive or as historically “representative” as the anthology now stands. But the problem

with *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* is precisely that it too often simply "represents" poetry, rather than giving us poetry as such. Much as one commends the anthology's aspirations, one might at the end of the day rather have had the real thing than the representation, the slim volume of poetry rather than the heavy tome of history.

University of Cologne, Cologne

Richard Aczel

## II

I greet the appearance of this anthology with a mixture of anticipation and foreboding. A representative collection of Hungarian poetry in English translation is long overdue and Makkai's is by far the most comprehensive and ambitious to date. Still, I have been disappointed consistently enough by other volumes of translations from the Hungarian to know the danger of expecting too much. In acquainting myself with what is available, I have been shocked into numbness by the preponderance of the bad and mediocre in the field, and, I am sad to say, I have become inured to it.

The first volume of *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* sets out to trace Hungarian poetry from its beginnings in recorded oral tradition and folk songs to the present. In the planned second volume, Makkai intends to collect the work of living Hungarian poets to give the reader some sense of the contemporary scene in Hungarian poetry. In mapping its course through the distant and recent past to the threshold of the present, volume one fills well over one thousand pages and includes a short foreword, a not so short introduction and various notes and appendices of various lengths, in addition to its roughly 850 pages of translations. Compiling a work of this scope is a daunting task, and its completion, whatever the work's quality, is a significant accomplishment, one which clearly comes as the result of great care and effort. Makkai and his fellow editors are to be congratulated for having completed such a formidable project.

At first glance, *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* has all the habiliments of quality. It is an attractive book, fairly well printed and laid out, and illustrated with accomplished woodcuts by the Hungarian-born, English artist, George Buday. It even comes with the blessing of Árpád Göncz, the President of Hungary and a published writer himself, who contributes a complimentary foreword to the book. In short, a quick perusal gives us at least superficial reason for optimism. *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* seems substantial, and not by virtue of its weight alone. But once the book has been put to the test, once its nature has been called out in the reading, our guarded optimism falls away. There is no longer any mixture of emotions in our approach to it. Foreboding takes on the flesh of disbelief, anticipation draws its final breath, then fossilizes into disappointment. When Makkai's anthology has revealed its true face to us, we see there can be no satisfaction here, no hope of anything approaching Blake's "lineaments of Gratified Desire".

The editing in this collection is heavy-handed and clumsy throughout, in places fairly scandalous and in general far too intrusive. Where he has seen fit, it seems, Makkai has tinkered with or substantially rewritten the work of other translators. This editorial license might be excusable as merely over-zealous were he a great translator. If the products of this indulgence were outstanding, a reviewer could feel justified in taking Makkai to task only lightly for such indiscretions. The ends would have gone some way toward justifying the means. But the results are not overwhelmingly good. The original translations themselves may not have been great (I do not have them all at hand and so cannot speak to their general quality), but it is

telling that after Makkai's efforts none is so substantially improved as to be great, or even very good. This does not mean that Makkai has not improved any of them. He may have done indeed, but I can only judge the final products of these peculiar collaborations. In his general introduction, Makkai thanks Watson Kirkconnell and Anton N. Nyerges, two of the translators whose work is included here, for their permission "to carry out a few minor touch-ups." But Makkai also reworks translations by George Burrow, Joseph Leftwich, Thomas Kabdedo, J. G. Nichols, Kenneth White, Ena Roberts, H. H. Hart, Neville Masteman, Judith Kroll, William N. Loew, István Tótfalusi, Michael Kitka, István Fekete, Vernon Watkins, and Peter Jay. Was he granted permission to do so by any or all of these translators? Perhaps he was. If so, I stand corrected (though I doubt this was the case with William N. Loew, a Hungarian-American translator who died in 1922). But even if Makkai did receive the necessary permissions, my encounter with his unorthodox procedure leaves me wondering just what the point could be of such extensive revision of other people's work. Is this a species of what Oscar Williams did in his *Little Treasury of Modern Poetry*, including his own work (and that of his wife, Gene Derwood) in a more than generous selection, while skimping on or bypassing altogether several worthy poets? Whatever its sources and ethical implications, the practice looks bad in an anthology compiled from translations by various authors.

Makkai has selected eighty-one of his own translations for this volume, not including those pieces by other authors that he has revised, which number thirty-two, for a total of at least 113 translations attributable in part or whole to the volume's chief editor. (There may in fact be more than this, since at least one translation that bears Makkai's initials is not listed under his name in the index of translators.) This puts Makkai squarely in the lead in number of appearances in the volume. If it were a competition, a kind of contributor's Olympics, let's say, Makkai would win going away. He is followed by Watson Kirkconnell in distant second with seventy-two translations and Peter Zollman in third with fifty-eight, after which the numbers drop off sharply into the teens. All this gives one the impression that Makkai the Editor (or Judge, to extend the sporting metaphor) is a great fan of Makkai the Translator, or at least that the former takes the latter very seriously. This seems to invite all others to do the same, which in turn invites scrutiny, encourages the reader to examine Makkai's translations to see whether such overt self-promotion could be justified. I accept the invitation and take the opportunity now to look at Makkai's translations.

Though many of his offerings are flawed beyond the pale of criticism, Makkai does contribute some good efforts to the collection (Gyula Juhász's "What Was Her Blondness Like..." and Attila József's "On Mankind" are two of the more successful). But too often even his best translations are marred by solecisms and awkward constructions. In "Zrínyi's Second Song", a translation of "Zrínyi második éneke" by the early nineteenth-century poet and essayist, Ferenc Kölcsey, Makkai taints an otherwise competent performance with the ungainly, ungrammatical "Your country's constellation / Must sunset for her prodigal son's guilt". I am not against inventive usages per se. Language permits such flexibility, even welcomes it in the hands of a good poet. But this effort to press "sunset" into service as a verb only calls unwanted attention to itself and falls so short of success it can hope to elicit nothing more sympathetic than a bemused chuckle in the reader. Two lines down in the same translation, Makkai betrays his weakness for archaic diction and Elizabethan syntax in the phrase "grey-haired fathers [sic] tombs begilt". Makkai's translations are rife with examples of this kind ("For 'twas the same song crying o'er the meadows", p. 570; "O woe, how shallow the depths and bare", p. 493; "For paltry mercenaries may have killed / him, and his heart could stop – but lo, see a / real wonder", p. 790; etc.). He employs these purposeful atavisms indiscriminately: the three phrases in parentheses above are from translations of twentieth-century poems, each by

a different poet (István Sinka, "My Mother Dances a Ballad"; Dezső Kosztolányi, "The Song of 'Kornél Esti'"; János Pilinszky, "On the Third Day"). As one might expect, none of the originals reads like an indifferent exercise in belated Victorian poesy. I do not mean to suggest that a translation should serve as a mirror to its original in every respect. To have any hope of avoiding the foibles of the purely academic or the amateur, a translation of a poem must succeed as a poem in its own right. One that fails in this cannot be rescued by literal accuracy or harmed significantly by excessive freedom.

Makkai renders Kölcsey's poem in an irregular mixture of meters that skirts the iambic closely but never quite gets there. In too many places (and this is typical of Makkai's versification) the translation borders on prose without much novelty or success. Despite these failings, "Zrínyi's Second Song" manages to preserve the stanza form and rhyme of the original. Makkai deserves commendation for his fidelity in this (a laudably consistent element in his approach to translation). More often than not, the regular meter and rhyme of originals get pushed aside by translators in favor of free verse, which is easier to pull off in some senses and in any case more prevalent in our poetry today. But Makkai is not a remarkable metrist in English, and, though he sometimes manages to fill out the form, his substitutions are so frequent and so slack that they regularly call into question his handle on the norm he means to approach. On the whole, his grasp of metrics impresses one as nearly competent. His verse tends to split the difference between the accentual-syllabic and the purely syllabic without being very much at home in either. His translation of Mihály Csokonai Vitéz's "Még egyszer Lillához" ("Once More to Lilla") provides as good an example as any of his dilemma as a prosodist. Makkai executes the translation in an ornate metrical form that reproduces the letter of Csokonai's original reasonably well. Like so many of his efforts, it looks like the original on the page, but (again like so many) it does not read like the original. There is no trace here of the sound and spirit of Csokonai's versification. Makkai's version is cold and lifeless and its rhythmic effects remarkable only in their combination of unsettling jerkiness and listless meandering. Since Makkai's translations of metrical poems rarely establish a pattern from which to deviate, it may be misleading to speak of their substitutions. It would be more accurate in many cases to regard substitution as the rule in his metrics, which makes extended prosodic analysis of his work fruitless. In any case, Makkai's failures seldom stem from errant versification alone. When the translations fail (as they often do), they fail in their entirety as independent poems.

Taken as a whole, Makkai's translations leave me as they found me, only bewildered and with a nagging sense of injustice. I think this effect results in part from their artless eclecticism, a quirky blend of the overworked, affected highbrow and the informal. Makkai seems to admire contractions in any form and context and regularly forces them on the reader where common usage and common sense would advise against it. ("You, who're alive now", p. 590; "How different rang the thunder of Hungary", p. 176; "You can't teach your nation, your verse's just a caper", p. 124.) I suspect this compulsion may stem from a notion that the facile prosodist makes verse by whatever means possible. I agree entirely, Makkai has certainly shown that a bad line can be made to scan through inventive use of punctuation. Unfortunately, he has also demonstrated that such lines invariably remain bad and actually tend to be laughably bad after all his tinkering. Add to this Makkai's weakness for the pseudo-folksy and studied colloquial ("I must sob here, sob a-crying, / and what I can't, Nymph, help! I've been a-trying", p. 163) and you have a combination that makes for fitful reading, each translation a haphazard tug-of-war between the Erstwhiles and the Y'all's with neither gaining sufficient advantage in the end to hold the reader's attention. After trudging through this second-hand landscape with its language relics and derelict constructions and its open season on the apos-



trophe, anyone who came to this book looking for readable poems should be thoroughly frustrated and ready to move on.

Like Makkai's, Watson Kirkconnell's translations are mired in the past, shot through with outworn contractions and antiquated turns of phrase. In this, both translators belong to what one might call the Miniver Cheevy school of versifying. Both seem to have "grown lean" with Robinson's world-weary, day-dreaming, comic figure in their assault on the seasons. Kirkconnell consistently adopts the pseudo-heroic tone as a translator, inflating even the sparest modernist poems into versions that read like neo-Romantic mock epics. This practice seems harmless enough on the surface. In fact, it puts the general reader, already at a disadvantage without knowledge of the originals, in danger of accepting *ex cathedra* a very skewed view of the nature and course of Hungarian poetry in the last hundred years.

*In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* intends to be encyclopedic and thus to provide a panoramic landscape or representative survey of Hungarian poetry. To achieve the type of inclusiveness he is after, Makkai has had to present a range of translations, from the very good few through the undistinguished multitudes to the frankly unrepresentable many. I have already noted Makkai's own shortcomings as a translator, along with those of Watson Kirkconnell. If I were to limit my discussion of individual translators to just these two, I might still manage to give some sense of the book's basic flavor. After all, together Makkai and Kirkconnell account for more than a third of the translations in the collection (it takes 89 translators to produce the remaining two-thirds). But *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* does contain some good work, despite its emphasis on the mediocre. There are convincing translations by a handful of prominent British poets, all of whom worked from literal translations and without extensive knowledge of Hungarian. Roy Fuller and John Wain stand out from the rest of these, while Britain's former poet-laureate, Ted Hughes, next to W. H. Auden easily the most imposing name included, delivers two rather undistinguished efforts. (Auden's single contribution is fine but very spare and certainly not earth-shattering.) It is sadly diagnostic that the best translators in the collection are among the most scantily represented here. Edwin Morgan's work is consistently good and dominates the selections from Sándor Weöres's poetry, much to Makkai's credit and the benefit of the book. But George Szirtes, another of the better and more prolific contemporary translators from the Hungarian, has just six pieces in the anthology. Peter Zollman, heavily represented throughout, is a spotty translator, just readable at his best, and belongs with Makkai and Kirkconnell in their loyalty to the antique, though Zollman exhibits this in a greatly diminished measure, primarily in his syntax. J. G. Nichols also deserves mention as one of the more accomplished contributors to the book (his translations from Gyula Juhász are especially satisfying). There is one exceptional inclusion here as well. Christine Brooke-Rose, whose name I have not encountered much, appears just once (but very impressively) with a translation of a poem by Gyula Illyés ("The Apricot Tree"), one of the best in the collection. Her single contribution validates Makkai's whole endeavor. I only wish her work had been included in a quantity commensurate with its apparent quality and at the expense of the filler that gives this anthology its bulk.

The editor of any anthology is limited in making selections by what is available at the time or can be produced through assignment or commission. This may be self-evident, but it complicates the assessment of such compilations based on what they include. Can an editor be faulted for accurately representing the state of affairs in a given field? Does the reviewer, in turn, have a responsibility to question the criteria for selection in a book that includes a preponderance of the bad or indifferent, or one that excludes much that is clearly good, or one that, like Makkai's, commits both of these peccadilloes in some measure? I think the answer to both

questions must be yes. When someone sets out to compile a tome, knowing there is barely enough first-rate work to flesh out a slim volume, the endeavor cannot end well. If anthologists want their products to be good, they must extend their responsibility beyond selection to the very conception of the work, its scope and focus. There can be no defense in lamenting the paucity of quality poems, translations, etc. An anthology whose nature is governed as much by accident as by choice does a disservice to its subject and the cause it means to represent. *The Stuffed Owl* and its kin aside, good anthologies will reflect what is best in their field. Decisions on inclusion may come down to arbitrary issues: there is room here for matters of taste, for constraints put on editors by money, space or time, for the thousand small concerns that can plague a project. But these decisions should never result from bad research or a faulty initial concept of the work.

Makkai would have done well to limit the scope of his anthology, if not to a single period, at least to the most outstanding figures in the last five hundred years. I am confident that László Arany, Gyula Reviczky, Ödön Palasovszky and several others could have been passed over without seriously undermining the spirit of the work. In this way, Makkai and his fellow translators could have concentrated their efforts and might with some luck have come up with more flattering results. As it is, there are a number of related anthologies better than this, though none half so Herculean. (I am thinking, for instance, of Miklós Vajda's *Modern Hungarian Poetry* and Thomas Kabdebo's *Hundred Hungarian Poems*.) For all its generosity and good faith, *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* adds little of substance to the field. It may improve on Watson Kirkconnell's long and tedious collection, *Hungarian Helicon*, but only by a hair. The curious will find more welcoming homes in some of the smaller anthologies and collections than they will here, and I would send them to any one of these long before recommending Makkai's palatial accommodations.

In a sense, the publication of this book is an important event. It is even historic on the modest scale of such things. I fear that in ten years *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* may also be of historical interest only, referred to as a document, one of the first of its type, but not very much read. But this is not for me to decide and, despite this dark prediction, I would be happy to see the book attract enthusiastic readers. It is terribly flawed (the punctuation is inept from start to finish and the proofreading a travesty, unleashing such curve balls as "Alan Dixon" spelled "Aalan Dickson" in the index of translators). Even its critical apparatus is potentially misleading (the vision of Hungarian history it presents strikes me as largely revision). And yet I wish Makkai's anthology well, in the belief that it will be of use and interest to someone somewhere. Though subject to the vicissitudes of fashion, the reputations of peripheral literatures are resilient (partly because they are marginal), and in the end no single work can do irreparable harm to the entire body of Hungarian poetry.

Hungarian poetry in English translation is not a field that takes up much territory. Once the dross has been removed, once the egregiously inept and the mediocre have been expunged, what is left is not so much a field as a patch of yard, well-tended and brightened by daffodils and lilies, but a patch of yard all the same. It is a pleasant enough place and I have spent many idle hours reading in its confines. Each of its parts represents a service done to the whole of Hungarian poetry and each addition to its ranks offers reason for hope that the field will continue to grow. Several anthologists have found in it the makings of small, attractive bouquets. But Makkai had decided to take a more inclusive, monumental approach and seems determined to play florist to the literary equivalent of a coronation or, as turns out to be more apt, a state funeral. In his defense I can only suggest that he may have envisioned some source of decent flowers beyond this humble garden nook.

Indiana University, Bloomington

Christof Scheele

## III

The recent appearance of *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* has prompted harsh, though entirely appropriate criticism. The anthology is riddled with flaws and any reader who opened it without being forewarned of its pitfalls would be shocked by the often bizarre twists of phrase contrived by some of the translators. Given the book's shortcomings, it is not surprising if its few merits have perhaps been overlooked. These merits, however, should be mentioned, as they might suggest the possible usefulness of this contribution to the literature in English concerning Hungarian poetry.

Though Makkai proves, as has been noted by Christof Scheele, a meddlesome editor and at best inconsistent translator, he nevertheless has made some inclusions in the anthology that greatly add to its worth. The succinct biographical sketches, which often contain mention of notable works (often prose) that have not been included in the book, offer background information helpful to a reader unfamiliar with Hungarian authors. In addition Makkai includes footnotes, which give fairly generous explanations of allusions to historical figures and events. Many of these footnotes contain fascinating tidbits concerning the significance of certain poems or passages. It is crucial, for example, to note, as Makkai does, that Vörösmarty's *Szózat* ("Appeal"), set to music by Béni Egressy, has become a sort of second national anthem for Hungary. Makkai often points out lines (for example, from Arany's *Toldi*) which have become proverbial in Hungarian. Perhaps the most interesting of Makkai's comments concerns the scene between Adam and the scientist in Madách's *Az ember tragédiája* ("The Tragedy of Man"). He notes that it was largely because of this scene that the play could not be performed under Stalinism in Hungary before 1953 by order of the Communist Party leader Mátyás Rákosi. Such details enable a reader to better understand the significance that many of the poems and passages have acquired.

Makkai has been criticized for including works of less significant Hungarian poets. Such a contention is problematic. It was clearly the editor's goal to provide a representative survey of Hungarian poetry, and one is tempted to say that he succeeded. It is wrong, for example, to cite the inclusion of works by Gyula Reviczky as a shortcoming. His poem in response to Arany's *Kozmopolita költészet* ("Cosmopolitan Poetry") articulates a significant attitude toward the debates concerning the role of the poet in nineteenth-century Hungary. Although the translation included in the anthology is poor, the crucial differences between the attitude expressed by Arany and that of Reviczky are clear. Mihály Tompa is perhaps a poet of no greater stature than Reviczky, yet the translation of his poem *A gólyához* ("To the Stork"), an expression of despair after the defeat of the 1848 revolution, is an excellent contribution to the volume. Moreover, when dealing with the most famous Hungarian poets such as Vörösmarty, Petőfi, or Arany, Makkai has taken care to include works of varying styles. Thus alongside the somber *Szózat* and *Az emberek* ("On Makind") we also find *Petike* ("Young Pete"), a sample of Vörösmarty's impish verve. These remarks, however, should be tempered with the observation that there are no works of Lőrinc Orczy in the anthology, an inexcusable oversight if it was indeed the editor's intention to provide a representative survey.

*In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* is littered with mediocre and even galling translations and Scheele is certainly correct to ask why so few works were included by, for example, Edwin Morgan and George Szirtes and so many by Watson Kirkconnell and Makkai himself. However, the worth of the book should not be too hastily dismissed. Too much has been written about the challenges of translating, and I hesitate to add another comment. Nevertheless, without intending to contest accepted wisdom, I wish to suggest that there are readers of poetry in English translation who are not necessarily looking for fine verse. Certainly there is enough

poetry written in English to last any reader a lifetime. Some readers of translated poetry undertake simply to discern a few of the distinctive features of a different literary tradition. This includes attempting to grasp historical influences which shaped attitudes towards literature and language. For such a reader, *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* will prove, in spite of its shortcomings, a useful book. It is perhaps faint praise, but nevertheless this anthology constitutes an important contribution to the literature available in English on Hungarian poetry.

Indiana University, Bloomington

Thomas E. Cooper

#### IV

Translations are often judged in terms of "faithfulness to the original." Christof Scheele makes an important point by insisting that "the translation of a poem must succeed as a poem in its own right." Such a target-oriented approach implies a radical devaluation of most of the English versions of Hungarian poems published so far.

Unlike Richard Aczel, a distinguished scholar and translator, Thomas E. Cooper, an American who has studied Hungarian history, language, and literature, and Christof Scheele, a young poet who writes verse in both English and Hungarian, I am not a native speaker of the English and Hungarian, so my reading of the anthology edited by Adam Makkai is strictly limited. I cannot judge the quality of the translations; all I can do is to assess the selection.

The high standard Scheele sets makes understandable the claim that in the English translation of Hungarian verse "there is barely enough first-rate work to flesh out a slim volume." Paradoxically, it is thanks to *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'*, the only large-scale anthology of Hungarian verse in English to date, that we can understand why Hungarian poetry is so little known and appreciated in the English-speaking world. In any case, it is possible to make general statements about the relative success and failure of the English translations of Hungarian verse on the basis of this unprecedented collection.

Since the success of a translation depends entirely on its reception in the target culture, the ideal translators would be poet, whose work in the target language is significant. Few, very few of them can read Hungarian, so they have to rely on prose translations. Occasionally this two-stage process has led to readable versions, but a poet unfamiliar with the source culture is no closer to being an ideal translator than a Hungarian who translates from his/her native language into English.

Translation can be regarded as an interlingual activity only if language is taken in a very broad sense, as the embodiment of cultural memory. Most of the existing translations of Hungarian verse have been made with the false assumption that translation was an interlingual activity in a limited sense. Some Hungarians, who claim to have a perfect command of the English language in a practical sense but write poetry neither in English nor in Hungarian, have done more harm than good to the international reputation of Hungarian literature by publishing translations made with good intentions but with no understanding of what poetry is.

While it is undeniably true that no single book can resolve such a crisis, it would be unjust to ignore the merits of an ambitious undertaking such as *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'*. The works of seventy-eight authors are included, and a generous selection represents folk poetry and verse by anonymous writers. I fully agree with Thomas E. Cooper that the suggestion that less could have been more has to be rejected. In an interview published in a daily (*Magyar Hírlap*, 9 August, 1997), Miklós Vajda, the editor of *Modern Hungarian Poetry* (New York:

Columbia University Press, 1977), a highly readable collection of contemporary Hungarian verse based on a rather questionable selection, criticized *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* for including many second- or third-rate poets who "can be important to Hungarian but not to English or American readers". If we take a target-oriented approach to translation, this criticism will seem inappropriate. A reader who is not familiar with the Hungarian language will not care whether Ferenc Faludi (1704–1779) is regarded as a major or minor poet in Hungary; (s)he may find the translation of *Spring* a fine poem. Ideally, the translator of an eighteenth-century Hungarian poem should be familiar with the history of two cultures. Davie could not read Hungarian, but he was not only an English poet but also an outstanding analyst of eighteenth-century English poetry. Accordingly, he could find a style appropriate for a poem composed in the eighteenth century.

To publish translations of contemporary verse is one thing, to present English versions of poems written in the past is quite another. Miklós Vajda, George Gömöri, or George Szirtes, the editors and translators of such collections as *Modern Hungarian Poetry* or the more recent *The Collonade of Teeth* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1996) had a much easier task than Adam Makkai, since they could ignore the historical implications of poetic language. One of the strengths of *In Quest of the 'Miracle Stag'* is that some pieces written in a more distant past and neglected by the Hungarian public prove to be quite successful. Another advantage is that in quite a few cases several translations of the same "original" are presented. This is a practice the compilers of future anthologies of translations should follow.

Literary evaluation is of great complexity. In this respect, too, Makkai's anthology is worthy of attention, insofar as the "official" canon institutionalized in Hungary is neglected. To take one example: *The Sons Changed into Stags* by József Erdélyi (1896–1978) is included, and so the reader can see that *The Boy Changed into a Stag Clamours at the Gate of Secrets*, a longer narrative by Ferenc Juhász (b. 1928) that was praised by W. H. Auden and others, may have been inspired by a much earlier text.

Adam Makkai has lived in the United States since 1956. His selection is based at least partly on the knowledge he acquired at school and at home in the early 1950s, and his value judgments are made from the perspective of a professor of linguistics who is also a Hungarian poet living in Chicago. It is a matter of course that his selection is as biased as the long essay by László Cs. Szabó (1905–1984), who went into exile in 1949. This outline of Hungarian poetry contains much useful information, although it is not free of questionable statements. Imre Madách (1823–1864) was not "imprisoned for his participation in the 1848–1849 Hungarian War of Independence" and cannot be called a "contemporary" of Gyula Juhász (1883–1937). Some of the errors may be ascribed to the printer rather than to the author, but this is hardly true of the parallels drawn with other literatures, which sometimes are more fanciful than convincing. To mention but one example, it is difficult to see why Cs. Szabó compares the lyric poet János Vajda (1827–1897) to Meredith and Turgenev. The essayist tries hard to find the closest affinities of the style of Hungarian poets but his comparisons are rarely helpful and reveal that he was out of touch with the results of literary historiography.

Cs. Szabó fails to recognize the significance of the late poetry of Kosztolányi and Makkai does not include the most significant poetic achievement of the Hungarian avant-garde, Kassák's *The Horse Dies and the Birds Fly Away*, Kosztolányi's greatest lyric, *A Song upon Nothing*, and two of the most widely discussed pieces of Hungarian literature: *Consciousness* by Attila József and *Apocrypha* by János Pilinszky. János Arany is represented by fewer poems than István Vas, and other examples could also be cited to suggest that the value judgments underlying this anthology may be somewhat conservative. This may be a characteristic feature of all anthologies edited by authors who spent most of their lives outside Hungary. Even Gömöri and

Szirtes have done less than full justice to the more innovative aspects of Hungarian poetry by excluding both the avant-garde and postmodernism, not to mention strikingly original poems by Lőrinc Szabó, Attila József, and Sándor Weöres. Of course, all value judgments are of historical nature, and I am aware that my taste will also be called outdated by future generations. A collection that provokes readers and translators may inspire others to follow suit and publish more Hungarian verse in English translation. This is an achievement no reader of poetry can ignore.

*Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest*

*Mihály Szegedy-Maszák*

## DER LITERATURGESCHICHTLICHE FAHRPLAN

1996 erschien im Kirsten Gutke Verlag, Köln–Argumentum Verlag, Budapest die durchweg zweisprachig aufgemachte Antologie: „újabb magyar költészet“, „neuere ungarische Lyrik“. 350 Seiten, es sind die Arbeiten von 29 Dichtern zu lesen, mit Ausnahme András Ferenc Kovács', eine längere Arbeit von ihm, sind sie alle mit drei bis neuen Gedichten repräsentiert. Danksagung aller, Vorwort der Verlegerin Kristen Guthe und der Redakteurin Sivia Loskamp, Nachwort des Herausgebers Paul Karpati, biographische Notizen. Viel Arbeit muß gelobt werden, es ist ein unternehmerisches Wagnis gemacht worden. An all das ist hoher Anspruch zu erkennen, wie es der Herausgeber im Nachwort schreibt, zu „präsentieren“. Am Anfang zeugt das Vorwort von Naivität und Inkompetenz.

Seine Verfasserinnen Frau Gutke und Frau Loskamp können die ungarische Literaturgeschichte nicht (gut) kennen, sie wissen nicht, daß die Innovation in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts in der Literaturzeitschrift „Nyugat“ (erschieden von 1908–1941) ausgetragen wurde, deren Name: „Westen“ – man erinnert sich an Adys programmatisches Gedicht „Góg és Magóg fia vagyok én“ aus 1905 – einen Anspruch zeichnet, den des Anschlusses der ungarischen Literatur an die westliche und nicht den einer Vorreiterrolle im internationalen Kontext. („Nyugat“ und sein Kreis, Reclam Leipzig, 1989.) Unbekannt muß ihnen die Vorreiterrolle Lajos Kassáks geblieben sein, obwohl er im deutschsprachigen Raum in den seinerzeit einschlägigen Literaturzeitschriften wie „der Sturm“ veröffentlichte, und nicht zuletzt, wie allein er dabei war, der stärkste Vertreter der Ismenbewegungen in Ungarn zu sein. Eine Anthologie seines Werks in deutscher Sprache ist im Corvina Verlag erschienen. (Corvina, Budapest 1989.) Voraussetzungen also, daß ein Literat des ungarischen Sprachraums „in den literarischen Kanon anderer Kulturkreise“ aufgenommen werde, gab es aus Gründen des eigenen Selbstverständnisses kaum. „... – natürlich, Helsingfors liegt weit von Paris entfernt; nach dem literaturgeschichtlichen Fahrplan kommt Victor Hugo erst jetzt dort an.“ So schreibt Ignotus 1908 über eine in Budapest gastierende finnische Theatergruppe; Er spricht von Ungarn. (Nyugat und sein Kreis S. 31.) Die ungarische Lyrik seit 1945, so die biographische Zäsur, den der Herausgeber, im Wissen um die Anfechtbarkeit eines solchen Generationsprinzips, er selbst sagt es, gezogen hat. Das Nachwort nimmt sich wie eine Rechtfertigung aus, und bezieht sich kaum auf das Vorwort – wo ein gewisser international relevanter innovativer Geist durch die Blume heraufbeschworen worden war. Paul Karpatis Lese- und Übersetzungskonzeption liegt ein metaphysisches Textverständnis der Moderne zugrunde. „Das Wesentliche“ and den Texten soll auch im deutschen „faßbar“ gemacht werden, „Substanz des Gedichts“ usw. Vorwort und Nachwort widersprechen einander. Karpati, selbst Ost-berliner, wendet sich an einen Rest DDR-Leser, sucht sich zu verbrüderern mit einer gemeinsamen Vergangenheit. Mangels Kenntnisse der evolutionären Bedigungen ungarischer Lyrik, der Samisdatszene seit 1945, der Spra-

che selbst und der einseitigen Zusammenarbeit mit Paul Karpati versäumt die von der Landesbank Berlin und dem Kulturfond Ungarns (Nemzeti Kulturális Alap) finanziell unterstützte Anthologie, ihre Möglichkeiten zu nutzen; die Herausgeberin kann mit dem Buch keine international relevanten Impulse anbieten. Keine Spur von Spuren der Postmoderne. Keine Spur, die aus diesem Gedankenkomplex richtungsweisend für irgendeine Lyrik aufbrechen würde, keine Dekonstruktion, keine rein assoziativ-dynamischen, statt zentrierten Bilderverkettungen usw. Es bleibt der Nachholbedarf an Modernität nach 1945, die der Herausgeber mit seiner Arbeit durchaus gelugen befriedigt. Der Zug kommt also pünktlich, aber wieder nach dem alten literaturgeschichtlichen Fahrplan nach Ungarn. Vermissen werden können jene Verfasser aus der Anthologie „Ver(s)ziók“ (Magvető, Budapest 1982), die ausfällig neue Wege suchten, wenn sie dabei die 20er Jahre, die Anfänge der Moderne im 20. Jahrhundert zum Ausgang wählten, besonders die Autoren, die dabei strukturelle Zersplitterung, Auflösung, Dezentralisation im Auge hatten, dafür wurden Zsófia Balla, Béla Cselényi, Béla Markó, Gáspár Nagy, Parti Nagy Lajos, Tibor Zalán berücksichtigt, allerdings andere Texte, die eine formal-inhaltliche Rückbesinnung auf eine abgekühlte Moderne erkennen lassen, nicht unbedingt der Verfasser, die Entstehungszeit der in die „Neue ungarische Lyrik“ aufgenommen lyrischen Arbeiten wurden nicht angegeben, aber die des Herausgebers. Diese Tendenz bestätigt die Auswahl, die aus dem leider abgeschlossenen Oeuvre der 1982 verstorbenen Judit Pinczési getroffen worden ist. Aus ihren vier Gedichtbänden wählte Paul Karpati drei Texte, die im Gegensatz zu ihrem Beitrag in Ver(s)ziók, ihre Welt ist der des populärsurrealistischen László Nagy verwandt, die Extase meidend um Zentrierung bemüht sind. So ist „ob“ so sehr modern-konventionell, als wäre der Text von einer anderen Verfasserin. Als wollte Paul Karpati klarstellen, sie könne auch anders. Weiter bezogen auf die Ver(s)ziók genannte Anthologie konnte sich János Sziveri (er)halten, und Gáspár Nagys „Brunnen“ bzw. Béla Markós „Deutung des Augenblicks“ ist sogar in beiden aufgenommen worden; gehörte letzterer schon in Ver(s)ziók zu denen, die weniger auf der Suche waren, wie auch von den drei Gedichten, die in Ver(s)ziók von Gáspár Nagy vertreten sind, „Brunnen“ am abgekühltesten modern ist. Ebenso vermissen werden kann Jenő Balaskó, der bis 1985 überhaupt nicht erscheinen *durfte*, und mit dem Band „Mini Ciklon“ (Magvető, Budapest 1985), für den er den Örley-Preis des ungarischen Schriftstellerverbandes erhielt, eine nicht nur bezogen auf die ungarische Lyrik progressive Arbeit vorgelegt hatte, um nicht den derzeit verschlissenen Begriff der Avantgarde zu strapazieren, und der den schwächeren Band „Ilyen éjszakát hagyatok“ (Kráter, Budapest 1990) mit der Unterstützung der Soros-Fondation folgen ließ. Dichter aus der Anthologie der 21köpfigen progressiven Künstlergruppe „Lélegzet“ (Magvető, Budapest 1985) wurden nicht mit berücksichtigt. Dabei ist Paul Karpati keineswegs Unkenntnis oder Willkür vorzuhalten. Jede Anthologie ist gewissermaßen willkürlich. Nur, daß er nach einem verfallenen Fahrplan die Literaturgeschichte fahren läßt. Statt dem deutschsprachigen Leser Einblick in die bewegliche, progressive Lyrikerszene, in die Arbeiten ungemütlicher, beunruhigender ungarischer Lyriker zu verschaffen, wird ihm die abgekühlte Moderne nach 1945 vorgesetzt, die kennt er, die wurde ihm ja nicht vorenthalten. Statt das Publikum zu überschätzen und es so (heraus)zufordern, wurde es unterschätzt, um es so lieb zu gewinnen.

Eine gewisse Einseitigkeit spiegelt die Bilanz der Übersetzungsarbeiten. Von insgesamt 113 Gedichten sorgte Paul Karpati für die deutsche Fassung von 45, von weiteren zwei in Zusammenarbeit mit Heinz Kahlau. Die verbliebenen 68 Texte wurden unter 21 Übersetzern wie folgt aufgeteilt: Christian Polzin zehn Gedichte, Hans-Hennig Paetzke neun, Irene Rübberdt neun, Annemarie Bostroem sieben, Valerie Koch sechs, Kathrin Schmidt vier – alle anderen ein Gedicht oder zwei. Unter diesen anderen: Zsuzsanna Gahse (Schriftstellerin, Residenz Verlag), unter Mitarbeit von János Ritoók, Franz Hodjak (Lyriker, Suhrkamp Verlag), Hans



Skirecki, der sonst vielleicht meistbeschäftigte Übersetzer ungarischer Prosa, Franz Fühmann und Heinz Kahlau, die wie Annemarie Bostroem und noch andere mehr an der Anthologie „Nyugat und sein Kreis“ bereits zusammengearbeitet haben. Paul Karpati steckt sie alle in die Tasche. Wenn man dann die Ergebnisse seiner Arbeiten durchgeht, kränken sie oft an Ästhetizismus und an der deplazierten Auswahl der Worte („gülden“ statt golden). Diese Kuckuckseier haben Methode. Ich erinnere daran, im Nachwort heißt es, es sollte „das Wesentliche“ an den Gedichten „faßbar gemacht“ werden. Wäre da nicht eine parallele Prosaübersetzung angebracht gewesen? Paul Karpati hat erstens ignoriert, daß die ungarische Lyrik speziell nach 1945 die Nähe zur Alltagssprache sucht und dabei Ästhetizismus bzw. Zitathaftigkeit vermeiden möchte, während doch eine Kunstsprache gesucht wird. Eine Gratwanderung, der er nicht gerecht werden konnte. „... Ülök szobám földjén“ ist durch das Fehlen des Artikels literarisiert, genauer anekdotisiert worden, dagegen hat Paul Karpati den Text mit der Übersetzung: „... sitz ich auf dem Lehm Boden meiner Stube“ (*Stube!*) antikviert (Károly Bari: Gebrabbel S. 40). Zahlreiche andere Beispiele (Tod mich ereilt, Haupt) lassen sich anführen. Zweitens, wie der Hof der gewählten Worte im Original nicht genügend beachtet wurde, so wurde auch der Duktus der Urtexte zu oft nur hingebogen, z.T. scheitern ganze Passagen bei dem Versuch, ihn aufzurichten. Dabei ist er gerade ein wesentliches Merkmal der ungarischen Sprache, die durch den Wechsel von dunklen und hellen, langen und kurzen Vokalen rhythmisch zu atmen vermag, durch den Sprachduktus „das Wesentliche“ (den Sinn?) zu verstärken, zu begleiten usw. Einen Moment einer Extase des singenden Alltagsschamanen erhascht der Leser der Nachdichtungen leider zu wenig, weniger als ihm das Original ermöglichte. Auch Annemarie Bostroem kümmert sich nicht um den Hof eines Wortes, sie benutzt die nötige Alltagssprache, aber nicht dem Original angemessen. Es gibt nicht viele gute ÜbersetzerInnen aus dem Ungarischen, hier waren die Mitbesten an der Arbeit. Es verärgert erst recht, wenn immer wieder Ungereimtheiten ins Auge fallen, und ich frage nach dem Auge Paul Karpatis. Wie konnte er das durchgehen lassen? Und schließlich, warum sonst gibt es die vielen Formspengungen in der Lyrik einer jeden Sprachgemeinschaft, wenn nicht um in diesem Fall der deutschen Sprache ungarisch beibringen zu können?

## The Kiss: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Hungarian Short Stories

Selected by István Bart

Budapest: Corvina Books, 1993. Fourth Printing, 1998.

*20<sup>th</sup> Century Hungarian Short Stories* is a splendid book for readers who, like myself, must depend for any knowledge of Hungarian literature they have, or would like to have, on English translations. As a member of that target audience for whom the anthology is, presumably, primarily intended, I obviously cannot comment on it as an Hungarian specialist might. My own naive responses to the stories, as I read them, are those of an American who is a Professor of English and American Literature. My brief review is therefore less a critical evaluation of the literary merits of the stories, or even the merits of the translations, than an account of what happens in the reading process when a reader like myself reads what is in front of him or her on the page.

But let it be said at the outset that this collection, comprised of thirty-one stories by thirty-one leading Hungarian writers, from Endre Ady to Péter Esterházy, does yeoman work in making available a wide range of stories from throughout the century. Written in a broad spectrum of styles and narrative techniques, they generally read very well, making me feel that I am in good hands as I move from translation to translation. At times, however, I find myself wondering what sort of Hungarian expression, unknown to me, lies behind the English text. Given my very limited knowledge of Hungarian social and cultural history, I tend naively to draw upon a social or cultural linguistic context with which I am familiar. But in doing so I can find myself wondering what in the Hungarian original might have driven the translator to adopt the kind of language he or she has.

The initial story, and title story of the volume, Endre Ady's "The Kiss," a highly stylized story by an author completely new to me, is a good case in point of what can go on during the reading process. The dates of composition and publication of "The Kiss" are not supplied but from the biographical sketch at the end of the book – useful brief accounts of the life and works of each of the thirty-one writers are provided – one finds that Ady's dates are 1877 to 1919. Reading "The Kiss," I convert it into an Edwardian period piece, although at times it seems to me I am reading second-rate Poe, perhaps filtered through *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. This parochial response of mine may be quite unfair to Ady, and to his translator. But when, for example, in the second paragraph I read that Rozália Mihályi "was an insignificant lass of the theatre while she lived," I assume that the Hungarian original presented the translator with something equivalently peculiar to catch an "Edwardian" note. A page later one encounters some "period piece" expression in Marcella Kun's outcry,

Would it satisfy you, Sir, to ravish me, body and soul, and hear me call you a rogue? Would you have such a plundered success, such a loveless love? Well, would you? (8)

This sounds rather like *kitsch*, if not a parody of *kitsch*, which I fear it isn't. It would be difficult enough for me to accept such diction in a twentieth-century English or American short story, but when I find myself reading it in the form of a translation from the Hungarian, a language which bears not the slightest resemblance to English, I become even more painfully conscious of the dated melodramatic quality of the English. As English "dubbing" of Hungarian dialogue, it thus sounds, in my ears, even more embarrassing than it otherwise might. That "foreigners" should be made to mouth such English does make me wonder what Ady sounds like in Hungarian. I suspect that, working within Hungarian stylistic traditions with which I am necessarily unfamiliar, he simply cannot be "Englished" without his threatening sometimes to sound as if he were writing *kitsch*.

At other times one stumbles over the odd phrase which causes one to ponder what sort of technical term the English is doing duty for, as when the narrator remarks, "the gentlemen of the theatrical board liked their chorus girls to be gay" (p. 7). I am not all sure what a theatrical board is, much less its Hungarian equivalent, but the theatrical collocation "to troop the boards" from somewhere in the wings totally inappropriately calls out. And as soon as the talk is of "chorus girls" I, in my provincial fashion, think of Broadway of the 1930s and vintage *New Yorker* cartoons and old Hollywood musicals. It may very well be that "chorus girls" is a precise, entirely accurate translation. That there might be such a thing as an Hungarian chorus girl is a proposition I am not unwilling to accept, even if it does not match up with any of my limited range of stereotypical images of "Hungarians". Hungarian chorus girls must therefore in my reading process first shed all sorts of inappropriate non-Hungarian contexts which, without my willing them to do so, and certainly no fault of Ady or his translator much less Hungarian chorus girls, invade my reading consciousness.

Reading the anthology I sometimes find myself in something of a no man's land, between "my" Anglo-American "English" world, summoned up whether I like it or not by immediate stock responses to the language formulations of the translated text, and the Hungarian world which the English text is standing in for. This peculiar in-between world in which I find myself, a world in which theatrical boards exist, and in which Hungarian chorus girls traipse about, is not my familiar socio-linguistic world. Native English speakers with some Hungarian at their command, and who *know* their Hungary and Hungarians, will be able to compare the original text and the English rendering, and thereby gain a particularly acute linguistic and literary sense of the text being translated. Working back from a translation to the original – as Fritz Zenn, the world's most eminent Joycean, has often pointed out with regard to translations of Joyce – can be a marvelous way of acquiring a more penetrating knowledge of the literary work in the original. But readers like myself of *20<sup>th</sup> Century Hungarian Short Stories* are left a bit hanging in the air at times. The remedy is obvious: learn some Hungarian, learn more about Hungary. If that is one of the things this admirable anthology impels a reader to do, it will serve an additional worthy purpose.

Another kind of problem emerges for me in reading the opening paragraph of Sándor Bródy's delightfully whimsical story "The Chicken and the Woman":

Once upon a time, there was a parrot who owned a woman. The bird was well-satisfied with her; she provided food and drink regularly and did not torment him by trying to make him learn useless words. He'd known three, anyhow, ever since his fledgling days. One was an uncomplimentary definition of a female, beginning with a *wh* and ending with *e*; the other two were magic: "Give me money!"

This, the second story the reader encounters in the anthology, is no doubt in Hungarian as different stylistically and tonally from "The Kiss" as it is in English, and one cannot help but feel that its translators, Zsuzsanna Horn and Paul Tabori, were more fortunate than Judith Szöllösy in being able to render their text playfully and wittily (as in the locution "fledgling days"). The adoption of the English fairy tale formula "Once upon a time" is good for starters, and the first sentence is a sure winner. The rest of the paragraph sustains tone and manner wonderfully well, and one is eager to read on. But if this is a story about a parrot and a woman, why the title "The Chicken and a Woman"? Read on and find out.

But wait a moment. The parrot knew three words. The first we have figured out, the uncomplimentary term for a woman beginning with a *wh* and ending *e*. And the next two we have already been told, "Give me money!" What's going on here? Is Bródy pulling a fast one on his readers, is this some sort of postmodern puddle we are stepping into? Will this numerical confusion become part of a discombobulated fictive world he is slyly summoning into existence? Or is the translator, faced with a linguistic dilemma of how to render two Hungarian words, which can be rendered in English only with three words, being literally faithful to the text on the one hand while making it literally preposterous on the other? One reads on in part to find out.

The closer one approaches the postmodern, and the end of the century, the more idiomatic the stories tend to sound to me. Take, for example, the opening paragraph of Mihály Kornis's "Father Wins":

imagine I'm dead rejoice anarchy may set in and the whole thing started by me going to the Corvin to buy a cuisinart since I have said for the longest time that we ought to have a cuisinart and I am always shushed saying don't talk you don't have the vaguest idea about it it would be wonderful to be able to dice potatoes and make coffee in it at the same time and besides I saw one over at Mrs. Zengő it had a red base and it's East German and you will kiss my hand in gratitude and Mrs. Sas said I should go in and not worry I will have one because she adores me I always tell her that she is an enchanting slender elegant lady and this makes her swoon and do anything for me albeit her eyes are hyperthyroid and almost fall out and I occasionally feel like pushing them back in anyway

Whereas Bródy's used the "Once upon a time" at the outset of his story playfully to establish a formal narrative story-telling mode, Kornis's garrulous first-person narrator bursts forth in oral monologue, in which the formula "the whole thing started by" pops up momentarily to signal that a story is starting. What "the whole thing" was or is we don't know, nor do we know what started it, but that's what we are about to hear. In the meantime, "I have said for the longest time," an adept use of the American English locution "for the longest time," helps clearly to establish an authentic "narrative speaker" voice. Who else would say "I am always shushed". It is almost something of a surprise to discover that the narrator is a Hungarian.

The monologue's being "dubbed" into idiomatic, non-stop colloquial English, unpunctuated on the page, is, however, in its fashion no less a stylization than the sort of prose we encounter in Ady's "The Kiss," from earlier in the century. No one really talks like Kornis's monologist does; but ever since Molly Bloom's nonstop internal monologue in Joyce's *Ulysses* we have become accustomed to such bravura performances and the pleasures they can afford. The

“natural” quality of English, and presumably the Hungarian, pushed paratactically forever on by “ands” and syntactically roughshod, is itself a literary convention, a game we as readers enter along with the author and, in this instance, the translator. My favorite single word-ploy in the passage is the turning-on-a-dime stylistic flourish “albeit,” which the dubbed monologist, thanks to the translator Thomas J. DeKornfeld, deploys with such self-conscious panache. What, I wonder, is “albeit” in Hungarian? And does it have the same stylistic ring to it that “my” albeit does? My linguistic chauvinism almost forces me to argue that Hungarian simply can’t have something that “right” for albeit as albeit, albeit I may be wrong.

But “my English” sometimes oddly enters into the text, oddly rubbing shoulders with what for me is puzzlingly “foreign.” I do not know what “the Corvin” is but I do know what “a cuisinart” is, and having to go to the Corvin to get one is a venture which sounds whimsically comic. That before too long in the passage the cuisinart turns out to be an East German cuisinart, if Mrs. Zengő is anyone to go by, heightens the comic, and satiric, tone of the proceedings. That I am reading an English transmogrification of Kornis’s Hungarian going on about an East German cuisinart (an artificial “English” word derived from the French cuisine) down at the Corvin makes the whole linguistic-cultural mix, for me as reader, yet more satisfyingly comic and satiric. One may always, inevitably, “lose” something in translation. But, in a curious fashion, one may also gain something as well.

My favorite “too good to be true as translation” locution enters the text in the form of a knuckle sandwich midway through the third paragraph: “... I just said goldie watch your language or I will give you a knuckle sandwich perhaps you have an East German cuisinart NO and there won’t be one...” I would gladly read a short story just for an albeit and a knuckle sandwich, with or without an East German cuisinart at the Corvin to help me make it. Can there be anything as good as a knuckle sandwich in Hungarian?

The “Once upon a time” formula Kornis employs is also made use of by Paula Baló and Martha Cowan in their translation of Péter Esterházy’s “The Miraculous Life of Prince Bluebeard.” Esterházy, born in 1950, and Kornis, born a year earlier, carry on into postmodern terrain the avant-garde tradition of their “Once upon a time” predecessor Sándor Bródy (1863–1924). Esterházy’s prose, rendered in English, fuses the fairytale mode wittily employed by Bródy and Kornis’s rampaging oral monologue mode:

Once upon a time, east of sodomy but west of oral copulation, out where the short-tailed piggy and kinky-tailed bluebeard rooted, there once lived an East-, or rather East-Central-European Bluebeard, a *tzentrall-yurop-blaubart*. And he lived happily ever after until he died. I could say a few things about this.

DeKornfeld’s translation speeds up the fairytale mode by going from “Once upon a time” to “he lived happily after until he died” in two sentences. Its “east of sodomy” also echoes the biblical “east of Eden” (not Sodom or Gormorrah), while “out where the short-tailed piggy and the kinky-tailed bluebeard rooted” amusingly echoes American western tale lingo. The “I could say a few things about that” tag signals the formal commencement of a narrative. As the story progresses, one finds that each of its twenty-six subsections ends with some variation on the initial “I could say a few things about that” formula, “There isn’t much to add to this” ending the second, “Well, I could certainly add to this” the third, “There is nothing left to say, really, about this” the fourth, and so on. Esterházy’s easy command of registers, voices, and styles throughout “The Miraculous Life of Prince Bluebeard” is, one may forget while reading, as much an achievement of the author as the translator.

In touching upon but four stories in this brief review I have had to neglect the remaining twenty-seven: to provide a bare listing of all authors and titles would have been no fairer to authors and translators whose work I have not discussed. What I have tried to convey is something of what it is like for a reader like myself, without Hungarian, to plunge into reading the stories on offer. Virtually all thirty-one I read with great pleasure – “The Kiss” despite some cavils of mine is a very intriguing piece and I felt it could not be neglected as it is the title story of the volume and the first story in it. Corvina Books, which also has produced a very attractively designed and printed volume, is to be congratulated, as are all the translators involved, in having done so much to make the 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian short story in all its diversity, and with all the pleasures it has to offer, available to Anglophone readers.

*Bonn University, Bonn*

*Frank J. Kearful*

---

László Kósa (ed.)  
**A Cultural History of Hungary**  
Translated by Tünde Vajda  
Budapest: Corvina Books/Osiris Kiadó, 1999.

A translation of the first part of the 1998 *Magyar művelődéstörténet*, the book under review, is the only cultural history of the Hungarians available in the English language. Indeed, it is the only such work in Hungarian since the book of the same title published under the editorship of Sándor Domanovszky between 1939 and 1942. Consequently, this new cultural history is an invaluable source for anyone interested in Central Europe before the nineteenth century.

One great strength of the book is the breadth of the Hungarian term *művelődéstörténet*. While the English term *culture* connotes shared attitudes or ideas, the Hungarian term *művelődéstörténet* seems to include anything not covered in a traditional political history. Unfortunately, the five authors whose essays compose this collaborative work do not seem to agree at all on the material to be covered or on the style in which it should be presented. In fact, a cultural history of the entire period written from any of the authors' points of view would be quite interesting. Taken in succession, however, these essays too often leave the reader wondering what each author might have included in one of the sections that author did not write.

The first section, by *István Fodor*, deals with the period through the occupation of the Carpathian Basin. Based on archaeology and linguistics, the author presents chronologically the movement and technological development of the people who spoke the ancestors of the Hungarian language. While this section begins with the caveat that "establishing the ethnicity of the dwellers of a particular ancient settlement or identifying the tongue they spoke pose serious problems," too often the author seems to equate language and ethnicity and to identify them with a particular archaeological complex. While this is justified with relation to the remains of the Conquest period, the unwary reader will take as settled the idea that the relics of the neolithic Gorbunovo culture were produced by speakers of a common Finno-Ugrian language who were the genetic ancestors of contemporary Hungarians. Nonetheless, the author does do an admirable job of stressing the cultural influence of neighbouring peoples at every stage of development. He also emphasizes the heterogeneous ethnicity of the people who entered the Carpathian Basin at the end of the ninth century, especially noting their strong Turkic element. It is unfortunate that this sort of intermixing is only discussed with regard to the period just before the *honfoglalás*.

The second section, by *István Bóna*, is entitled "The Hungarians and Europe in the Tenth Century." As the title indicates, this section deals not so much with developments within the lands controlled by the recently-arrived Magyars, but rather with their relations with other parts of Europe. After a short section dealing with the Conquest itself and with the peoples encountered in the newly-occupied lands, the author devotes a section to Italy, one to "Gaul

and beyond," one to the Byzantine Empire, and finally a somewhat longer one to the Germans. This section is a wonderful introduction to the period of the raids and to the roots of mediaeval Hungarian foreign affairs. It is a bit difficult to see how certain parts of this section are to be distinguished from political, rather than cultural, history, but it is a welcome addition to the small amount of material available in English on the raiding period. It would also have been nice for the editors to include an essay on the internal cultural development of Hungary in the tenth century – an era that saw the beginning of the most far-reaching societal changes in Hungarian history.

The period from the reign of Saint Stephen to the Ottoman conquest is covered by *Iván Bertényi*. The author divides the subject into thematic sections dealing with matters as diverse as roads, clothing, games, chivalric culture, and the doctrine of the Holy Crown. Each section contains a wealth of detail based on written records and archaeology. This material would be of interest to any student of mediaeval European culture even outside of Hungary. Unfortunately, the reader unacquainted with the Hungarian sources will occasionally be confused as to the chronological placement of a particular reference within the five centuries covered by this section. This could easily have been remedied by reference to a footnote except for the disastrous editorial decision to include no notes in the entire volume. This essay does also include the one instance of the sort of boosterism often found in older national histories, but that most contemporary scholar might find a bit embarrassing. When the author, in discussing the sculptural works of the fourteenth-century Kolozsvári brothers, declares that "It would be high time to declare that in sculpture, just as in the foundation of the first secular order of knighthood, the Hungarian Kingdom was at the lead in contemporary Europe," it is hard to disagree with the facts, especially as based on one of the volumes lovely black-and-white illustrations. One only wishes he had expressed them in a less vehement style. Similarly discomfiting is the discussion of the doctrine of the Holy Crown, which seems to project the attitudes of a later age back into the eleventh century and never discusses the questionable provenance of the actual crown itself.

The final two sections, on the early modern age, are possibly the most satisfying of the book. This is due mostly to the fact that it has been divided between an essay of *István György Tóth*, dealing with material culture and such practical topics as medicine and literacy, and an essay of *István Bitskey*, dealing with such aspects of "spiritual life" as religion, literature, and courtly culture. The former, in particular, is nicely divided into large sections on man and nature, lifestyle and mentality, sickness and cures, and the advance of literacy. Both of these essays, moreover, make it absolutely clear at all times when the particular event discussed occurred. The only thing further that one might wish in these sections, as in the previous section on the mediaeval period, is more of the comparative aspect. This comparison would be most welcome concerning the non-Hungarian inhabitants of the Kingdom of Hungary. While the volume is impeccably translated, striking an admirable balance between scholarly style and idiomatic language where required, the choice of title in English is somewhat unfortunate. This is not a cultural history of Hungary, which would imply a history of the cultural developments that occurred in Hungary, regardless of the ethnicity of the participants. It is however, a perfectly admirable Hungarian cultural history, as its title in the original states.

Once again, the lack of notes in the volume under review is a serious drawback. The discussions are far too detailed to give to readers below the undergraduate level, but it is hoped that any college student would be accorded the convenience of notes so that he could research further, verify the author's statement, or resolve any confusion he might have as to chronology or source. That said, this is a uniquely comprehensive cultural history and should be on the



---

syllabus of any course dealing with the history of Hungary or with the history of Central Europe before the nineteenth century. More advanced scholars will also find it a valuable reference both because of its lucid discussions of a wide range of topics and because of the brief but current bibliographies at the end of each section.

*Indiana University, Bloomington*

*James T. Wilson*

Gábor Tolcsvai-Nagy  
**A magyar nyelv stilisztikája [Hungarian Stylistics]**  
 Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 1996.

In *A magyar nyelv stilisztikája* [Hungarian Stylistics], Gábor Tolcsvai-Nagy updates a long-time standard *A magyar stilisztika vázlatja* [Sketch of Hungarian Stylistics], originally published in 1958 and continually reprinted. However, the two works are quite different both in approach and in scope. Fábíán et al. (1958) takes a bottom-up approach, building stylistics from the constituent parts of language (phonetics, lexicon, grammar). This is a “functional stylistics” (Tolcsvai-Nagy’s term), where an author has particular goals and chooses various linguistic elements to perform these functions. Thus, Fábíán et al. devote the bulk of their discussion to the enumeration and exemplification of the items in the Hungarian stylistic toolkit.

Tolcsvai-Nagy, on the other hand, takes a diametrically opposed approach, building top-down from the level of the text itself. “[A] stílus elsősorban a szöveg része, a beszélő annak részeként működteti, és a hallgató annak részeként érti meg valamiképpen.” (108–109) Language, rather than consisting of a pre-determined toolkit, is,

egyén, közösség, egyéni tudás és cselekvés, valamint közösségi hagyománymondás közötti viszonyban folyamatosan konstituálódó szemiotikai rendszer, amely a múltbeli példák alapján különböző módon és mértékben férhető hozzá az egyének számára, s amelyet különböző módon és mértékben állandósíthat és/vagy módosíthat nyelvi megnyilatkozásaival (hozzájárulásaival) az egyén. (32)

Given these perspectives, a different (non-grammatical) basis must be selected for the identification of stylistic categories. Since Tolcsvai-Nagy locates the speaker and hearer in the text, he is able to identify the following cognitive bases for stylistic structure: “feltűnőség – semlegesség, dominancia – kiegyensúlyozottság – hiány, azonosság – ellentét, egyszerűség – összetettség, linearitás – hierarchizáltság.” (112)

Using these cognitive bases, Tolcsvai-Nagy identifies the following three major stylistic categories: “szociokulturális változók,” “a nyelvi tartományok stíluslehetőségei,” and “a stílus szerkezeti lehetőségei.” (134) Each of these categories contains subcategories, which can be used to characterize style: “szociokulturális változók” involve “magatartás, helyzet, érték, idő, hagyományozott nyelvváltozatok;” “a nyelvi tartományok stíluslehetőségei” involve (using relatively uncharged linguistic terminology) “hangzás, szó, szótár, mondat, jelentés,” and “a stílus szerkezeti lehetőségei” involve “szövegszerkezeti stílusjellemzők, módosított alakzatrendszer.” (134) These categories are quite persuasive, but the reader is left wondering whether others could also be found (a problem inherent to taxonomies). Certainly, Tolcsvai-

Nagy allows for complex interactions among subcategories, covering aspects of intertextuality, differing effects on readers with differing knowledge, and so on.

Since the 1958 stylistics manual focused so heavily on linguistic resources to be deployed for stylistic effect, a somewhat closer comparison is warranted with respect to this category, Tolcsvai-Nagy's second major category. The 1958 *Sketch* utilizes a traditional grammatical framework for dividing and carefully exemplifying the various stylistic tools. The present work acknowledges the strong influence of Noam Chomsky on linguistics, but takes a strong cognitive stance opposed to the concept of the modularity of linguistic systems. Nevertheless, the linguistic possibilities are divided into areas based on more or less the same principle – with some seepage. For example, symbols and metaphors are included under “meaning.” A strength of the current work is that it includes a section on intonation. However, none of these sections is the exhaustive catalogue that could be found in the previous work, a statement that can be generalized for the sociocultural and structural sections as well. Perhaps this is not a detriment, however. Readers in search of a catalogue may refer to the 1958 book, or to such works as Mrs. Zoltán Zsuffa's *Gyakorlati magyar nyelvtan* [Practical Hungarian Grammar], 1993 (2nd ed. 1994), which contains an extensive stylistic section.

Thus, overall, Tolcsvai-Nagy's *Stylistics* offers a serious treatment of the theoretical issues involved in approaching the concept of stylistics, together with an outline of what aspects should be included in such study. It certainly is not a handbook of stylistic tools, which could be used by a writer or analyst, but other works (Fábián et al. 1958, Zsuffa 1993, as well as various works exemplifying terms from Greek rhetoric) fill this gap nicely. However, a more serious gap in the present volume is found in its neglect of the concept of genre. Certainly, a static, structural approach to genre would be inappropriate here, but given Tolcsvai-Nagy's definition of language above (p. 32 in his book), genres that are continually instantiated and recreated through practice would fit into the system quite naturally. More fundamentally, one wonders whether a *performance*-based stylistics might be more appropriate to Tolcsvai-Nagy's approach than a *text*-based stylistics. The following definition of performance will help to clarify this point.

Fundamentally, performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence. This competence rests on the knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways. Performance involves on the part of the performer an assumption of accountability to an audience for the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content. From the point of view of the audience, the act of expression on the part of the performer is thus marked as subject to evaluation for the way it is done, for the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer's display of competence. Additionally, it is marked as available for the enhancement of experience, through the present enjoyment of the intrinsic qualities of the act of expression itself. Performance thus calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression and gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and the performer with special intensity. (Bauman 1977: 11)

It is not difficult to see how this definition, when extended to include written performance, is consonant with Tolcsvai-Nagy's approach. In the present volume, Tolcsvai-Nagy has already surveyed and synthesized findings from a staggering array of literary, linguistic and other fields, from Western European, American and Hungarian sources, drawing a wide range of insights and motivating delimitations for the concept and field of stylistics. His resultant cognitive and text-based groundings are certainly useful. However, the current reviewer would recommend a grounding in the interdisciplinary area of performance studies (cf. Bauman & Briggs 1990/1997 for a survey), particularly if the work is translated into English.

### References

- Bauman, Richard. (1977). *Verbal Art as Performance*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Bauman, Richard–Charles Briggs. (1990). "Poetics and performance as critical perspectives on language and social life." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, pp. 59–88. [Reprinted in Sawyer, R. Keith (ed.). (1997). *Creativity in Performance*. Greenwich, CT: Ablex Publishing Corporation, pp. 227–264.]
- Fábián, Pál–István Szathmári–Ferenc Terstyéni. (1958). *A magyar stílisztika vázlatja* [Sketch of Hungarian Stylistics]. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó.
- Tolcsvai-Nagy, Gábor. (1996). *A magyar nyelv stílisztikája* [Hungarian Stylistics]. Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó.
- Zsuffa, Zoltánné [Mrs. Zoltán Zsuffa]. (1994). *Gyakorlati magyar nyelvtan* [A Practical Grammar of Hungarian] (2nd ed.). Budapest: Panem-Akkord.

*Indiana University, Bloomington*

*Laura Knudsen*

## CONTRIBUTORS

Richard ACZEL	University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany
László BORHI	Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, U.S.A.
Thomas COOPER	Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, U.S.A.
Mirko DOMBROWSKY	Universität zu Köln, Köln, Deutschland
Péter HAJDU	Institut für Literaturwissenschaft, Budapest, Ungarn
Frank J. KEARFUL	Bonn University, Bonn, Germany
Laura KNUDSEN	Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, U.S.A.
Ernö KULCSÁR SZABÓ	Eötvös-Loránd-Universität, Budapest, Ungarn
Christof SCHEELE	Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, U.S.A.
Anikó SOHÁR	Miskolc University, Miskolc, Hungary
Kristóf SZABÓ	Universität zu Köln, Köln, Deutschland
Mihály SZEGEDY-MASZÁK	Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
James T. WILSON	Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, U.S.A.
Péter ZIRKULI	Université de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France

## Guidelines for Submission of Manuscripts

Manuscripts should be sent to the Editor. Texts should be double-spaced with wide margins. Quotations longer than three lines should be indented and single-spaced. Whenever possible please also include a copy on diskette. Footnotes or endnotes should be numbered consecutively. *Hungarian Studies* will follow the forms recommended by *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); or Kate L. Turabian: *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). In preparing their manuscripts and footnotes, all contributors are urged to follow the system in these two guide-books.

## From the Contents of Forthcoming Issues

Papers of the György Ránki Hungarian Chair Conference on “Political Transitions in Hungary in Comparative Perspective”, Bloomington, Indiana, April 1–2, 2000

*András Bozóki*: The Roundtable Talks of 1989: Participants, Political Visions, and Historical References

*Denis Sinor*: The First Change of Regime in Hungarian History

*Rudolf Tőkés*: Revolution Reconsidered: Institution-Building in a Moral Void