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LAJOS KOSSUTH AND THE CONVERSION OF THE HUNGARIAN CONSTITUTION

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The ancient constitution of Hungary consisted of the mutually recognised rights and obligations of two actors: the Crown and the nobility. The reformers aimed at creating a Hungarian civil society through legislation. Conversion meant the replacement of the constitution, based on rights, by another system, based on statute laws. The April Laws broke the back of the old social order based on hereditary right and laid the foundation of the new Hungary.

Keywords: the Land *(ország)*, the crown, *dietalis tractatus*, civil society, constitutional conversion, personal union, the State

The proposition that the world changed in 1848 may be in doubt elsewhere but not in Hungary. Quite rightly so. The creation of the first Hungarian responsible ministry, the passing of the April Laws, the National Assembly and above all, the War of Independence were the formative events at the birth of modern Hungary. 1848 has become emblematic of national identity. The revolution (always in the singular rather than plural) is credited with the creation of Hungarian civil society out of legally and culturally diverse social groups. Further, the revolution became a focus of national aspirations to attain independence. The revolution also generated conflicts and civil war within the kingdom between the Hungarian and the rival Slav and Romanian movements and these conflicts became a legacy of 1848 as well.

The Hungarian constitution, in the widest sense of the term, was undoubtedly transformed in 1848. The change can be looked at from a variety of perspectives. The ancient constitution offers a vantage point and so does Marxist social theory or modernisation. Yet what I dare call the conversion of the constitution offers a more adequate perspective than the others do for the subject. Why do I believe that?

The ancient constitution consisted of the mutually recognised rights and obligations of two actors: the Crown and the nobility organized in the counties and the diet of the *ország*. Their constitution went through conflicts and accommodations

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by *tractatus*, agreements, in 1608, 1681, 1711, 1790 and 1848 leading to the 1867 Settlement. A historical analysis based on the vocabulary of the customary constitution like privilege, *gravamina, postulata, dietalis tractatus,* reserved rights, fundamental laws and so on, can shed plenty of light on the process. But explanations largely based on this vocabulary would get bogged down in continuities whereas it was the discontinuities that lent character to 1848.

Marxism provides a vantage point that puts all the emphasis on discontinuities: the revolution replaced 'feudalism' with 'capitalism', it abolished serfdom and introduced 'bourgeois parliamentarism' in place of 'feudal absolutism'. For me these are big words. The vocabulary of Marxist metaphysics does not penetrate the subject of the constitution and it is not much use even for understanding social change. How is it, for instance, that in the new 414-member House fewer than ten non-nobles faced the landed gentry and the aristocrats who together made up a robust 74 per cent of the membership? What is commonly regarded by historians as a *polgári forradalom*, 'bourgeois revolution', created a one-class parliament dominated by the landed gentry, *bene possessionati.* In 1861, the preponderance of the aristocracy and the landed gentry rose to 77.3 per cent in the House, where the nobility as a whole possessed 80 per cent of the seats. In the House that passed the 1867 Settlement the proportion of the land-owning nobility rose to nearly seventy-nine per cent. Thus, their proportion in the House from 1848 to 1867 was actually going up. Where was the bourgeoisie?

Modernization theories (Marxist metaphysics in sheepish form) are even less helpful in understanding social or constitutional change. Ministerial responsibility, the concentration camp and the doctrine of mutually assured destruction are all 'modern'. What do they have in common? And what on earth do the very different societies that are lumped together as 'traditional' have in common beyond the trivial point that we would not find Esso 'gas stations' in any of them?

The conversion of the constitution, the term covers a cluster of interrelated theses, seems to me a more adequate analytical tool to unpack and elaborate the constitutional transformation in 1848 and after than are offered by other schemes because it penetrates the subject matter. After 1830 liberal nationalism became the driving force of Hungarian politics. The reformers, Széchenyi, Wesselényi, Kölcsey, Deák, Kossuth, Eötvös aimed at creating a Hungarian civil society through legislation. Conversion, *alkotmányos kifejlés* or *kifejtés*, *Entwicklung,* for the liberal nationalists primarily meant the replacement of the constitution, based on rights, by another system based on statute laws. Or to put it less formally, the system of privileges was to be replaced by a social order based on legal equality. Also, some of the monarch's reserved rights were to be shared with the nation so that representative government could be introduced without the nobility losing its ascendancy in Hungarian society. The central aim of liberal nationalist nobles was the creation of a Hungarian civil society and the establishment of an autonomous

Hungarian state within the Habsburg monarchy. Looking at it from this perspective, conversion meant the transition from the customary constitution based on the bipolarity of the *ország* and the crown to the all embracing legal system, called the "state," created by statute law. Also, conversion had a territorial aspect: the medieval precept of the crown's inalienability was converted to the integrity of the *ország* (a point to which I shall return later). Finally, the social aspect of the process was that through conversion the influence of the gentry increased at the expense of the aristocracy.

The reformers, in general, were committed to the West European idea of civil society, *polgári társaság*, in which all individuals possessed the same rights and duties. Civil society was a political order founded on a unified legal system in which statute laws, which equally applied to the nobles, the clergy, the bourgeois and the serfs, replaced the segmentary, 'barbaric', 'feudal' society based on serfdom, the hierarchy of privileges, legal inequalities, local and provincial customary rights. Equality under the law, personal security, freedom and the right to own property became the new social ideal. The methods were the policies of *érdekegyesítés*, interest-amalgamation, and of *jogkiterjesztés*, the extension of rights (the latter happened to be a confused hybrid).

All this sounds like a liberal social reform package – which it was not. The reform served an end: civil society was to be national. As elsewhere in Central Europe and beyond, liberalism and nationalism, although philosophically incompatible, politically appeared combined: both served social integration. Through legislation the reformers planned to create a single Hungarian community of citizens out of legally and culturally diverse social groups. The *ország* transformed, converted into the Hungarian nation, demanded an autonomous position in the Empire. This program of nation building was successful before 1848. In early nineteenth-century Hungary less than forty per cent of the population was Hungarian speaking. However, the national-liberal program had a wide appeal in the German speaking towns and particularly among smaller ethnic groups like the Jews, Armenians, Zipser-Saxons, Bunyevici and others. But in spite of rapid voluntary magyarisation, the national-liberal program was also fraught with conflict. It put Hungarian politics on a collision course with Vienna. Magyarisation left unaffected the large blocks of Slavonic groups on the periphery which had their own national movements. The diet, overriding strong Croat objections, put through language laws which replaced Latin with Hungarian as the official language of the counties, the dicasteria, the diet and the courts. In 1836 Hungarian became the official language of statute law. From that year the laws also contained provisions to spread the Hungarian language among the non-Hungarian population, enactments as ineffective and unenforceable as they were capable of generating conflicts, which they undoubtedly did, with the non-Hungarian intelligentsia. But national conflicts were probably unavoidable in multi-lingual Hungary. What makes the

nineteenth-century transformation of the country's constitution so peculiar is that an ever growing proportion of a hidebound provincial gentry was inclined to accept the abolition of serfdom and the nobility's prerogatives, including the tax privilege, the principle of equality before the law, and even the introduction of political franchise. The county gentry accepted the social reforms to the extent that they were subordinated to the national program whose implementation would meet their social aspirations.

The objective of the national movement was no less than the building of a unitary Hungarian State, under gentry leadership, with representative institutions covering the whole territory of the kingdom and even beyond. Croatia-Slovenia, the *Militärgrenze*, Transylvania and the Partium, as well as Dalmatia and Galicia were to be merged with Hungary proper. The program to absorb Transylvania and Croatia – two separate *regna* for centuries – into Hungary was based on a claim to pre-existing state-right. From the king's obligation, enshrined in the coronation diploma, to reconquer and reincorporate all lost territories in the kingdom and its adjoined parts, a single *regnum*, Hungary, derived the claim to 'repossess' the other *regna*. The inalienability of the crown, when converted, appeared as the 'integrity' of the *ország*, and the merger of Transylvania into Hungary as 'reunion'. The last objective appeared politically viable. Transylvania's Romanians objected to union, but they lacked political rights. Two out of Transylvania's 'Three Nations' (estates), the county nobility and the Szekels, both Hungarian-speaking, were potential supporters of union. Only the third 'nation', the Saxon *universitas*, opposed it.

In contrast, in Croatia only segments of the nobility, the magnates, the yeomanry of Turopolye and, for a while, County Zagreb were 'magyarones'. The bulk of the educated nobility and honoratiores formed the Croat national (Illyrian) party under the spirited leadership of the radical Croat intellectual, Ljudevit Gaj. The Sabor rejected the Hungarian claims: Croatia, for eight hundred years a separate *regnum* under the Hungarian crown, had never been a part of the *ország*. The terms found in the *decreta*, '*partes subiectae*' or '*adnexae*', in fact meant *socia regna*. As Hungary and Croatia were 'associated Lands', the Hungarian diet did not have the right to legislate for Croatia except on the basis of mutual consent and interest. Indeed in the past even in 1790, the diet had not enforced the majority principle. That was why the Croat Sabor (not the three Croat counties directly) sent deputies to the diet without putting Croatia's separate position in jeopardy. By the 1840s, however, the Hungarian county deputies at the diet were quite prepared to 'majorise' minorities, particularly on language issues. But the crucial question behind the language issues was the status of Croatia itself.

Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894), who came from a rather humble background, and started out as a journalist in the 1830s, played a major role in the conversion of the constitution. He had a rapid rise in Hungarian politics. The journalist became

leader of the Opposition between 1841 and 1847. The key to this success was his ability to be ahead of others on both the fronts of social reform and national demands. A strong case could be made that the conversion of the constitution carried out in 1848 was to a large extent based on Kossuth's policies.

Take serf-lord relations first. The laws of 1840 introduced 'optional emancipation', i.e., permissive arrangements through which the peasant could redeem all servitudes in exchange for a one-time payment compensation to the landlord. Kossuth argued in his *Pest News* that the law should be implemented whenever a peasant wants to invoke it and is able to meet its demands. On taxation he argued that the nobility should start paying tax, the local rates, to the *cassa domestica* acting as a bank to finance peasant emancipation. On economic policy Kossuth would introduce a protective tariff system against the Austrian produce (Kossuth swallowed Friedrich List's nationalist political economy) in order to develop industry in Hungary. He argued that the towns should have proper representation at the diet on the understanding that they magyarize. As regards Magyarization he distinguished the 'public sphere' from the 'private sphere'. Only the former should be Hungarian but there is a rider: the definition of 'public' is too wide (e.g., it includes the 'new' economy, railways, banking, and so on). Kossuth wants to maintain the county system (against central government – even against responsible government) but it should be democratized even though genrty leadership in it should be preserved.

Kossuth was in conflict with Eötvös and the Centralists over the introduction of representative government, which Kossuth initially opposed. The conflict however was patched up in 1847. The independent and responsible ministry became a desirable aim rather than a program in the Oppositional Declaration drafted by Kossuth and Deák.

Unlike the plans of other politicians, Kossuth's reform program, which included the setting up of a Hungarian State, was predicated clearly on all the Lands of the Hungarian crown. At the diet, from December 1847, Kossuth, by then as leader of the Opposition, repeatedly questioned the very existence of Croatia as a Land. He insisted that under the Hungarian Holy Crown a single nation existed: the Hungarian, and there had to be therefore a single legislature. His speeches, made shortly before the revolution, created an atmosphere which later made any cooperation between Croat and Hungarian politicians improbable.

In the run up period before the revolution Kossuth was not at all radical on the imperial connections. Instead of any shift to demanding personal union, 'common interests' and 'common relations' between Hungary and other Lands of the Monarchy became an accepted part of political discourse. This was because Kossuth and other liberals now assumed that constitutionalism would be (sooner or later) introduced in all parts of the Habsburg Monarchy (and in that case *tractatus* with the monarch would no longer be enough). The Oppositional Declaration had al-

ready alluded to this topic, which then came up in Kossuth's speech at the Circural Session on 22 November 1847 and in the text of his draft Address. It was now the Lower House's view that 'the fullest expansion of the Hungarian constitution' and 'common status relationships' could, if Art. X of 1790 was respected, coexist and the seemingly divergent interests be settled 'in the management of the common imperial state connections' on the basis of parity. There is similar evidence all over in the documents from late 1847. We may digress for a moment to note that these were the terms and concepts that reemerged in the 1860s – facts which historians who censure Deák for abandoning Hungary's rights in 1867 ignore. Notably, however, while Kossuth in 1847 envisaged *tractatus* on the 'common relations' with the Austrian liberals as well as the Court, Deák in the 1860s entered into *tractatus* solely with the monarch.

Even after the July Monarchy's collapse in Paris in February, the Kossuth-led diet, instead of demanding personal union, followed the earlier twin policies of (i) vindicating the claim to the expansion of the constitution by introducing 'national government' based on majority support and (ii) calling for a settlement *(kiegyenlíteni)* of the common interests with the other Lands as well as recognising 'our legal relations towards the empire as a whole'. Once, however, the Metternich system collapsed the Hungarian position shifted: it became more radical. Also, in *dietalis tractatus* which now commensed, rules and conventions were repeatedly broken. Now the leaders wanted to secure greater autonomy for Hungary than had been envisaged by Kossuth and others even a few weeks earlier.

Well before the collapse of the Metternich system, however, on 3 March, Kossuth, with an eye to the main chance, had dragged the diet away from the politics of small measures. His "Address" speech had a single theme: the constitution's *kifejtése (Entwicklung)*, the establishment of national government, a system where the executive power would be responsible to a parliament elected by the nation. The draft Address clearly stated that 'we regard the conversion of the dicasterial *(collegiális)* governmental system to a Hungarian responsible ministry the essential requirement and guarantee of all the other reforms'. The draft then asked the king to send to the diet members of the Gubernium who enjoyed his confidence and who would be responsible (to the diet) for the implementation of the reforms. The Lower House passed the Address on the same day, the Upper House only on the 14th, the day after Metternich fell. By then the situation had changed. The Lower House, under Kossuth's spell, reported to the counties that it expected 'the strengthening, the expansion and the transformation of the constitution'. Indeed, the first attempt to transform the monarch and the *ország*'s rights into a liberal legal order, the April Laws, or rather what was read into them in Pest after their enactment, was a more sweeping conversion of the constitution than subsequent attempts; and although it failed conspicuously, it set a standard for Hungarian politics that outlasted even the Monarchy. The European events, Kossuth

reported to County Pest, 'shook the building of the ancient constitution' to its foundations, which had proven to be too constricted. 'Only two pillars remained standing unimpaired and strong enough to support a (new) capacious building, the king and the free legislature' (a dangerously unstable situation, one would have thought). By the free legislature Kossuth meant the Lower House, about to become House of Representatives, rather than the diet as a whole. For the collapse of the Metternich system crushed the authority of the Upper House and deflated even that of the county. Neither institution ever recovered its former place in the constitution. On 14 March the Lower House declared that even before its reconstruction it could perform its duties only as 'the representative of the whole nation rather than of a separate class'. The claim of the Lower House to act as a constituent assembly, a declaration of gentry ascendancy over the aristocracy, was realised in the thirty-one laws of the 1848 *decretum*.

The April Laws broke the back of the old social order based on hereditary right and laid the foundation of the new Hungary. *Ország* rights were converted into the rights of the Hungarian nation, to which at least those who were given the franchise could claim to belong. In the process the rules of *dietalis tractatus* were repeatedly broken. The foundations, improvised, incomplete, and in part temporary, also contained durable rules, notwithstanding the speed with which the whole *corpus* was put through. In the preamble of the April Laws the estates, defining the aims of the *decretum,* listed in the first place the intention to 'unite the interests, under the Law, of the whole Hungarian people'. Yet the Law did not declare the principle of legal equality. Nor was the nobility annulled as a legal status. All in all, legal equality, the principle that all individuals possess the same rights and duties, and personal freedom inspired the legislator in 1848, they were parts of the reform program rather than rights established by statute law.

The emancipation of over nine million peasants in Hungary and in Croatia from their servile condition was the most significant, albeit incomplete, step towards civil society in 1848. Law XI abolished the patrimonial authority of the landlord over the serf. Laws IX and XIII rendered void urbarial obligations and the tithe. The private landlord was to be paid compensation out of public funds to be determined by the new parliament, the tithe went without compensation.

The law established an 'independent and responsible' government. Although the authority of the Hungarian ministry was not properly defined, the April Laws created a coherent system of government so far as it was politically possible to do so in the spring of 1848. The legislator went as far as he could to secure the consent of both sides, which, however, is not to say that the partners agreed to a fudge. The settlement did not last because the partners, *after* its enactment, embarked on policies governed by irreconcilable aims. Kossuth and the Prime Minister Batthyány read 'personal union' into the April Laws as a figleaf for the claim to a separate Hungarian State. The Austrian response was the claim to the exist-

ence of *Gesammtstaat*, read into the Pragmatic Sanction, and ultimately the rejection of the April Laws. Thus, the culprit for the failure of the constitutional compromise reached between the court and the Hungarian leaders was not the *corpus* of the April Laws but the new, rival conceptions of the State that governed policies afterwards. Historians sometimes forget that no constitutional reform should be expected to solve intractable political conflicts.

After Custozza, the revision of the April Laws was demanded by the court and the Austrian government in order to 'restore the supreme government' by subordinating the Hungarian ministry in finance and in army matters to the departments of the imperial ministry in Vienna. Resistance to such a change in Hungary was robust. In the crisis in September the Batthyány government disintegrated; Kossuth became a parliamentary dictator. The Austrian and the Hungarian rival conceptions of 'state' disrupted the foundations of the monarchic union of Lands on which the Habsburg empire had rested for centuries. *Tractatus* in any form was no longer an option. The intractable constitutional conflict was settled on the battlefield because the court decided to impose its constitutional claims by armed force.

Francis Joseph's Manifesto and the announcement of the Imperial Constitution by *octroi* of 7 March 1849 opened a new chapter in Hungary's relationship with the empire. The new monarch, by alluding to his 2 December Manifesto, declared that the guarantee of the future lay 'in der Wiedergeburt eines einheitlichen Österreich' – a program based on the presumptive claim that the Habsburg monarchy constituted a single State. In contrast to the Pillersdorf Constitution the new Constitution applied to all *Kronländer* of the Austrian empire, including Italy and Hungary. Centralisation was the cornerstone of the constitution. There was to be common citizenship, a single legal system and central parliament (in addition to a local diet for each crownland). The constitution broke up the kingdom of Hungary. It severed the connections between Croatia-Slavonia, Transylvania and Hungary proper and it carved out the Serbian Voivody as a separate territory. Each became, like Hungary, a separate *Kronländ.* Paragraph 71 emasculated the April Laws, without formally putting them out of force, and ended Hungary's special position in the empire.

> Die Verfassung des Königreiches Ungarn wird insoweit aufrecht erhalten, dass die Bestimmungen, welche mit dieser Reichsverfassung nicht im Einklange stehen, ausser Wirksamkeit treten.

Although this constitution was nowhere in the empire fully implemented before its cancellation in 1851 (and for Hungary it largely remained a blueprint), its announcement affected the course of Hungarian politics. It enabled Kossuth and the national radicals to put through the rump parliament the resolution on 14 April 1849 at Debrecen, to which it had moved because of the advancing imperial army, that Hungary was an independent European state. This move was a direct re-

sponse to the imperial announcement of 7 March. Undoubtedly there were other factors. Görgey and the other generals' brilliant spring campaign leading to the recapture of the capital improved morale. Also, Kossuth, quite unrealistically, hoped that an 'independent' Hungary would attract foreign help. Further, by forcing parliament to burn its boats, Kossuth successfully wiped the floor with the 'peace party'. Based on the House's resolution of the 14th 'The Hungarian Nation's Declaration of Independence' was enacted on 19 April.

The constitutional import of the Independence Declaration went beyond the deposition of the dynasty. For the first time the claim to statehood, based on historic right, was anambiguously expressed in an authoritative document. Hungary, not just a Land, possessed all the attributes, external as well as internal, of an independent European State. The new term *álladalom*, soon to be shortened to *állam* in political discourse, expressed the claim to Hungary's new constitutional status. Kossuth, a *nagy száműzött*, the 'great exile', in Turin after 1867, mourned for the eclipse of the 'Hungarian State' which he, its last representative, had tried to 'restore' in 1848. But was Kossuth its last representative rather than its creator? Did the maker of the constitutional conversion from the *ország* to the State really believe this? Well, there you have it. Leaders sometimes entertain mis-conceptions about their own contributions.

KOSSUTH: ON THE NEW FUTURE OF CENTRAL EUROPE

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The conception of Zsigmond Kemény, the father of the Hungarian psychological novel, harmonizes with Ferenc Deák's standpoint and Kossuth's thoughts start out from the European and Hungarian realities. They all were very well aware of the fact – which had been obvious to all throughout the Reform Era (1825–1848) – that Hungary independently and without assistance would not be able to bring an embourgoisement to fruition. Kemény and Deák believed in the future of the Habsburg Empire, and tended to cast the nation's lot with it.

Keywords: Habsburg Empire, Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, political thought, absolutism, feudal diet, western civilization, Pragmatica Sanctio, Balkans, national minorities

The father of the Hungarian psychological novel Baron Zsigmond Kemény once observed in connection with the pamphlets he had written after the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–1849 that some of the details of those writings had been designed to serve a practical purpose: the mitigation of the official political persecution. These pamphlets, describing the activities of the peace party, which had sought a peaceful resolution to the conflict, had been criticized by his contemporaries. Later on, as editor-in-chief of the *Pesti Napló* [The Pest Journal], a very influential newspaper of the 1850s, Kemény outlined a more comprehensive conception in which he explained his views on the history and mission of the Hungarian state. In this respect he was among the first to formulate some fundamental ideas that would make their effects felt in Hungarian political thought throughout the coming century. In his work *Forradalom után* [After the Revolution] Kemény considered the strong national feelings of Hungarians as a historical endowment, the basic content of which was – in his opinion – a demand for the constitutionality of the country. The political theory of the age perceived a clear break between absolutism and constitutionality. Consequently, it was deemed to be of secondary significance whether the given constitution gives the right to have a say in the life of the state to a

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feudal diet of the privileged or to a bourgeois parliament. However, the demand for an independent statehood was only one of the factors on which external forces also produced a marked influence. In Kemény's view, even the "historical mission" of a nation could be affected by its external relations. Referring to one political axiom of his age, he claimed that there was a "European conviction" that there needed to be a counterweight against the Slavs, especially against Russia, and this counterweight could not be any power other than the Habsburg Empire. The weakness of Austria meant the weakness of Europe as well. Here Europe was obviously not to be understood as a mere geographical term, but as the world of the western civilization. Arising from this conception was the demand that the Austrian monarchy should be the first power of Europe; and thus the real task of the Hungarians was to reconcile this aim with another endeavour, namely, with their old, historical striving for the independence of the Hungarian state. Therefore, it was not by chance that at the end of his train of thought Kemény cited "the greatest Hungarian," or István Széchenyi. For Széchenyi had raised the problem of whether Vienna or Budapest should be the center of the empire and considered this dilemma as an option between West and East, or between a political life oriented toward the West or the East. The latter would open a new mission for Hungary: it may be "the legislator and dictator of the East." In other words Hungary might introduce and establish in the Balkan region the scale of values prevailing in the western world.[1]

According to Kemény's pamphlet, an attempt had been made in 1848 to realize this great conception, but things had gone beyond the desirable limits. Although hidden within the potential of this double tendency was the possibility of the dual monarchy, or even of a prospective federalism, the objective that "Hungary's independence will be brought into harmony with the impressive unity of the Austrian empire" finally could not be attained. Nevertheless, by 1850 the pressure of the actual political situation left its mark on Kemény's wording, and he criticised himself very concretely. In his view, during the summer of 1848 Hungary ought to have assumed a part of Austria's public debt and to have redefined the *Pragmatica Sanctio* as a law ensuring the fundamental right to common defence."[2] Here, however, he, who had always strongly emphasized the necessity of considering the external situation, forgot precisely about the realities of foreign policy as they had stood two years earlier. Namely, that in summer of 1848 every authoritative political actor of the continent had perceived the new German unity as a fact; and in a particular form in which the German provinces of the Habsburgs became a part of a unified German state, thereby reducing the relationship between "the king in Vienna" and his other countries and provinces to a mere personal union. This situation encouraged not so much the re-definition of the *Pragmatica Sanctio* as the formation of a military alliance with the new

German state, which the Hungarians in fact attempted to do.[3] The Austrian government, for its part, did begin to make references to the *Pragmatica Sanctio,* an eighteenth-century family agreement among the Habsburgs, with the intention that – by taking advantage of the opportunity of interpreting it at their discretion – they might lay an ideological foundation for a counter-revolutionary offensive. The studious misinterpretation within Kemény's criticism was just as unambiguous as his objective. He wanted strongly to underline the sincerity of the policy aiming to harmonize the two major tendencies mentioned above: namely, the demand for the great power standing of the Habsburg Empire on the one hand and for a certain degree of independence for Hungary on the other.

The same ideas were presented in a somewhat more tinged and detailed form on the pages of his *Még egy szó a forradalom után* [One More Word after the Revolution]. Here, Kemény expounded his train of thought not only by following István Széchenyi's ideas but also with explicit references to them, thereby hoping better to authenticate his arguments. Thus, figuratively, Kemény like a good master mason further decorated the already impressive building of the Széchenyi legend. His starting point was a kind of natural endowment, which required an independent statehood as its means "to defend our race and to help it come into full fruiton." His argumentation is interpreted in an up-to-date liberal manner. He insisted on a "a national development identified with the demand for freedom and bourgeois development (embourgeoisement)."[4] The parts of his argumentation that refer to the past, understandably, show signs of a resentment: "though geographically we had been marked out as the center of the empire, yet in reality we have only become a simple part of the monarchy."[5] It was this situation that Széchenyi had wanted to change by proposing that Budapest be not only the capital city of Hungary, but also the center of the empire. Thus, the Hungarian nation might reach its full development, and this might be not only a necessity of the empire but a European demand as well. When declaring that Austria "has a historical chance" because the common interests of its people had become stronger than ever before, Kemény made concrete and developed his Széchenyi-based train of thought, which emphasized a policy grounded in national interests and feelings.[6]

The first point – in Kemény's view – was that the Habsburg Empire should not be part of the unified German state because this would be opposed by the Slav, mainly the South-Slav peoples, who as a result would be permanently susceptible to outside agitation. Furthermore, the Habsburg Empire could not be an exclusively German state because in that case it could not fulfil its mission to carry through the embourgeoisement of Central Europe. In foreign policy terms, this meant that – as had been recognized and proposed by Eugene of Savoy – "our empire" ought to focus on a Turkish, rather than German orientation. In short, the

Austrian empire ought to concentrate on the vacuum taking shape in the Balkans in order to prevent the penetration of Russia into this region. Indeed, Baron Kemény would often "historicize" and "ideologize," but a number of his remarks revealed a keen intellect. For example, in context of the political competition in the Balkan region, he prophetically remarked that any political force that Austria failed to overcome would later turn against it. Though he did not state that St. Petersburg conducted a pan-Slav policy, yet he rightly warned that a tsarist autocracy expanding in Southern Europe would by all means produce a disrupting effect on Austria with its considerable South-Slav ethnic minorities.[7]

From the viewpoint of policy towards the nations and national minorities, Austria had to face the European task of separating the immense bloc of the Germans from that of the Slavs. Considering the region's geographical situation, Hungary might quite naturally be a *neutrale terrenum*, wedged in to separate these two blocs. But Hungary could only play this role if it would be strengthened once again, and if it could recover its relative independence. Then it could bring the internal unity of its own ethnic minorities to fruition on the basis of the idea of "a political nation," without, however, conducting a policy of forced Magyarization.[8] Thus, "our fatherland" – Kemény went on – would be the real intermediary, a political force that might also fulfil the mission of Austria. Furthermore, Kemény maintained that Hungary's independence as defined by Act X of 1791 might be brought into perfect harmony with the empire's great power standing by way of a dualist state structure.[9]

Baron Zsigmond Kemény's pamphlets may have served well as a concrete political recipe had the Viennese political kitchen not concocted a quite different dish. According to Prime Minister Prince Schwartzenberg's plan – which was very ambitious but devoid of the great-power-conditions for its implementation – the unity of Germany as the continent's new hegemonic power, created by way of a totally Germanized monarchy, would be served up as a special "main dish" on the dinner table of the European states. However, this gastronomical enterprise met with failure. The food got scorched on the Viennese kitchen stove; and it took quite a few years before the dainty gourmets of the imperial capital resigned themselves to tasting the perhaps more rustic, albeit more nutritious Hungarian dishes.

Like Kemény, Lajos Kossuth and his followers both at home and in emigration also recognized the importance of foreign-policy realities, but they evaluated the lessons drawn from the struggles of 1848–1849 in another way. Although they started out from similar premises, they came to different conclusions. In their opinion, too, there was a need for a shield against the German and pan-Slav pressure, but they saw Austria as unsuitable to play this shielding role, not so much because it was too weak as because it would block the national development of peoples living within its borders. Therefore instead of preventing interference on the part of the great powers, Austria would provoke it. The resolution of the diffi-

culty – as had been first proposed by Kossuth in his draft constitution of Kütahya (1851) – lay in a kind of minimalist defensive military alliance of the small nations living along the Danube River on the territory of the Austrian empire, which was bound to disintegrate. This alliance might be developed by the participants into a confederation based on consistently democratic principles. From the viewpoint of the great powers at the time, the problem can thus be summed up: the form itself was of a secondary importance, what really mattered was that such an alliance could also fill Austria's transitionally vacant place in the often mentioned system of the European balance of power.[10]

Kossuth, of course, drew his conclusions from this new conception of policy to be conducted towards national minorities. Although owing to the intrigues of the Vienna camarilla the nationalities had revolted in 1848, the Hungarian National Assembly in its act on the national minorities had recognized as early as June 1849 that the right of "a free national development" was also due to the national minorities. Thus, the new, independent Hungary to be built on principles proposed by the draft constitution would be the common homeland of all nationalities living in Hungary, because no Hungarian embourgeoisement and self-determination could be achieved without reconciling these demands with the similar rights and interests of other nationalities.[11]

At first sight it is clear that both Kemény's conception, which harmonizes with Ferenc Deák's standpoint, and Kossuth's thoughts on these matters start out from the same European and Hungarian realities. Both of them were very well aware of the fact – which had been obvious to all throughout the Reform Era (1825–1848) – that Hungary independently and without assistance would not be able to bring an embourgeoisement to fruition. Indeed, it was beyond doubt that, for example, without foreign capital neither a modern capitalist economy, nor a rapid-rate economic growth, nor an intensive intellectual progress would prove to be achieveable. The two different answers as a matter of fact also include answers to the questions of where (and how: directly or indirectly) should capital import – which was indispensable due to lack of an adequate capital accumulation in Hungary – come from. Who and from what position should negotiate on the price and necessary conditions of that import? Or to put it another way: whether the particular Hungarian interests will appear subjected to the imperial interest, or will they be treated as claims of equal rank with the former in the related decisions? Decisions that might without any exaggeration be viewed as ones decisive for centuries to come. However, in respect of the scale of values, there was a marked difference between the two conceptions. Kemény's position was based on the classical liberal principles, and he professed a more limited conduct towards the national minorities. Kossuth was more open to extending the democratic rights of nationalities and could, to some extent, step beyond nationalist biases. Another neuralgic point of their answers was the way they judged the actual state and great

power standing of the Habsburg Empire. Kemény, Deák and their companions believed in the future of the empire, and tended, with responsibility, to cast the nation's lot with it. They did not deem it a fatal sacrifice if – arising from this situation – the nation's right of self-determination would have been limited to a certain extent. Kossuth and his followers, in turn, tended to consider remaining a part of the Habsburg Empire as a death sentence and, with a similar responsibility, searched for a chance to get rid of the Empire in order to attain a full national self-determination that would lead to Hungary's full independence as a nation state. They regarded this as the only chance for Hungary's national survival when the Austrian empire inevitably collapsed. This would allow the country to shape its own future.

These two approaches, indeed, express a real alternative because (1) these two scales of values had become sufficiently separated by the middle of the nineteenth century that they could mark out two different courses of social and political development for the future, although they both remained within the framework of modern bourgeois society, which was based on a market economy; and (2) during the 1850s it was not possible yet to "objectively" discern which of the two approaches would be appropriate for the empire. The Habsburg Empire itself, to wit, offered contrasting interpretations of itself: one that it would be stable, the other that it would not.

Kossuth planned his Kütahya draft constitution, which he had worked out during his internment in Turkey and which contained many of the principles discussed above, to be submitted to a future free parliament of Hungary. At the same time, he also regarded it as a basis for negotiations to be continued with the leaders of nationalities in Hungary and of the neighbouring peoples. According to his draft, Kossuth wanted to have all the organs of state power, from the legislature down to the county and local authorities, elected on the basis of a universal suffrage. Criminal proceedings would be based on juries, and the rule of law would be controlled and assured by a constitutional court. The importance of the municipalities and the counties – and also their constitutional "checks-and-balances-role" against the central power – would also be enhanced by the practice that these local authorities would elect the members of a Senate, which would replace the Upper House. In territories populated mostly by the nationalities the county would automatically grant collective political rights, and a true self-government, to the national majority living there. In addition, these ethnic groups might also form nation-wide organizations to safeguard their particular interests, in a way somewhat similar to the autonomies of ex-territorial religious denominations. All this would be completed with an extensive right to use the local vernaculars in political, cultural and ecclesiastical life alike. The draft constitution speaks in a similar spirit of the armed forces as well as of some other questions such as education. Although Kossuth had first proposed the formula of a "democratic repub-

lic" as a constitutional form, later, however, out of some realistic-policy considerations, he left the question open. Thereby he made a concession to the form of "constitutional monarchy" as it had originally appeared in the Debrecen Declaration of Independence of 1849.[12]

The most democratic nineteenth-century scheme for the structure of the Hungarian state was included, with certain modifications, by Kossuth in a noted document, prepared in 1863, which described his project for a Danubian Confederation. The discussion was designed for strictly diplomatic use and by no means meant to be propagated to the general public. This was a proposal for a confederation of states to be basically formed jointly by Hungary, Croatia, Romania, and Serbia by way of their "legislative assemblies" and plebiscites. In addition to common governing bodies for foreign affairs and defence, the document also envisaged an economic community. This project essentially contained all the democratic guarantees that had been laid down in the Kütahya draft constitution. As to the internal structure, the American pattern was proposed. In addition to a House of Representatives to be elected in proportion to the total number of population, another chamber of this common legislature, a Senate, was also proposed to be formed. In this body each member state would be represented by delegates in equal number. The Federal Council (government) would alternately hold its sessions in the capitals of the member states. In matters concerning home politics, each member state would make its decision in a sovereign fashion, provided that the given state adhered to the common basic principle: the fullest equality of ethnic groups and religious denominations. Concerning the Transylvanian question, Kossuth was thought to have given the greatest concession possible when he proposed that Transylvania be transformed into an independent state, which was only attached to Hungary by a personal union.[13]

Kossuth had sent the text of his scheme to the Milanese newspaper *L'Alleanza* so that it might help to propagate his ideas. But editor Ignác Helfy somehow misunderstood Kossuth's cautious intention, and published the text in full in his newspaper. Unfortunately, this indiscretion enabled the government-party press, which until then had branded Kossuth as a nationalist, to accuse him of cosmopolitism and of forfeiting Hungary's historical rights. Moreover, the politicians of the nationalities would soon find that the decisive part of the Hungarian political elite distanced itself from Kossuth's proposal. Thus, the leaders of the Danubian peoples concerned could not appreciate Kossuth's ideas according to their appropriate significance. In this way the document, which had been designed and written to lay foundations for the region's long-term strategy of development, ultimately became nothing but a milestone on the road that finally led to the Compromise of 1867.

Notes

1. Zsigmond Kemény, *Változatok a történelemre* [Variations to history], Budapest, 1982, (hereinafter: Kemény), 246–259.
2. *Ibid.*, 309–310.
3. Delegated to the German constitutional assembly in Francfort, László Szalay's tasks also included to form a military alliance and customs union with Germany. See Gábor Erdődy, *A magyar kormányzat európai látóköre 1848-ban* [The Hungarian government's European horizon in 1848], Budapest, 1988 , 46–48.
4. Kemény, *op. cit,* 425.
5. *Ibid.*, 403.
6. *Ibid.*, 439 ff.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, 492, 516, 546.
9. *Ibid.*, 518–538.
10. György Szabad, *Kossuth and the British "Balance of Power" Policy,* Budapest, 1960.
11. György Szabad, *Kossuth politikai pályája* [Kossuth's political career], Budapest, 1977, 170–176.
12. For the history of Kossuth's draft constitution and its variant readings, see György Spira, *Kossuth és alkotmányterve* [Kossuth and his draft constitution], Budapest, 1989.
13. György Szabad, "Az önkényuralom kora (1849–1867)" [The age of absolutism (1849–1867)], In *Magyarország története (1849–1890)* [The history of Hungary (1849–1890)] (Ed. by Endre Kovács), Vol. 1., Budapest, 1979, 709–713.

LAJOS KOSSUTH AND THE AUTONOMY DEMAND OF THE CATHOLIC HIGHER CLERGY IN 1848*

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The higher clergy interpreted autonomy as the independence of the church from the state, while for the lower clergy autonomy meant primarily autonomy from its ecclesiastic superiors. The autonomy movement embraced about seventy years and emerged in several waves. The concept according to which the Catholic Church – if it wanted absolute independence – should expect no financial support from the state meant secularization to the liberal reformists.

Keywords: Catholic Church, separation of church and state, autonomy of church, civil society, education

1. The possible interpretations of the concept of Catholic autonomy and its emergence

The concept of Catholic autonomy might seem a paradox at the first sight. It raises the question of how autonomy can be related to the Catholic Church. First, it can relate to an external autonomy, which refers to the autonomy of the Catholic Church against the state and other establishments that have similar functions. Second, this autonomy can be internal, that is an autonomy within the Church, which can relate to the different levels of independence between the hierarchical levels of the clergy, e.g., the relation between rectors and bishops, or the relation between rectors and chaplains. During the period under discussion the higher clergy interpreted autonomy as the independence of the Church from the state, while for the lower clergy autonomy meant primarily autonomy from its ecclesiastic superiors. The reformist élite saw in the idea of autonomy a greater possibility for the laity to participate in the affairs of the Catholic Church.

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Nevertheless, if we are to remain sensitive to the dogmatic constitution of the Roman Catholic Church, autonomy cannot be so easily interpreted within the Church by using the above-mentioned method. This refers mainly to the connection between the different levels of the clerical hierarchy, the crucial influence of the secular people and to the efforts of nationality. From a historical point of view, this makes the next analysed approaches more notable.

In Hungary an important element of the liberal and civil transformation was the process of separating Church and state, whereby several legal and political problems arose.[1] (László Péter has made a survey of the one hundred and fifty years of this process in a study recently published in Hungarian.) Owing to the birth of modern Hungarian civil society, the relation of the Catholic Church to the state changed in its foundations. At the same time, the Church had to face new challenges in connection with its internal relations.

Analysing the particular historic situation we can observe an autonomy movement that embraced roughly seventy years and emerged in several waves.

The demand for autonomy strengthened particularly when basic changes respecting the relationship between the Catholic Church and the state arose. This was the situation in 1848–1849, at the time of the Compromise in 1867, and at the time of the Church–government battles of the 1890s.[2] Here I am going to touch upon only the first element of this process, which occured in the spring of 1848.

2. The emergence[3] of the Catholic bishops' conception of autonomy during the closing period of the last parliament based on orders

In short, we can say that by raising the autonomy concept most of the higher clergy wanted to strengthen their own weakened position in perpetuating their interests.

The prelates presented a petition to King Ferdinand V on 20 March 1848.[4] In this document they asked him – in view of the bill on the establishment of a Ministry of Religion and Education – to prevent the expectable influence of this newly established ministry on the exercise of the right of patronage and the administration of the ecclesiastic possessions and foundations, which were earlier disposed of by the Ecclesiastical Commission of the Gubernial Council (Comissio Eclesiastica). They wanted him to keep these rights to himself, or if this did not prove possible, to assign them to the Catholic Church. In other words, they wanted the king to make them independent of the civil government. The king's answer contained in the royal rescript of 27 March encouraged the efforts of the clergy but was rejected by the parliament in an uproar. Two days later in a new rescript the ruler agreed that the exercise of the right of patronage should be countersigned

by the ministry. This version was then accepted by the representatives. Later, the appointed Prime Minister Lajos Batthyány was able to carry the proposal for the ministry in its original form. Accordingly, the influence of the ministry could proceed on the appointments through its right of countersigniture. Simultaneously, the absolute competence that had formerly been practised by the bureaus [kormányszékek] of the Viennese court, which included the administration of the Catholic ecclesiastic and educational funds, was passed over to the hands of the Minister of Religion and Education.

To this came to be added another important change in law, the 20th Act of Religion in which clause 2 (the 2.§) declared the absolute equality[5] of the different denominations and churches. With this regulation the Roman Catholic Church also lost its status as the state religion in Hungary. In the course of the debate the bishops contested only the third clause (3.§) of the act. That article promised that the ecclesiastic and educational expenses of all institutional denominations would be financed by the state.[6] In this concept the higher clergy saw the danger of further secularization because the prelates thought that it might be financed by using the properties and foundations of the Catholic Church. To prevent this, Mihály Fogarassy, the Bishop of Skodár, made a proposal to insert two additional stipulations into the text:

> the ecclesiastic and educational expenses of all denominations, – and here come the stipulations – in case they do not have enough money from their present properties and their foundations, should be financed by the state[7], but besides practising their own ideas they have to preserve their religious principles.

The inserted paragraph that had been meant to prevent the secularization of the fortunes of the clergy and indirectly to uphold its monopoly of education did not get into the final version of the act. Despite the objections of the bishops, the magnates also agreed to the original version. This turn of the debate on the bill about the ministry and religion was a considerable political failure for the Catholic Church and especially for its bishops in their fight for preserving their rights.

In this situation the ecclesiastic government had to take steps. As a result, immediately after the closure of the debate on the just mentioned bill, on 6 April, the episcopal council that was meeting in Pozsony presented a petition to the parliament.[8] The aim of this request was to allow the Catholic Church, in view of the Act of Religion, to be able to handle its internal and external affairs independently, that is, without the interference of the state. In the view of the prelates the independence of the ecclesiastic councils and the freedom to establish schools pertained to the external affairs of the church. A separate clause dealt with the right to manage ecclesiastic and educational foundations independently. This pe-

tition was introduced in the Lower House as a bill by János Rónay, a representative of Csanád, on the following day, 7 April. On Ferenc Deák's advice the questions raised by the bill were committed to a conference. However, in the course of the three-hour debate the emergence of intractable conflicts prevented any compromise over the bill. Since there was little time left before the arrival of the king, the further discussion of the proposal was postponed until the next diet. Therefore, the last attempt to achieve Catholic autonomy at the final parliament of orders failed.

To sum up, I think that raising the demand for autonomy during this period and the plans to modernize the institution of the Church, which were linked to it, were not considered to be strategic,[9] but rather tactical steps in the new political situation by the majority of the higher clergy. The tactical nature of the phenomenon was also demonstrated by the fact that when the new system had to face increasing difficulties – from the autumn of 1848 – the voice demanding autonomy in the çircle of the higher clergy faded gradually.

An important motivation for the higher clergy for raising the demand for autonomy was to prevent the secularization of church property.[10] But we cannot disregard the fact that the majority of the higher clergy wanted to conform to the changing social and political system. So, according to their expectations, they could have stabilized their own situation and their power towards the government and the believers under these new bourgeois circumstances; and they could have maintained the preferred image of the Church among the clergy as well. Thereby they wanted to avoid any further loss of power. These aims and plans, including the demands for autonomy, ought not to be considered as vices or virtues of the prelates.[11] The actions of the clergy were based simply on their perception of the situation and their interests.

3. Lajos Kossuth's relation to the higher clergy's conception of autonomy

Kossuth's personal relation to the aims of the higher clergy, which strove to maintain its previous position, was well illustrated in the speech that he made in the Lower House on 4 April. His speech was dedicated to Miklós Sárkány, an abbot of Bakonybél, who had ennumerarted the demands of the Catholics. Kossuth announced with considerable irony that:

> Thinking about the proposals that were going to be presented, I haven't found anything else that could be prejudicial to these gentlemen as opposed to people of other religions, save the fact that they are unmarried. Let me note that, just as in other affairs, I am willing to lend a helping hand to abolish celibacy, in as much as I am able.[12]

Kossuth's opinion on the Catholic demand for autonomy was appropriately summarized in the discussion that he held with József Lonovics, Bishop of Csanád, at the time of the last parliament of orders.[13] According to this Lonovics argued as follows: if the liberal élite wants to abolish Catholicism as an established religion and if it codifies religious equality, from this follows the independence of the Catholic Church from the state to the same extent as the Protestants are independent from the state. The argumentation of Lonovics for the necessity of autonomy was based on the codified liberal ideas. Above all, it was based on the principle of the absolute separation of state and Church, ideologically and especially financially, and on the declaration of religious equality and mutuality. This was the basis of the argumentation, which claimed – referring to the Protestants' right of handling Church property independently from the state, of holding councils and electing bishops – the same rights for the Catholic Church and its leaders.

In theory Kossuth agreed to this argumentation, as the basis of it was an important liberal idea, equal rights on both the individual and the institutional level. But against the practical realisation of it he made several objections. Above all, he referred to the dependence of the Catholic Church on Rome and to the fact that it was not an independent national Church, as those of the Protestants. He wanted to support the local ecclesiastic governments of the Catholics only in the case that their delegates prefer the laws that the Hungarian parliament had made to those of the Holy See. Moreover, he observed that he could only accept the autonomy of a Church in which the Church is identical with the complex of the believers and priests of the same religion and in which the right for action belongs not only to the clergy but also to the community of the believers.

This meant that the laity must have a wide range of influence over all aspects of the institution except the basic doctrinal questions. Finally, independence from the state means that the Church would get neither property nor governmental assistance from the state.

Analysing this chain of ideas, Kossuth's liberal counter arguments connected with the conservative episcopal concepts of Catholic autonomy can be observed. The universal Roman Catholic Church could have only laid claim to independence in the eyes of the liberal élite of the time, if it had tried to become national by getting rid of a foreign influence, which was unfamiliar to the liberals.

When Kossuth considered the possible independence of the Church in connection with greater influence for the laity, he followed the liberal concept of Church, which holds that the Church is a form of cultic community that is independent from the sate.

The concept according to which the Catholic Church – if it wanted absolute independence – should expect no financial support from the state meant secularization according to the understanding of the liberal reformists. To understand this, according to László Csorba, we have to examine the liberal idea of

Church property that began to coagulate during the reform era.[14] The clergy – in the period of feudal absolutism – was a part of the feudal governmental system and delt with cultural and religious tasks. The clerks (here meaning the priests) in the state apparatus got paid for their work by the state. Their payment was not money but donations. The aim of the liberals was the separation of state and Church. Consequently, after the state had taken over their functions the officers of the Churches were not authorized to use the donations they had received as payments. According to Kossuth's argumentation church property had never been a possession of the Church. So the Church had not been its owner, but its holder. The owner was and remained the state. In this interpretation the liberal reformists reinterpreted feudal law according to civil principles of law.

This understanding might be made clearer by reference to an often cited reminiscence of Kossuth from 1871. In this writing in connection with religious equality he brought up the question of support for the Churches by the state. For the establishment of absolute religious equality there were two possibilities at the last parliament of orders. The state should either give nothing to each Church, or it could ensure the religious and educational needs of each denomination. Following the liberal principle, Kossuth wrote, "The first part of the alternative is right, but not the second."[15] However, he added immediately:

> We were convinced that if we had proposed this way of equality among the denominations, we would have brought forth such a rigorous fight and hostilities, and we would have sent such great aid into the arms of our Viennese enemies, who were against our freedom, that the whole work of transformation would have been endangered. We did not dare to do it.[16]

This meant that the leader of the liberal reformists interpreted every kind of financial support to the Church by the state as a compromise of principle.

Let us return to the conversation between Kossuth and Lonovics. Examining the argumentation of the two sides we can notice an intresting situation. The Bishop of Csanád, who was stressing the arguments of the higher clergy, was using a liberal–based argumentation to back up the conservative concept of the law protecting ecclesiastical autonomy. After an analysis of Kossuth's words it becomes obvious that the liberals chose the partial neglect of religious equality and mutuality rather than accept the Catholic autonomy plan proposed by higher clergy. Kossuth believed that if he supported the Catholic bishops' proposal on this issue realization, he would strengthen the power of the higher clergy, which he did not want to do.

Notes

1. László Péter, "The connection between state and church and the civil society in Hungary: a historical synopsis," *Századvég* (1998 Spring): 3–31. In regard to this period, see especially pages 3–15.
2. For more on this issue see: Csaba Máté Sarnyai, "The possibilities to approach catholic autonomy in the second half of the 19th century", *Századvég* (2001 Summer): 85–101.
3. For additional information see: Csaba Máté Sarnyai, "The autonomy – idea supported by the episcopacy in 1848", in *Állam és egyház a polgári átalakulás korában Magyarországon (1848–1918)* [State and Church in the period of bourgeois transformation in Hungary (from 1848 to 1918)], ed. Csaba Máté Sarnyai (Budapest: METEM books, 2001), 63–88.
4. Pécsi Püspöki Levéltár 1848/704 [The Episcopal Archives of Pécs].
5. See *Magyar Törvénytár* [Collection of laws in Hungary] (henceforth MT), 1836–1868. évi törvényczikkek [Acts between 1836 and 1868] (Budapest, 1896), 243.
6. See MT, 1836–1868. évi törvényczikkek [Acts between 1836 and 1868] (Budapest, 1896), 243.
7. *Főrendi Napló 1848* [Diary of the peers], 468. The underlined part is the proposed addition.
8. *Religio és Nevelés* [Religion and Education] 1848. Vol. I, 252.
9. László Csorba, "Katolikus önkormányzat és polgári forradalom", *Világosság* (1989): 219–227.
10. This reference is more particularly analysed by László Csorba, *A vallásalap "jogi természete"* [The 'juridic nature' of church properties] (Budapest, 1999), 47–68.
11. We can find examples for both cases. For the first we can find examples in conservative Catholic historiography, for the latter in marxist historiography. See: Antal Meszlényi, *A magyar katholikus egyház és az állam 1848/49-ben* [The Hungarian Catholic Church and the state in 1848/49] (Budapest, 1928), 88; and Erzsébet Andics, *Az egyházi reakció 1848–49-ben* [The reaction of the church in 1848/49] (Budapest, 1949), 22–23, 28.
12. *Karok és Rendek Naplója az 1847/8. országgyűlésen* [The Journals of Faculties and Orders at the parliament of 1847/48], 219.
13. *Kossuth Lajos iratai* [The papers of Lajos Kossuth] in *Kossuth Ferenc* (Budapest, 1900), VIII, 344–346.
14. In the course of the analysis we follow László Csorba's article "A szekularizáció kérdése a reformkori országgyűléseken" [The issue of secularization at the parliaments of the reform era], *Világosság* (1979), 603–610.
15. *Kossuth Lajos iratai*, 342.
16. *Ibid.*

THE AFTERMATH OF THE 1848 REVOLUTION

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Zsigmond Kemény, the Transylvanian-born author, in his 1850 pamphlet, *After the Revolution*, questioned the Romantic concept of national character, and characterized tradition as ambivalent: both a sine qua non of culture and a system of dated conventions. Kemény drew on Bentham's utilitarianism, considering the right to property to be the basis of society. Liberalism and nationalism were in conflict during the Revolution, and the fate of the Revolution showed that extremes may lead to failure.

Keywords: Communism, Post-Communism, identity of community, national character, discontinuity, populism, nationalism, liberalism, utilitarianism, tradition, tyranny of the majority, tragic interpretation of history, Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, Habsburg Empire

1. Continuity and Disruption

Historic events usually provoke a wide range of interpretations. Instead of trying to give an overview of the reception of the 1848 revolution, I shall limit myself to the analysis of an early assessment. *After the Revolution,* a long pamphlet by the Transylvanian-born writer Zsigmond Kemény and published in 1850, was often described during the decades of Communism as controversial. Those who saw the expression of reactionary views in the work spoke of an unjust evaluation of Kossuth's revolutionary activity. This interpretation will not hold up under scrutiny; the real reason for the attack was Kemény's critique of Communism. My intention is to re-examine the pamphlet from a Postcommunist perspective and decide to what extent it can be read as a condemnation of the revolution. The assumption underlying my arguments is that the conflicting interpretations of 1848 constitute a characteristic example of treating history as a vital criterion for defining what it is to be Hungarian. Employed in a search for self-identity, history was often twisted to supply a burden of proof. How the debate was conducted reveals how insecure Hungarians are about their inheritance.

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As in most of Kemény's nonfictional works, the present is approached from the angle of the past. While the first person singular is used in the last section of the text, a distance towards the events marks the introduction. The impersonality of the tone is especially striking in the summary of the author's assessment of the fate of Hungary: "During the revolution he could not believe that victory could lead to the creation of an independent Hungarian state. Nor could he take it for granted that Europe would allow such a victory" (252).[1]

From the very outset, the fate of the Hungarian community is examined against an international background. With a focus on the identity of this community, the Romantic concept of national character is considered and made questionable on the basis of the idea that even the continuity of the individual is far from self-evident. "Timon of Athens was transformed overnight from a gentle and hospitable citizen of the world into an eccentric misanthrope" (190). Possibly inspired by Plutarch's life of Anthony, the play known as *The Life of Timon of Athens*, and Montaigne's essay *De l'inconstance de nos actions*, Kemény developed the argument that the coherence of national identity was as questionable as that of the human personality. In his view, continuity is often broken by the unexpected in both cases. What the example of Timon suggests is that discontinuity can often be described in terms of a change in attitude towards others. The fate of the Hungarian nation is determined by its relationships "to the other nationalities living in the country" (194). Such is the starting thesis formulated in *After the Revolution.*

2. Centralization and the Hungarian Counties

Widely accepted judgements are often questioned in Kemény's works. A few pages after the passage about Timon, expressing strong reservations about the validity of the Romantic concept of national character, there is a reference to the definition of Hungarian identity given by the poet Petőfi. The wide horizon of the plainland is taken as a symbol of liberty, and a hypothesis is formulated that closely resembles the main thesis of the political message Petőfi sent to the people of his native Cumania, in the summer of 1848: "The territory between the rivers Danube and Tisza represents the heart of Hungary and the core of the Hungarian people. If something fails to succeed in this region, it will never succeed in the rest of the country" (197).

The populism so characteristic of Petőfi's poetry made no impact on Kemény. His emphasis on the significance of the countryside was meant to suggest the incompatibility of centralization with Hungarian traditions. That is why the idea that France could serve as an example for Hungarians was rejected: "In France the counties are subordinate to Paris not only because of the intellectual superiority of

this city but also because from the Pyrenees to the Rhine all the arteries of the country are directed towards this centre" (195). The model contrasted to this French tradition is reminiscent of the ideal of self-reliance popularized by Emerson, whose work is as deeply rooted in Calvinism as that of the Hungarian author: "The judge of the county court had to rely on his own judgment. Instruction rarely came from Vienna or Pest. In any event, he was reluctant to listen to warnings coming from above" (197–198).

Local conditions are hardly known in centres, whether actual or hypothetical. The argument that the counties "have saved Hungary from absolutism" (250) is closer to Kossuth's ideas than to those of the centralists. Yet it would be misleading to regard this as the whole truth. The other side of the coin is that "the county system tolerated the corruption that dominated political decisions" (250).

Tradition is ambivalent. On the one hand, it is a sine qua non of culture, on the other, it is a system of dated conventions. Kossuth's assumption that the counties could play a role similar to that of the Swiss cantons is dismissed. At the same time, it is a cause for serious concern that "the advocates of centralization thought themselves infallible" (252).

3. Communism

The main lesson people should learn from the example of the revolution is that fanatics cannot be trusted, since for them the word "homeland means doctrines and party affiliations" (196). One of the principles underlying *After the Revolution* is that all generalizations are suspect. Indeed, Kemény's pamphlet can be regarded as an early example of the positivism that characterized the post-revolutionary age.

The critique of dogmatism leads to a reference to Tocqueville's ideas on the tyranny of the majority. The most serious criticism is directed against those who "started preaching socialism and communism" (204). The focus is on "the legitimacy of property ownership," and the main issue is formulated in the following manner: "Is the individual the owner of property or is it the state, and the individual an innocent or guilty leaseholder?" (205)

It is not possible to argue that the meaning of the words just quoted is limited to the plans of those who wished to find the common interest of landlords and serfs, for the question asked has a far more general import. What Kemény has in mind are not the Hungarian conditions of 1850 but those that could be expected to exist in the future. What is at stake is not only the feudal but also the capitalist system. The dilemma for the Hungarian author is "whether the party of tenants, the owners of private houses, capitalists, factory owners, industrialists, craftsmen and en-

trepreneurs will lose or win, and in the case of defeat how should the party of factory workers, apprentices, agricultural labourers, small grocers, and the penniless govern?" (205)

At this point it seems necessary to admit that the main body of the argument refers not to the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 but to the possible consequences of all revolutions that "may divide human beings into two classes: the proletariat and the rest" (203). The remark that "our radicalism was quite moderate in a European context" (232) implies that in some countries revolution involved the rise of a communistic movement. Following the lead of Széchenyi, the author of *Hitel* (Credit, 1830), Kemény draws on Bentham's utilitarianism, considering the right to property to be the basis of society. His dismissal of Communism is far from being emotional; in fact, his pamphlet offers the picture of a man walking a fine line by acknowledging a family resemblance or at least some continuity between the ideals of Christianity and Communism: "The origin of Cabet's Icaria can be traced back to the legacy of Bethlehem" (238). What Kemény regards as more attractive than Communism is a system dominated by the bourgeoisie. This, he believes, is not incompatible with constitutional monarchy, as the example of Belgium suggests.

4. Kossuth and the Revolutionary Youth

Although this last assumption contains an explicit critique of Kossuth's decision to cut ties with the Habsburgs, it is an exaggeration to say that the pamphlet is directed against the chief architect of Hungary's 1849 declaration of independence. Kossuth the speaker is praised without any reservations, and the characterization of his political attitude is far from one-sided. The lesson Kemény tries to learn from the fate of the revolution is that extremes may lead to failure. Kossuth had a sharp eye for the internal conditions of Hungary, but he was less at home in the world of international politics. The youth that staged the revolution on March 15, 1848 had other shortcomings: they were inclined to make "plans inspired by French books" (303). This statement may be linked to the reference to Cabet, whose activity was not quite unknown to the circle of Petőfi.

The conclusion is not far-fetched that the sharpest words are directed not against Kossuth but against the young intellectuals associated with Petőfi, who "read much about revolutions and were impatient to re-enact French revolutionary scenes" (308). While Kossuth is criticized for not paying enough attention to the interests of the great powers and the possible isolation of the Hungarian revolution, Petőfi, Vasvári, Irinyi, Irányi, and others are blamed for imitating a foreign model. Such a critique may be based on a somewhat cautious acceptance of the hypothesis formulated by Ferenc Kölcsey in his widely influential essay *Nemzeti hagyományok*

(National Traditions, 1826). The qualification is necessary, for the imitation of the French model is rejected not in general but only because of the multinational character of the Carpathian basin.

5. Liberalism and the Nationalities

One of the key issues of *After the Revolution* is the definition of Central Eruope. The two criteria given are tradition and preconception. Neither the Habsburg Empire nor the Carpathian basin are regarded as organic entities. Even a dual monarchy may not have much chance, since "it is beyond doubt that federalism may be more compatible with the conditions of the region than dualism" (258). In view of this statement the argument that *After the Revolution* paved the way for the 1867 Ausgleich is a baseless allegation.

If the principle of national self-determination is in conflict with the existence of multilingual states, Hungarians have to make a distinction between those nationalities that seek to establish an independent state and those with no such aspirations: "In the Austrian Monarchy Jews, Armenians, Gypsies, and the French living in the Banat region are the only nationalities that do not wish to extend the borders of their homeland" (244). It is hardly an accident that Jews are mentioned first, since Kemény played a major role in the preparation of the last law associated with the revolutionary parliament, the law of Jewish emancipation. "Kemény's healthy and democratic attitude was free of demagogy, full of understanding and courage," as the author of a recent book on the Jewish question writes.[2] Kemény's assumption is that the nationalities mentioned above could assimilate to the Hungarians, whereas the others can rely on support from other states. The dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy may inspire the other nationalities to join states outside the Carpathians.

It is worth remarking that throughout the pamphlet the term "Hungarian-speaking" is preferred to the word "Hungarian." Social and national distinctions are also given a perceptive analysis. The author may be right to point out that "if an agricultural labourer was Hungarian, he was inclined to consider himself to be superior to those of his class who were not Hungarian" (217). A contradiction between Liberalism and nationalism is detected: "Nationalism was a Conservative rather than a Liberal trend" (237). Anticipating the message of *A XIX. század uralkodó eszméinek befolyása az álladalomra* (The Influence of the Ruling Ideas of the Nineteenth Century on the State, 1851–54) by József Eötvös, *After the Revolution* gave an interpretation of Hungary between 1825 and 1848 in terms of a conflict between Liberalism and nationalism: "Because of the tension between these two forces, political parties sometimes emphasized nationality at the expense of freedom, sometimes stressed freedom at the expense of the interests of

national identity" (239). The question arises whether it was benevolence or shortsightedness that made Kossuth underestimate this problem. "He took it for granted that liberty was so powerful that if it were given to the other nationalities, they would give up their national aspirations" (240).

6. Revolution and Nationalism

Before the author expands on the revolution, he makes two preliminary comments. First, he summarizes the Hungarian events of the early nineteenth century with the underlying assumption that it is misleading to see a necessary link between these and the revolution of 1848. A special emphasis is placed on Kossuth's and Széchenyi's plans concerning the railway system of the country. The comparison is made not with the intention of passing a value judgment. The focus is on the relationship of the Hungarian community to other nationalities.

The second preliminary comment relates to the revolution that broke out in Paris in February 1848. The international background is sketched with the intention of underlining that the European revolutions put the Hungarian nobility in a very difficult situation: instead of a gradual elimination of its rights, it was forced to give them up within a very short time. "The nobility had lost a great deal, yet it responded to the shock with so much courage and was ready to serve the homeland with so much energy and self-sacrifice that one cannot help being respectful of the resignation and common sense with which the Hungarians accepted the extraordinary turn of events" (299).

One of the most important points made by the author of *After the Revolution* is that the end of feudalism brought a major change not only for the Hungarians but also for the other nationalities living in the Carpathian basin. Two of these nationalities are selected as deserving special attention. The reader is reminded that the pamphlet was written "on the threshold of an enormous crisis and an unknown future" (357), and the conclusion is drawn that the Hungarian nation has to make peace with its neighbours: "although it cannot forget the past that verged on a devastating war, it has no racial hatred that could lead to future conflicts" (359).

The message sent to Vienna is a kind of warning. Kossuth's popularity is compared to that of Ferenc Rákóczi:

> Rákóczi died twenty-four years after the Peace Treaty of Szatmár. During those years little was done to improve the conditions of the Hungarian nation. Much less than demanded by the circumstances, the interests and the European status of the ruling dynasty (360).

7. Tentative Conclusions

Zsigmond Kemény is known as the author of highly self-reflexive novels in which all values are questioned. The value structure of his pamphlet *After the Revolution* closely resembles the world of his fiction. It presents the Hungarian events of 1848 as profoundly tragic. "Both our enemies and we made mistakes" (370). Most of the leaders of the revolution walked into some ambush. "They are more or less guilty and more or less innocent... none of them could be called lucky" (371). While the killing of Lamberg is condemned, it is called an exception. The Hungarian revolution is valued on the grounds that it was far less violent than either the French or the English revolution: "since we were less passionate, we committed fewer crimes" (333).

Although it is true that the Hungarian Declaration of Independence is viewed as a vulnerable spot, it would be a distortion to say that the pamphlet is an unambiguous attack on the decision to cut off ties with the Habsburgs. It is pointed out that a) Vienna had made a serious mistake by declaring Jelačić the governor of Hungary, and b) the Hungarian leaders had no opportunity to foresee the international response to the Declaration of Independence.

As the final words of the pamphlet indicate, its author's intention was "to deconstruct rather than to construct" (373). Suggestions for the future were promised to be made in a sequel. The much longer text called *One More Word about the Revolution* is an attempt to find an answer to the questions asked at the end of the earlier pamphlet.

"We never ceased to love our country, but sometimes we did not serve our cause well" (371). The discrepancy between intention and result is at the basis of the arguments for a multi-party system:

> No party is needed if it aims to rule by itself.
> Our number has decreased and our conditions have changed; we cannot afford to be fragmented by old animosities (372).

The conclusion drawn from the discontinuities of history is that the survival of a nation depends on two factors: a drastic selection and a full awareness of the legacy of the past: "We must learn to forget and remember" (370).

8. Self-Interpretation

One More Word about the Revolution can be read as a self-interpretation made from a certain distance. The links between the two texts are quite obvious. The earlier reference to *Timon of Athens* is in tune with the later allusion to *Macbeth.*

A quotation from *Hamlet* would not have escaped the attention of the censors. Less conspicuous was the passage reminding the reader of Banquo's warning: although I may be killed by Macbeth, my descendants will be the rulers of the country in the future.

The admiration for the revolution expressed in the second pamphlet is without any qualification. "In our century the Hungarian was the greatest among all the European revolutions" (515). This statement is further supported by the final section of the text, which compares the defeat to the battle of Mohács. A certain defiance marks the tone of the passages that refer to Vienna:

> We do have a constitution.
> Austria cannot claim to have one. (...)
> Hungarians (...) never failed to make a distinction between king and government. (...) They viewed every coronation as the signing of a contract based on mutual obligations (404–405).

At the very start it is emphasized that despite its defeat the revolution has created an entirely new situation. Repression, "the illness of despotism" (394) cannot last; "ideas that are suppressed by force will take revenge on those who were winners by force and not by ideas" (392). The revolution was justified insofar as those who preached the preservation of values proved to be the destroyers of the existing values: "Prince Metternich asked Széchenyi not to touch the Hungarian constitution, arguing that if one stone is taken away, the whole may collapse, but it was the Austrian chancellor who eliminated so many arches and columns of that building. In the period prior to 1825 no one proved to be more destructive than the eminent leader of the European Conservatives" (394).

Although the debate between Széchenyi and Kossuth is described in terms of a contrast between reform and revolution, both conceptions are considered to be autonomous, representing a dilemma, since "to step too early or too late on the road of radical changes are both dangerous in the sense that they may lead not only to the failure of a plan but also to the destruction of the country" (384). Kemény agrees with Széchenyi that before 1825 Hungary was comparable to a dead body. Furthermore, he insists that the hypothesis that "society is organic life" (410) cannot imply that revolutions are inorganic. What it means is that Montesquieu was right to point out that no state of government was universally applicable.

Kemény's reading of Montesquieu is radically different from the way Joseph de Maistre had interpreted *De l'Esprit des Lois*. "Like its predecessors, the constitution introduced in 1795 was made for *man*," de Maistre wrote. "No one seems to know what *man* is. I have seen French people, Italians, Russians. Thanks to Montesquieu, I know that *Persians also exist* (qu'on peut être Persan), but *man* I

have never met (...). A constitution made for all nations is not for any nation, it is a mere abstraction."[3]

It would be misleading to ascribe such relativism to Kemény. In his 1851 pamphlet man and nation are regarded as abstractions but the relationship between the two is described in terms of a continuity that cannot be neglected. The idea of the diversity of cultures does not imply that all cultures are on the same level of sophistication. Historical changes are thought to be inevitable, despotism and slavery are condemned, and capitalism is considered to be superior to feudalism. The "compelling force of European ideas" (393) and the temporary validity of all goals are taken for granted: "What is mere illusion today may prove to be everyday reality in a hundred years" (403). The only qualification is that progress depends not only on ideals but also on "the nature of the medium" (418). The comparison with the visual arts is quite significant. Titian cannot be translated into Canova. Nations, societies, and even political systems resemble works of art insofar as the existing conditions are transformed by creative activity. Just as one may think of art in terms of the media of art, so one may see a nation in terms of the circumstances that dominate its homeland. In Kemény's view Montesquieu's position was not sheer realitivism; what the French author suggested was that different political traditions made different political solutions possible, in the same way as painting differed from sculpture. In a work by Titian paint and canvas, in a sculpture by Canova metal or stone as media would disappear, just as material conditions, local circumstances, given conventions may disappear as a result of social practice. Universal laws are not questioned, but progress is viewed as the consequence of so many factors that it needs "a subtle discussion (...) of political conditions and property relations, the demands of liberty and national interests, economic considerations and the structure of the state" (423).

One More Word about the Revolution continues to emphasize the necessity of a multi-party system. At the same time, it draws attention to the weaknesses of the Hungarian parliamentary system by reminding the readers that decisive changes "have been hindered by the partisanship of bureaucrats" (429) and "their meaningless debates" (431). "In our country a large number of messages are often sent on insignificant or merely stylistic matters" (430). Some of these drawbacks are not limited to Hungary but are the consequences of a lack of historical and philosophical insight. These two are largely responsible for the limitations of political culture: "Most parties lack historical awareness and philosophical training" (395). In view of this, parties can be called the manifestations of some necessary evil.

Although economic factors are given a special treatment, the "superstructure" is regarded as the main reason for political changes. Ideological trends are linked to the language reform: "The reform of the language has led to that of literature, the transformation of literature to that of society, the modernization of society to

that of the state" (397). Such a broad and Romantic view of language, the assumption that it was not the consequence but the origin of decisive changes that "French Classicism was defeated by the new school" (397), was in tune with Geistesgeschichte scholarship but not with Marxism. National character is regarded as the product of language; Hungarian, Slovak, and Croatian nationalisms are characterized as movements inspired by a language reform.

As every textual interpretation, *One More Word about the Revolution* makes a radical selection of the constituents of the work it comments on. Some of these are given a detailed analysis, whereas others are discussed very briefly. Socialism is not forgotten – in Part 4 the views of Proudhon are refuted – but this time the main emphasis is put on international affairs. The focus is on the future rather than on the past. The fate of Africa, the possible rise of the bourgeoisie in the Far East, and the growing power of North America are considered.

Even the cause of the nationalities is subordinated to the discussion of the desires of the great powers. The author's deeply historical approach can be seen in his insistence that whatever he may state will prove to be of passing relevance. Even if a hypothesis seems justified in the short term, it will lose its significance in the long run. The prediction that Russia "may separate Central from Western Europe" (468) was more relevant a few decades ago than it seems today. By contrast, the remarks on the situation in the Balkans still have not lost their interest. Kemény foresaw some of the tragic events of the past decade and his remarks on the continuing attraction of Eastern Orthodoxy are still worth attention. "Their faith is as strong as Christianity had been in the West in the early centuries; it still is a driving force in society. In our world faith has been attacked by philosophy, church has been separated from state, and the influence of religion on civil society has diminished" (466).

The concluding section of the later pamphlet consists of three parts and is devoted to the relations between Hungarians and other nationalities. Part one is a warning against any nostalgia for the past: "our country was never more Hungarian in language than it is now" (495). This is followed by the observation that the idea of national independence could not emerge before a late phase in history, which in Central Europe was the age of language reforms. Part three is an attack on "racial hatred" (359).

During the revolution "nationalities made demands that could be compared to Sybil's books insofar as they asked for a high price if not paid special attention" (535). Four possibilities are considered. The first is linked to "the desire of the nationalities to extend their boundaries on the basis of ethnicity, leave the empire, and join their Slavic and Romanian compatriots" (531). The three other alternatives are federalism, dualism, and the preservation of Hungarian supremacy without forceful assimilation.

The arguments listed in favour of the last of these are defensive. Of course, it is possible to point out that not even the states of Western Europe could be called monolingual. Although the official language was forced on many citizens of France, the revolutionary convention admitted that less than fifty percent of the population had French as their mother tongue. Multilingualism has survived in Great Britain and Spain until our own age. No less true is that a considerable part of the non-Hungarian population supported the revolution in 1848. Reminding the reader that "members of all the nations living in our country fought for the Hungarian cause either as soldiers or as administrators" (496), the author of the pamphlet expressed his hope that "public spirit" would be in favour of the association of "nationalities that are different in language but united in their interests" (497) rather than in favour of the ideas of Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism, or Daco-Roman continuity. It is possible to regard this hope as mere illusion but in no way could it be contrasted to Kossuth's plan. As political thinkers both thought in terms of a community united not by origin but by some agreement. In his second pamphlet Kemény condemned "Magyarization" (546) and "racial intolerance" (547), and compared Jan Kollár, the pan-Slav politician to Ferenc Kazinczy, the organizer of the Hungarian language reform.

In any case, the conclusion Kemény has drawn from events of Kossuth's revolution that "this nation wished to belong to the West even when its short-term interest suggested some other alternative" (520) is worth remembering today, when Hungary desires to join the European Union.

Notes

1. All page numbers refer to *Változatok a történelemre* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1982).
2. Ambrus Miskolczy, *A zsidóemancipáció Magyarországon 1849-ben: Az 1849-és zsidóemancipációs törvény és ismeretlen iratai* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 1999), 72.
3. Joseph de Maistre, *Considérations sur la France* (Genève: Slatkine, 1989), 123–124.

KOSSUTH'S CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN ISOLATIONISM

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The Hungarian War of Independence was widely reported in the American press. Kossuth hoped to bring about a fundamental change in U.S. foreign policy: to convince the country that the time came for taking an active role in international affairs. Sixty-six years later, the U.S. came to act exactly along the lines advocated by Kossuth. Ninety years later the Atlantic Charter came to embody the very principles first expressed by the Hungarian leader.

Keywords: international affairs, U.S. foreign policy, Lajos Kossuth, Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence

Senator Seward of New York described Kossuth in the U.S. Senate on December 8, 1851 as "a personage whose name and fame at this time fills the eye and ear of the world."

Kossuth, like George Washington, was regarded by Hungarians as the father of the nation already in his lifetime. Probably he was the first Hungarian political leader to make it into world history. In 1849 his name was identified with Hungary and with liberty in most civilized countries. Later on, during his visits, he was admired and welcomed in England, France, the U.S. and in Italy by enthusiastic crowds. More than 100,000 turned out to greet him in New York City on Broadway. With his seven-month tour of the United States he left an indelible mark on the country, matched by few foreign politicians.[1] Four full-size statues and several busts, one in the Capitol bear testimony to this. "Millions of Americans came under his spell... dozens of books, hundreds of pamphlets, and thousands of articles and essays, as well as nearly two hundred poems were written to him or about him." The names of Emerson, Longfellow, Horace Greeley, James Russel Lowell, Harriet Beecher Stowe stand out among those authors.[2] Undoubtedly the greatest person who was inspired by the exiled Hungarian leader was Abraham Lincoln. On January 9, 1852, Lincoln said in the legislature of Illinois: WE RECOGNIZE IN GOVERNOR KOSSUTH OF HUNGARY THE MOST

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WORTHY AND DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CAUSE OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ON THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE."[3]

How could Kossuth have such an impact on the United States? The Hungarian War of Independence was widely reported in the contemporary American press, it inspired the young nation and reminded it of its own struggle for independence 75 years earlier. Following a series of spectacular victories in the spring, when the Hungarian Parliament elected Kossuth Governor-President on April 14, 1849, the President of the U.S. sent an envoy, Mr. Dudley Mann, to Hungary with the intention of recognizing the country's independence. The bloody reprisals following the surrender of the Hungarian Army in August 1849 even increased the sympathy.

President Zachary Taylor was an enthusiastic supporter of the cause of Hungary – his reports and instructions to the Senate at the end of 1849 testify that. There were also a number of prominent members of the U.S. Congress who took a very strong interest in Hungary, most notably Senator Cass of Michigan (who in early 1850 moved to break diplomatic relations with Austria), and Senator Webster of Massachusetts. There was even a move in the House of Representatives to censure the President and the Secretary of State for having failed to recognize the independence of Hungary in due time.

The death of President Taylor was a blow to the Hungarians. His successor, President Fillmore was more reserved, but his Secretary of State became Daniel Webster, an admirer of Kossuth. In Spring 1851 Senator Foot of Mississippi moved to send a warship for Kossuth to bring him over to the States from his exile in Turkey. The Senate concurred, and the frigate Mississippi was dispatched.

Kossuth arrived in New York on December 4, 1851. He was greeted by huge crowds, just like subsequently in Philadelphia and Baltimore and at so many other places. His first speeches galvanized America. Kossuth is considered as one of the great orators of all times. He could capture his audience in Hungarian, German, Latin and English, too. C. A. Macartney, in his introduction to the definitive work of John Komlos, rightly spoke of the "inexhaustible fluency and almost magic persuasiveness" of Kossuth preaching his gospel.[4] The Hungarian leader was extremely well educated and widely read, as reflected in his speeches. He showed a remarkable knowledge of the history and constitution of America, too.[5]

The exiled former Head of the Hungarian State came to the United States with far higher aims than capitalizing on his personal popularity and raising money for the continuation of the Hungarian War of Independence. While he fully understood why the Founding Fathers of the Republic warned against entangling alliances, he hoped to bring about a fundamental change in U.S. foreign policy: to convince the country that the time came for taking an active role in international affairs, commensurate with its strength, and to make Americans realize the inter-

dependence of Europe and the U.S., that the Atlantic was no longer a barrier but rather a link, that freedom and democracy in Europe was also a vital interest for the American Republic, and, finally, that the two English-speaking countries must be allied so that they could jointly prevent tyrannical, authoritarian countries like Russia from suppressing the striving of subject nations for freedom. All that was set forth in detail at the Corporation Dinner in New York on December 11, 1851. That speech, that challenge to American isolationism, shows Kossuth's erudition as well as his forceful reasoning.

> But while I acknowledge the wisdom of your attachment to fundamental doctrines, I beg leave with equal frankness to state, that, in my opinion, there can be scarcely anything more dangerous to the progressive development of a nation, than to mistake for a basis that which is none; to mistake for a principle that which is but a transitory convenience; to take for substantial that which is but accidental; or to take for constitutional doctrine that which is but a momentary exigency of administrative policy. [...] Let me suppose, gentlemen, that doctrine of non-interference was really bequeathed to you by your Washington (and that it was not, I will essay to prove afterwards), and let me even suppose that your Washington imparted to it such an interpretation, as were equivalent to the words of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" [...] I may be entitled to ask, is the dress which suited the child, still suitable to the full grown man? Would it not be ridiculous to lay the man into the child's cradle, and to sing him to sleep by a lullaby? In the origin of the United States you were an infant people, and you had, of course, nothing to do but to grow, to grow, and to grow. But now you are so far grown that there is no foreign power on earth from which you have anything to fear for your existence or security. In fact, your growth is that of a giant. Of old, your infant frame was composed of thirteen states, and was restricted to the borders of the Atlantic: now, your massive bulk is spread to the gulf of Mexico and the Pacific, and your territory is a continent. Your right hand touches Europe over the waves; your left reaches across the Pacific to eastern Asia; and there, between two quarters of the world, there you stand, in proud immensity, a world yourselves. Then you were a small people of three millions and a half; now you are a mighty nation of twenty-four millions. [...] The very existence of your great country, the principles upon which it is founded, its geographical position, its present scale of civilization, and all its moral and material interests, would lead on your people not only to maintain, but necessarily more and more to develop your foreign intercourse. Then, being in so many respects linked to mankind at large, you cannot have the will, nor yet the power, to remain indifferent to the outward world. And if you cannot remain indifferent, you must resolve to throw your weight into that balance in which

the fate and condition of man is weighed. You are a power on earth. You must be a power on earth, and must therefore accept all the consequences of this position. [...]

I hope I have sufficiently shown, that should even that doctrine of non-interference have been established by the founders of your republic, that which might have been very proper to your infancy would not now be suitable to your manhood. [...] Having stated so far the difference of the situation, I beg leave now to assert that it is an error to suppose that non- interference in foreign matters has been bequeathed to the people of the United States by your great Washington as a doctrine and as a constitutional principle. Firstly, Washington never even recommended to you non-interference in the sense of *indifference* to the fate of other nations. He only recommended *neutrality*. And there is a mighty diversity between these two ideas. Neutrality has reference to a state of war between two belligerent powers, and it is this case which Washington contemplated, when he, in his Farewell Address, advised the people of the United States not to enter into entangling alliances. [...] Neutrality is a matter of convenience – not of principle. But while neutrality has reference to a state of war between belligerent powers, the principle of non-interference, on the contrary, lays down the sovereign right of nations to arrange their own domestic concerns. Therefore these two ideas of neutrality and non-interference are entirely different, having reference to two entirely different matters. The sovereign right of every nation to rule over itself, to alter its own institutions, to change the form of its own government, is a common public law of nations, common to all, and, *therefore, put under the common guarantee of all.* This sovereign right of every nation to dispose of itself, you, the people of the United States must recognize; for it is the common law of mankind, in which, because it is such, every nation is equally interested. You must recognize it, secondly, because the very existence of your great republic, as also the independence of every nation, rests upon this ground. If that sovereign right of nations were no common public law of mankind, then your own independence would be no matter of right, but only a matter of fact, which might be subject, for all future time, to all sorts of chances from foreign conspiracy and violence. [...]

Now, gentlemen, if these be principles of common law, of that law which God has given to every nation of humanity – if to organize itself is the common lawful right of every nation; then the interference with this common law of all humanity, the violent act of hindering, by armed forces, a nation from exercising that sovereign right, must be considered as a violation of that common public law upon which your very existence rests, and which, being a common law of all humanity, is, by God himself, placed under the safeguard of all humanity; for it is God himself who commands us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves, and to do towards others as we desire

others to do towards us. Upon this point you cannot remain indifferent. You may well remain neutral to war between two belligerent nations, but you cannot remain indifferent to the violation of the common law of humanity. That indifference Washington has never taught you. I defy any man to show me, out of the eleven volumes of Washington's writings, a single word to that effect. He could not have recommended this indifference without ceasing to be wise as he was; for without justice there is no wisdom on earth. He could not have recommended it without becoming inconsistent; for it was this common law of mankind which your fathers invoked before God and man when they proclaimed your independence. It was he himself, your great Washington, who not only accepted, but again and again asked, foreign aid – foreign help for the support of that common law of mankind in respect to your own independence. [...]

I will go further. Even that doctrine of neutrality which Washington taught and bequeathed to you, he taught not as a constitutional *principle* – a lasting regulation for all future time, but only as a matter of temporary *policy*. I refer in that respect to the very words of his Farewell Address. There he states explicitly that "it is your *policy* to steer clear of *permanent* alliances with any portion of the foreign world." These are his very words. Policy is the word, and you know that policy is not the science of principle, but of exigencies; and that principles are, of course, by a free and powerful nation, never to be sacrificed to exigencies. [...] Again, in the same address Washington explicitly says, in reference to his policy of neutrality, that "with him a predominant motive has been to *gain time* to your country to settle and mature its institutions, and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it the command of its own fortunes." These are highly memorable words, gentlemen. Here I take my ground; and casting a glance of admiration over your glorious land, I confidently ask you, gentlemen, are your institutions settled and matured or are they not? Are you, or are you not, come to such a degree of strength and consistency as to be the masters of your own fortunes? Oh! how do I thank God for having given me the glorious view of this country's greatness, which answers this question for me! Yes! you *have* attained that degree of strength and consistency in which your less fortunate brethren may well claim your protecting hand.

One more word on Washington's doctrines. In one of his letters, written to Lafayette, he says: – "Let us only have twenty years of peace, and our country will come to such a degree of power and wealth that we shall be able, in a just cause, to defy any power on earth whatsoever." "In a just cause!" Now, in the name of eternal truth, and by all that is dear and sacred to man, since the history of mankind is recorded, there has been no cause more just than the cause of Hungary. Never was there a people, without the slightest reason,

more sacrilegiously, more treacherously attacked, or by fouler means than Hungary. Never has crime, cursed ambition, despotism, and violence, united more wickedly to crush freedom, and the very life, than against Hungary. Never was a country more mortally aggrieved than Hungary is. All your sufferings – all your complaints, which, with so much right, drove your forefathers to take up arms, are but slight grievances in comparison with those immense deep wounds, out of which the heart of Hungary bleeds! If the cause of our people is not sufficiently just to insure the protection of God, and the support of right-willing men – then there is no just cause, and no justice on earth. [...]

Now, allow me briefly to consider how your Foreign Policy has grown and enlarged itself. I will only recall to your memory the message of President Monroe, when he clearly stated that the United States would take up arms to protect the American Colonies of Spain, now free republics, should the Holy (or rather unholy) Alliance make an attempt either to aid Spain to reduce the new American republics to their ancient colonial state, or to compel them to adopt political systems more conformable to the policy and views of that alliance. I entreat you to mark this well, gentlemen. Not only the forced introduction of monarchy, but in general the interference of foreign powers in the contest, was declared sufficient motive for the United States to protect the colonies. Let me remind you that this declaration of President Monroe was not only approved and confirmed by the people of the United States, but that Great Britain itself joined the United States, in the declaration of this decision and this policy. [...] It is true, that this declaration to go even to war, to protect the independence of foreign States against foreign interference, was restricted to the continent of America; for President Monroe declares in his message that the United States can have no concern in European struggles, being distant and separated from Europe by the great Atlantic Ocean. But I would remark that this indifference to European concerns is again a matter, not of principle but of temporary exigency – the motives of which have, by the lapse of time, entirely disappeared – so much that the balance is even turned to the opposite side.

President Monroe mentions *distance* as a motive of the above-stated distinction. Well, since the prodigious development of your Fulton's glorious invention, distance is no longer calculated by miles, but by hours; and, being so, Europe is of course less distant from you than the greater part of the American continent. But, let even the word distance be taken in a nominal sense. Europe is nearer to you than the greatest part of the American continent – yea! even nearer than perhaps some part of your own territory. President Monroe's second motive is, that you are separated from the Europe *by the Atlantic*. Now, at the present time, and in the present condition of navigation, the Atlantic is no separation, but rather a link; as the means of

that commercial intercourse which brings the interest of Europe home to you, connecting you with it by every tie of moral as well as material interest.

There is immense truth in that which the French Legation in the United States expressed to your government in an able note of 27th October past: – "America is closely connected with Europe, being only separated from the latter by a distance scarcely exceeding eight days' journey, by one of the most important of general interests – the interest of commerce. The nations of America and Europe are at this day so dependent upon one another, that the effects of any event, prosperous or otherwise, happening on one side of the Atlantic, are immediately felt on the other side. The result of this community of interests, commercial, political, and moral, between Europe and America – of this frequency and rapidity of intercourse between them, is, that it becomes as difficult to point out the geographical degree where American policy shall terminate, and European policy begin, as it is to trace out the line where American commerce begins and European commerce terminates. Where may be said to begin or terminate the ideas which are in the ascendant in Europe and in America?"

It is chiefly in New York that I feel induced to urge this, because New York is, by innumerable ties, connected with Europe – more connected than several parts of Europe itself. It is the agricultural interest of this great country which chiefly wants an outlet and a market. Now, it is far more to Europe than to the American continent that you have to look in that respect. [...]

Even in political considerations, now-a-days, you have stronger motives to feel interested in the fate of Europe than in the fate of the Central or Southern parts of America. Whatever may happen to the institutions of these parts, you are too powerful to see your own institutions affected by it. But let Europe become absolutistical (as, unless Hungary be restored to its independence, and Italy become free, be sure it will) – and your children will see these words, which your national government spoke in 1827, fulfilled on a larger scale than they were meant, that "the absolutism of Europe will not be appeased, until every vestige of human freedom has been obliterated even here." And oh! do not rely too fondly upon your power. It is great, assuredly. You have not to fear any single power on earth. But look to history. Mighty empires have vanished. Let not the enemies of freedom grow too strong. Victorious over Europe, and then united, they would be too strong even for you! And be sure they hate you most cordially. They consider you as their most dangerous opponent. Absolutism cannot sleep tranquilly, while the republican principle has such a mighty representative as your country is. [...]

I have shown you how Washington's policy has been gradually changed: but one mighty difference I must still commemorate. Your

population has, since Monroe's time, nearly doubled, I believe; or at least has increased by millions. And what sort of men are these millions? Are they only native-born Americans? No. European emigrants? Many are men, who though citizens of the United States are, by the most sacred ties of relationship, attached to the fate of Europe. That is a consideration worthy of reflection with your wisest men, who will, ere long agree with me, that in your president condition you are at least as much interested in the state of Europe, as twenty-eight years ago your fathers were in the fate of Central and Southern America. And really so it is. The unexampled sympathy for the cause of my country which I have met with in the United States proves that it is so. Your generous interference with the Turkish captivity of the Governor of Hungary, proves that it is so. And this progressive development in your foreign policy, is, in fact, no longer a mere instinctive ebullition of public opinion, which is about hereafter to direct your governmental policy; the opinion of the people is *already* avowed as the policy of the government. I have a most decisive authority to rely upon in saying so. It is the message of the President of the United States. His Excellency, Millard Fillmore, made a communication to Congress, a few days ago, and there I read the paragraph: – "The deep interest which we feel in the spread of liberal principles, and the establishment of free governments, and the sympathy with which we witness every struggle against oppression, *forbid that we should be indifferent* to a case in which the strong arm of a foreign power is invoked to stifle public sentiment and repress the spirit of freedom in any country."

Now, gentlemen, here is the ground which I take for my earnest endeavours to benefit the cause of Hungary. [...] I have been charged as arrogantly attempting to change your existing policy, and since I cannot in one speech exhaust the complex and mighty whole of my mission, I choose on the present opportunity to development my views about that fundamental principle: and having shown, not theoretically, but practically, that it is a mistake to think that you had, at any time, such a principle, and having shown, that if you ever entertained such a policy, you have been forced to abandon it – so much, at least, I hope I have achieved. My humble requests to your active sympathy may be still opposed by – I know not what other motives; but the objection, that you must not interfere with European concerns – this objection is disposed of, once and for ever, I hope. It remains now to inquire, whether, since you have professed not to be indifferent to the cause of European freedom – the cause of Hungary is such as to have just claims to your active and effectual assistance and support. It is, gentlemen.

To prove this I do not now intend to enter into an explanation of the particulars of our struggle, which I had the honour to conduct, as the chosen Chief Magistrate of my native land. It is highly gratifying

to me to find that the cause of Hungary is – excepting some ridiculous misrepresentations of ill- will – correctly understood here. I will only state now one fact, and that is, that our endeavours for independence were crushed by the armed interference of a foreign despotic power – the principle of all evil on earth – Russia. And stating this fact, I will not again intrude upon you with my own views, but recall to your memory the doctrines established by your own statesmen. Firstly – I return to your great Washington. He says in one of his letters to Lafayette, "My policies are plain and simple; I think every nation has a right to establish that form of government under which it conceives it can live most happy; and that no government ought to interfere with the internal concerns of another." Here I take my ground: – upon a principle of Washington – a *principle*, not a mere temporary policy calculated for the first twenty years of your infancy. Russia *has* interfered with the internal concerns of Hungary, and by doing so has violated the policy of the United States, established as a lasting principle by Washington himself. It is a lasting principle. I could appeal in my support to the opinion of every statesman of the United States, of every party, of every time; but to save time, I pass at once from the first President of the United States to the last, and recall to your memory this word of the present annual message of his Excellency President Fillmore: – "Let every people choose for itself, and make and alter its political institutions to suit its own condition and convenience." I beg leave also to quote the statement of your present Secretary of State, Mr. Webster, who, in his speech on the Greek question, speaks thus: – "The law of nations maintains that in extreme cases resistance is lawful, and that one nation has no right to interfere in the affairs of another." Well, that precisely is the ground upon which we Hungarians stand.

But I may perhaps meet the objection (I am sorry to say I have met it already) – "Well, we own that it has been violated by Russia in the case of Hungary, but after all what is Hungary to us? Let every people take care of itself, what is that to us?" So some speak: it is the old doctrine of private egotism, "Every one for himself, and God for us all." I will answer the objection again by the words of Mr. Webster, who, in his speech on the Greek question, having professed that the internal sovereignty of every nation is a law of nations – thus goes on, "But it may be asked 'what is all that to us?' The question is easily answered. *We are one of the nations*, and we as a nation have precisely the same interest in international law as a private individual has in the laws of his country." The principle which your honourable Secretary of State professes, is a principle of eternal truth. [...]

But from certain quarters it may be avowed, "Well, we acknowledge every nation's sovereign right; we acknowledge it to be a law of nations that no foreign power interfere in the affairs of another, and we are determined to respect this common law of mankind; but

if others do not respect that law it is not ours to meddle with them." Let me answer by an analysis: – *Every nation has the same interest in international law as a private individual has in the laws of his country.* That is an acknowledged principle with your statesmen. [...]

The duty of enforcing the observance to the common law of nations has no other limit than the power to fulfil it. Of course the republic of St. Marino, or the Prince of Monaco, cannot stop the Czar of Russia in his ambitious annoyance. It was ridiculous when the Prince of Modena refused to recognize the government of Louis Philippe – "but to whom much is given, from him will much be expected," says the Lord. Every condition has not only its rights, but also its own duties; and whatever exists as a power on earth, is in duty a part of the executive government of mankind, called to maintain the law of nations. [...] People of the United States, humanity expects that your glorious republic will prove to the world, *that republics are founded on virtue* – it expects to see you the guardians of the laws of humanity.

I will come to the last possible objection. I may be told, "you are right in your principles, your cause is just, and you have our sympathy, but, after all, we cannot go to war for your country; we cannot furnish you armies and fleets; we cannot fight your battle for you." There is the rub! Who can exactly tell what would have been the issue of your own struggle for independence (though your country was in a far happier geographical position than we, poor Hungarians), had France given such an answer to your forefathers in 1778 and 1781, instead of sending to your aid a fleet of thirty-eight men-of-war, and auxiliary troops, and 24,000 muskets, and a loan of nineteen millions? And what was far more than all this, did it not show that France resolved with all its power to espouse the cause of your independence? But, perhaps, I shall be told that France did this, not out of love of freedom, but out of hatred against England. Well, let it be; but let me then ask, shall the curse of olden times – hatred – be more efficient in the destinies of mankind than love of freedom, principles of justice, and the laws of humanity? And is America in the days of steam navigation more distant from Europe to-day, than France was from America seventy- three years ago? However, I must solemnly declare that it is not my intention to rely literally upon this example. It is not my wish to entangle the United States in war, or to engage your great people to send out armies and fleets to raise up and restore Hungary. Not at all, gentlemen; I most solemnly declare that I have never entertained such expectations or such hopes; and here I come to the practical point.

The principle of evil in Europe is the enervating spirit of Russian absolutism. Upon this rests the daring boldness of every petty tyrant to trample upon oppressed nations, and to crush liberty. To the Moloch of ambition has my native land fallen a victim. It is with this that

Montalembert threatens the French republicans. It was Russian intervention in Hungary which governed French intervention in Rome, and gave German tyrants hardihood to crush all the endeavours for freedom and unity in Germany. The despots of the European continent are leagued against the freedom of the world. That is A MATTER OF FACT. [...]

The second matter of fact is that the European continent is on the eve of a new revolution. It is not necessary to be initiated in the secret preparations of the European democracy to be aware of that approaching contingency. It is pointed out by the French constitution itself, prescribing a new Presidential election for the next spring. Now, suppose that the ambition of Louis Napoleon, encouraged by Russian secret aid, awaits this time (*which I scarcely believe*), and suppose that there should be a peaceful solution; such as would content the friends of the Republic in France; of course the first act of the new French President must be, at least, to recall the French troops from Rome. Nobody can doubt that a revolution in Italy will follow. Or if there is no peaceful solution in France, but a revolution, then every man knows that whenever the heart of France boils up, the pulsation is felt throughout Europe, and oppressed nations once more rise, and Russia again interferes.

Now I humbly ask, with the view of these circumstances before your eyes, can it be convenient to such a great power as this glorious republic, to await the very outbreak, and not until then to discuss and decide on your foreign policy? There may come, as under the last President, at a late hour, agents to see how matters stand in Hungary. Russian interference and treason achieved what the sacrilegious Hapsburg dynasty failed to achieve. You know the old words, "While Rome debated, Saguntum fell." So I respectfully press upon you my FIRST entreaty: it is, that your people will in good time express to your central government what course of foreign policy it wishes to be pursued in the case of the approaching events I have mentioned. And I most confidently hope that there is only one course possible, consistently with the above recorded principles. If you acknowledge that the right of every nation to alter its institutions and government is a law of nations – if you acknowledge the interference of foreign powers in that sovereign right to be a violation of the law of nations, as you really do – if you are *forbidden to remain indifferent* to this violation of international law (as your President openly professes that you are) – then there is no other course possible than neither to interfere in that sovereign right of nations, nor to allow any other powers whatever to interfere.

But you will perhaps object to me, "That amounts to going to war." I answer: no – that amounts to preventing war. What is wanted to that effect? It is wanted, that, being aware of the precarious condition of Europe, your national government should, as soon as possi-

ble, send instructions to your Minister at London, to declare to the English government that the United States, acknowledging the sovereign right of every nation to dispose of its own domestic concerns, have resolved not to interfere , but also not to let any foreign power whatever interfere with this sovereign right in order to repress the spirit of freedom in any country. Consequently, to invite the Cabinet of St. James's into this policy, and declare that the United States are resolved to act conjointly with England in that decision, in the approaching crisis of the European continent. Such is my FIRST humble request. If the citizens of the United States, instead of honouring me with the offers of their hospitality, would be pleased to pass convenient resolutions, and to ratify them to their national government – if the press would hasten to give its aid, and in consequence the national government instructed its Minister in England accordingly, and by communication to the Congress, as it is wont, give publicity to this step, I am entirely sure that you would find the people of Great Britain heartily joining this direction of policy. No power could feel peculiarly offended by it; no existing relation would be broken or injured: and still any future interference of Russia against the restoration of Hungary to that independence which was formally declared in 1849 would be prevented, Russian arrogance and preponderance would be checked, and the oppressed nations of Europe soon become free.

There may be some over-anxious men, who perhaps would say, "But if such a declaration of your government were not respected, and Russia still did interfere, then you would be obliged by this previous declaration, to go to war; and you don't desire to have a war." [...] But your declaration *will* be respected – Russia will not interfere – you will have no occasion for war – you will have prevented war. Be sure Russia would twice, thrice consider, before provoking against itself, besides the roused judgment of nations – (to say nothing of the legions of Republican France) – the English "Lion" and the star-surrounded "Eagle" of America. Remember that you, in conjunction with England, once before declared that you would not permit European absolutism to interfere with the formerly Spanish colonies of America. Did this declaration bring you to a war? quite the contrary; it prevented war. So it would be in our case also. Let me therefore most humbly entreat you, people of the United States, to give such practical direction to your generous sympathy for Hungary, as to arrange meetings and pass such resolutions, in every possible place of this Union, as I took the liberty to mention above.

[...] The THIRD object of my wishes, gentlemen, is the recognition of the independence of Hungary when the critical moment arrives. Your own declaration of independence proclaims the right of every nation to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which "the laws of nature and nature's God"

entitle them. The political existence of your glorious republic is founded upon this principle, upon this right. Our nation stands upon the same ground: there is a striking resemblance between your cause and that of my country. On the 4th July, 1776, John Adams spoke thus in your Congress, "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I am for this declaration. In the beginning we did not go so far as separation from the Crown, but 'there is a divinity which shapes our ends.'" These noble words were present to my mind on the 14th April, 1849, when I moved the forfeiture of the Crown by the Hapsburgs in the National Assembly of Hungary. Our condition was the same; and if there be any difference, I venture to say it is in favour of us. Your country, before this declaration, was not *a self-consisting independent* State. Hungary was. Through the lapse of a thousand years, through every vicissitude of this long period, while nations vanished and empires fell, *the self-consisting independence of Hungary was never disputed*, but was recognized by all powers of the earth, sanctioned by treaties made with the Hapsburg dynasty, at the era when this dynasty, by the freewill of my nation, which acted as one of two contracting parties, was invested with the kingly crown of Hungary. Even more, this independence of the kingdom was acknowledged to make a part of the international law of Europe, and was guaranteed not only by foreign European governments, such as Great Britain, but also by several of those once constitutional states which belonged formerly to the German, and after its dissolution, to the Austrian empire.

This independent condition of Hungary is clearly defined in one of our fundamental laws of 1791, in these words: – "Hungary is a free and independent kingdom, having its own self- consistent existence and constitution, and not subject to any other nation or country in the world." This therefore was our ancient right. *We were not dependent on, nor a part of, the Austrian empire, as your country was dependent on England.* [...]

The laws which we succeeded to carry in 1848, of course, altered nothing in that old chartered condition of Hungary. We transformed the peasantry into freeholders, and abolished feudal incumbrances. We replaced the political privileges of aristocracy by the common liberty of the whole people; gave to the people at large representation in the legislature; transformed our municipalities into democratic corporations; introduced equality before the law for the whole people in rights and duties, and abolished the immunity of taxation which had been enjoyed by the class called *Noble*; secured equal religious liberty to all, secured liberty of the press and of association, provided for public gratuitous introduction of the whole people of every confession and of whatever tongue. In all this we did no wrong. All these were, as you see, internal reforms which did not at all interfere with our allegiance to the king and were carried lawfully in peaceful

> legislation *with the king's own sanction.* [...] The dynasty [...] resorted to the most outrageous conspiracy, and attacked us by arms, and upon receiving a false report of a great victory this young usurper issued a proclamation that Hungary shall no more exist – that its independence, its constitution, its very existence is abolished, and it shall be absorbed, like a farm or fold, into the Austrian Empire. To all this Hungary answered, "Thou shalt not exist, tyrant, but we will;" and we banished him, and issued the declaration of the deposition of his dynasty, and of our separate independence.
>
> So you see, gentlemen, that there is a very great difference between your declaration and ours – it is in our favour. There is another difference; you declared your independence of the English crown when it was yet very doubtful whether you would be successful. We declared our independence of the Austrian crown only after we, in legitimate defence, were already victorious; when we had actually beaten the pretender, and had thus already proved that we had strength to become an independent power. One thing more: our declaration of independence was not only overwhelmingly voted in our Congress, but every county, every municipality, solemnly declared its consent and adherence to it; so it became sanctioned, not by mere representatives, but by the whole nation positively, and by the fundamental institutions of Hungary. And so it still remains. Nothing has since happened on the part of the nation contrary to this declaration. One thing only happened, – a foreign power, Russia, came with its armed bondsmen, and, aided by treason, has overthrown us for a while. Now, I put the question before God and humanity to you, free sovereign people of America, can this violation of international law abolish the legitimate character of our declaration of independence? If not, then here I take my ground, because I am in this very manifesto entrusted with the charge of Governor of my fatherland. I have sworn, before God and my nation, to endeavour to maintain and secure this act of independence. And so may God the Almighty help me as I will – I will, until my nation is again in the condition to dispose of its government, which I confidently trust, – yea, more, I know, – will be republican. And then I retire to the humble condition of my former private life, equalling, in one thing at least, your Washington, not in merits, but in honesty. That is the only ambition of my life. Amen. Here, then, is my THIRD humble wish: that the people of the United States, would by all constitutional means of its wonted public life, declare that, acknowledging the legitimacy of our independence, it is anxious to greet Hungary amongst the independent powers of the earth, and invites the government of the United States to recognize this independence *at the earliest convenient time.* That is all.[6]

This speech strikes the reader 150 years later as much with its thorough knowledge and understanding of American political thinking as with its powerful rea-

soning and persuasiveness. It captured its audience and the many versions of the same arguments delivered on other occasions at other places usually also carried the day. Those reading the arguments, usually well summarized in the press, and running so much against common wisdom and accepted doctrine, were more difficult to be convinced. Undoubtedly the weakest point of the argument was that adopting the policies advocated by Kossuth would not get the United States involved in a war fought in Europe – and not for obvious American national interests, but for a noble principle. A few days later, speaking at the Bar of New York on December 19, Kossuth himself admitted that a mere declaration denouncing intervention might not be enough.

> Yes, gentlemen, I confess, should Russia not respect such a declaration of your country, then you are forced to go to war, or else be degraded before mankind. But, gentlemen, you must not shrink back from the mere word war; you must consider what is the probability of its occurrence. I have already stated my certain knowledge how vulnerable Russia is; how weak she is internally. [... In Hungary] *the Czar did not dare to interfere until he was assured that he would meet no foreign power to oppose him.* Show him, free people of America – show him in a manly declaration, that he will meet your force if he dares once more to trample on the laws of nations – accompany this declaration with an augmentation of your Mediterranean fleets, and be sure he will not stir."[7] But you are powerful enough to defy any power on earth [...] give to humanity the glorious example of a great people going to war, not for egoistical interest, but for justice, for the law of nations [...] It will be the last war, because it will make nations contented – contented, because free.[8]

These last words recall the illusions of the first world war, and sound truly Wilsonian. They did not help Kossuth winning America for his foreign policy platform.

While Kossuth's first speeches in New York were received most warmly by crowded audiences, they cooled the enthusiasm of quite a few in Congress. On December 2, 1851 the President expressed his wish that Congress should decide on how to receive the Hungarian statesman. A heated debate started on the following day. Foote's move for an official reception was opposed by Southern Democrats and by radical free-soilers, who saw a contradiction between welcoming a foreign freedom-fighter while denying freedom to slaves. Conservatives denounced Kossuth as a revolutionary. The debate ran for eight days. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts called Kossuth "a living Washington," while Senator Seward of New York on December 8 gave a moving eulogy.

> I know not in the history of modern times a more sublime spectacle – than would be afforded by hearing the American Congress in

the name and behalf of the American people, give to the representative of the cause of popular government in Europe a cordial welcome, on his escape from the perils of his position and his arrival in this land, where that system of government is established and in full and successful operation. [...] I confess I am desirous, as the Congress of the United States did bring or cause Kossuth to be brought here under their authority, that his reception should be a national act, and that the two houses of Congress should not be divided, but should act together in this great proceeding. This form, also, seems to commend itself to adoption by the Senate, because it stops short of committing Congress to any action beyond he words, - beyond the simple national action of giving Kossuth a cordial welcome. What I desire is not the utterance of words: what I want to have Congress do is to tact – to extend the welcome to Kossuth which the world expects him to receive. [...]

Mr. President, in the course of human events, we see the nations of Europe struggling to throw off the despotic systems of government, and attempting to establish a government based upon the principles of republicanism or of constitutional monarchy. Whenever such efforts are made, it invariably happens that the existing despotisms of Europe endeavor to suppress the high and holy endeavor, and to subdue the people by whom it is made. The consequence is that despotism has one common cause; and it results that the cause of civil and constitutional liberty has, in all countries, become one common cause – the common cause of mankind against despotism. Now, whatever nation leads the way at any time – at any crisis – in this contest for civil liberty, it becomes, as we perceive, the representative of all the nations of the earth. We once occupied that noble and interesting position, and we engaged the sympathies of civilized men throughout the world. No one can deny that now, or recently, Hungary took that position. [...]

Hungary herself has set the seal upon his merits, and has concluded that question; and it would be as unreasonable and absurd to listen to those who should disparage the fame and character of Washington as to whose who stand doubting and hesitating whether in honoring Kossuth we are really honoring the cause of liberty and the cause of his unfortunate country. [...]

I will notice a single other objection, and then I will leave this resolution to its fate. It is the apprehension that, by the adoption of this or a similar measure, the Congress of the United States would commit itself to some act of intervention in the affairs of Europe, by which the government of the United States may be embarrassed in its foreign relations. [...] If I saw in this measure a step in advance towards the bloody field of contention on the shores of Europe, I, too, would hesitate before I would vote for it. But I see no advance towards any such danger in doing a simple act of national justice and magnanimity.

> I think that no man will deny the principle that a nation may do for the cause of liberty in other countries whatever the laws of nations do not forbid. I plant myself upon that principle – that what the laws of nations do not forbid any nation, may do for the cause of civil liberty in any other nation and country. Now, the laws of nations do not forbid hospitality, the laws of nations do not forbid sympathy with the exile – sympathy with the overthrown champion of freedom. [...] The laws of nature require, and the laws of nations demand hospitality to those who flee from oppression and despair. This is all that we have done, and all that we propose to do.[9]

Stephen Douglas called attention to the fact that Kossuth challenged European absolutism, the antipode of the basic principles the U.S. were built upon, and that he was a representative of world freedom. But even those showing the greatest sympathy and warmth towards Kossuth did not accept any suggestion of intervention for the cause of Hungary. Senator Cass said that while denouncing Russia's intervention was morally imperative, it did not mean that the U.S. would send a fleet to European waters. Senator Charles Sumner's maiden speech was perhaps the best expression of the feelings of the majority.

> He deserves it [the invitation] as the early, constant, and incorruptible champion of the liberal cause in Hungary, who, while yet young, with unconscious power, girded himself for the contest, and by a series of masterly labors, with voice and pen, in parliamentary debates and in the discussions of the press, breathed into his country the breath of life. [...] Without equivocation, amidst the supporters of monarchy, in the shadow of a lofty throne, he proclaimed himself a republican, and proclaimed the republic as his cherished aspiration for Hungary. [...]
>
> But an appeal has been made against the resolution on grounds which seem to me extraneous and irrelevant. It has been attempted to involve it with the critical question of intervention by our country in European affairs; and recent speeches in England and New York have been adduced to show that such intervention is sought by our guest. It is sufficient to say in reply to this suggestion, introduced by the senator from Georgia (Mr. Dawson) with a skill which all might envy – that no such intervention is promised or implied by the resolution. But I feel strongly on this point, and desire to go further.
>
> While thus warmly joining in this tribute, let me be understood as in no respect encouraging any idea of armed intervention in European affairs. Such a system would open phials of perplexities and ills, which I trust our country will never be called to affront. In the wisdom of Washington we may find perpetual counsel. Like Washington, in his eloquent words to the minister of the French Directory, I would offer sympathy and God-speed to all, in every land, who struggle for human rights; but, sternly as Washington on another oc-

> casion, against every pressure, against all popular appeals, against all solicitations, against all blandishments, I would uphold with steady hand the peaceful neutrality of the country. Could I now approach our mighty guest, I would say to him with the respectful frankness of a friend: "Be content with the out-gushing sympathy which you now so marvelously inspire everywhere throughout this wide-spread land, and may it strengthen your soul! Trust in God, in the inspiration of your cause, and in the great future, pregnant with freedom for all mankind. But respect our ideas, as we respect yours. Do not seek to reverse our traditional, established policy of peace. Do not, under the too plausible sophism of upholding non-intervention, provoke American intervention on distant European soil. Leave us to tread where Washington points the way.[10]

Finally on December 12 the Senate adopted Seward's motion with Shield's (Ill.) modification: Kossuth was to be received exactly like Lafayette had been. There was 36 vote for that and 6 – from the South – against. The House of Representatives concurred on December 15: 181 for and 16 against, with Rep. Smith from Alabama saying that if Kossuth continued to agitate against friendly Austria he should be arrested! All that shows that while the country came under the spell of the Hungarian leader, Congress overwhelmingly concurring, sectional interests and ideological concerns acted as a brake even in what was hardly more than a gesture.

Kossuth's train arrived in Washington on December 30. He was received by Senators Shield and Seward. Secretary Webster immediately visited him in his hotel, followed by the mayor and a large number of politicians and various associations, delegations. The House was still debating about the details of his reception. On the next day, December 31, Kossuth called upon President Fillmore. In a masterly speech he presented the case of Hungary, calling for help. The President expected only a courtesy call, so in his answer he told that he personally sympathized with Hungarian independence, but the policy of the Union would not abandon its traditions. This should not have been a surprise, but still it was a cold shower for Kossuth.

On January 7 Cass, Shields and Seward presented him to the Senate, and on the same day the House appointed three members to show him to the House. Kossuth's answer to the welcoming words of the Speaker was brief and non-controversial.

> Sir: It is a remarkable fact in the history of mankind that while, through all the past, honors were bestowed upon glory, and glory was attached only to success. The legislative authorities of this great republic bestow the highest honors upon a persecuted exile, not conspicuous by glory, not favored by success, but engaged in a just cause. There is a triumph of republican principles of this fact.

> Sir, in my own and my country's name, I thank the House of Representatives of the United States for the honor of this cordial welcome.[11]

On that evening a banquet was given by both Houses in Kossuth's honor, with 250 attending, including Webster and two other members of the cabinet. Kossuth's address was again non-controversial, extolling the virtues of self-government.

> Happy is your great country, Sir, that it was selected by the blessing of the Lord to prove the glorious practicability of a federative union of many sovereign state, all preserving their state-rights and their self-government, and yet united in one.

Despite a few dissenting voices Kossuth's reception in Congress was exceptional in both form and substance. Nevertheless the political aims of the Hungarian leader were not met by the legislature, so he took his message to the country, embarking on a tour that took him as far as St. Louis in the West, New Orleans in the South and Boston in the North. There were moving outpourings of sympathy, and occasionally even the idea of intervention was endorsed. Much of the financial contributions were, however, spent by the local hosts on lavish hospitality – to the grief of Governor Kossuth.

> Kossuth failed to accomplish any of his objectives in the United States: American foreign policy was not altered; the independence of Hungary was not recognized; the Anglo-American alliance did not become a reality; and the financial contributions did not meet his expectations. [...] Although the first three weeks of his visit were encouraging, the public did not respond to Kossuth's sustained efforts with sustained aid. [...]
>
> Kossuth's goals were not always realistic, and often leant themselves to justifiable skepticism from the American public. Even if the public had been more receptive, however, America could not pursue the objectives Kossuth had desired. She was not prepared – either militarily, financially, or psychologically – for such a fundamental change in foreign policy. In essence, Kossuth was defeated both by the enormity of his task and by the factional opposition to his goals.[12]

John Komlos' judgement is valid only for the short run. The effort to bring about a fundamental change in U.S. foreign policy, to abandon neutrality and isolationism was bound to fail in 1852 – but wasn't Kossuth's only a premature but sound idea? Sixty-six years later, in 1917, the U.S. came to act exactly along the lines advocated by Kossuth, and President Wilson's principles echoed much of what Kossuth advocated in 1851 and 1852. Ninety years later the Atlantic Charter came

to embody the very principles first expressed by the Hungarian leader. When the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance was established in 1949, its basic principle and underlying philosophy, the idea to stand up jointly to aggression and to maintain the rule of law in international life, is also very close to the tenets proposed by Kossuth in the United States.

Today the dreams of Kossuth have been realized: Hungary is a fully independent democracy, closely allied to a democratic Europe and to the United States, the country which inspired Kossuth and in his footsteps generations of Hungarians.

Notes

1. Joseph Széplaki, *Louis Kossuth, "The Nation's Guest"* (Ligonier, PA: Bethlen Press, 1976). The most complete account of Kossuth's tour is Dénes Jánossy, *A Kossuth-emigráció Angliában és Amerikában, 1851–1852* [The Story of the Hungarian Exiles Led by Kossuth in England and America, 1851–1852], 3 vols. (Budapest, 1940–1948); Donald S. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America. A Study in Sectionalism and Foreign Policy, 1848–1852* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1977); John H. Komlós, *Kossuth in America, 1851–1852* (Buffalo: East European Institute, 1973).
2. Steven Béla Várdy, "Epilogue" in *The Life of Governor Louis Kossuth with his Public Speeches in the United States* (New York, 1852). Reprinted by Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 2001.
3. Mario M. Cuomo and Harold Holzer, eds, *Lincoln on Democracy* (New York, 1990).
4. Komlós, 7.
5. As the editor of the first popular daily newspaper in Hungary Kossuth established the reputation of the United Staes as a most successful country and as a political model. György Szabad, "On the Political System of the United States" in *Kossuth politikai pályája* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1977).
6. Newman, Francis W., ed., *Select Speeches of Kossuth. Condensed and Abridged, with Kossuth's Express Sanction* (New York: C. S. Francis & Co./Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co., 1854), 45–74. This volume is now available on the Internet: http://www.hrfa.org/kossuth/index.html Cf. Komlós, 84–86.
7. Newman, 114–116.
8. Komlós, 87. Strangely these last words were left out from the Newman edition – most likely deliberately, because of the stir they caused.
9. Jánossy, vol. 2, 146–153.
10. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 154–158.
11. Dedication by the Congress of a Bust of Lajos (Louis) Kossuth. Proceedings in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, March 15, 1990. 101st Congress, 2nd Session. House Doc. 101–168, 54–55.
12. Komlós, 139.

"KOSSUTH: THE HERMIT AND THE CROWD"

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Kossuth, the crowd hero, was the pioneer of an exciting new political discourse that used the Magyar vernacular. In exile, Kossuth presented himself as "the wandering son of a bleeding nation." Eventually, he retreated into the role of the hermit of Turin. His funeral attracted a crowd of over a million people in 1894.

Keywords: Nationalism, martyrology, demonology, nationalistic rhetoric, national identity

Let me begin with three familiar images of Louis Kossuth and the crowd.[1] Lithographs of the electoral crowd for the Pest county election of 1847 depict carriages on the streets, flamboyant dress and scenes of exalted rhetoric. One youthful admirer, Baron Frigyes Podmaniczky announced to the crowd on election eve that he knew of four special days since the creation of the world: the first when light was created out of chaos; the second when Christ was born; the third when the French Revolution broke out, and the fourth would be tomorrow, when it would be decided if Kossuth was elected or not.[2] Kossuth, the crowd hero, was the pioneer of an exciting new political discourse that used the Magyar vernacular. Lamartine in France, Robert Blum in Germany, and Kossuth in Hungary were a recognizable type – the theatrical orator of 1848. But Kossuth was also more. He would span the lives of several generations of Hungarians. From his arrest and imprisonment in 1837 to his burial in 1894, Kossuth seemed ever present in Hungarian political life – either center stage or as an oracular figure off stage.

A second popular image is of the massive crowds of London and New York greeting Kossuth four years later in 1851. As the principal martyr of defeat in 1849, Kossuth attracted some of the largest political crowds the western world had ever seen. His heavily accented and impassioned rendition of Hungarian martyrdom was not simply heard by vast crowds in the United States, it was also telegraphed around the country, so that Kossuth occasioned what we would call a media frenzy. "My country was martyred! Her rulers are hangmen!" was the prin-

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cipal message he brought his various audiences."[3] He succeeded in making of the Hungarians what the Poles had been to the previous generation of Englishmen and Americans – martyrs in the march to progress.[4]

Kossuth presented himself as "the wandering son of a bleeding nation," a homeless exile representing "my down-trodden land," with his authority resting on the fact that "my people took, and take me still, for the incarnated personification of their wishes, their sentiments, their affections, and their hopes. Is it not then quite natural that the woes of my people also should be embodied in myself? I have the concentrated woes of millions of Magyars in my breast."[5]

Finally, a third association of Kossuth and the crowd is the mammoth gathering of over a million people awaiting the Kossuth funeral procession in Budapest in 1894. This funeral came after forty-five years of exile, and it brought forth the old schism and the old unity. Kossuth had refused to accept the Compromise of 1867, and consequently Franz Joseph forbade the Hungarian government from accepting the body and giving the dead insurrectionist a hero's burial. The Hungarian government was painfully embarrassed by the king's insistence that members of the cabinet, government officials, and army officers not attend the funeral. But the municipality of Budapest claimed the body and held a "private" funeral attended by millions in a moment of great collective emotion. The whole nation mourned Kossuth's death and embraced his son Ferenc, who had accompanied his father's body from Turin.

These three crowd scenes encapsulate a popular story of the rise, fall and redemption of the nation's greatest son. Imbedded in this narrative of Kossuth and the crowd are decades of Kossuth the Hermit, making periodic interventions in Hungarian political life. Here he could be a rancorous exile summoning the resentment of defeat, or remain the man of principle who served as a troubled conscience of fading and abandoned ideals. In either event, he represented an ambiguity, a tension that remained characteristic of Hungary between 1849 and 1914.

The first of the exile's interventions came in September 1849, the moment of defeat, when Kossuth issued the Vidin Letter that fingered General Görgey as a "traitor."[6] Kossuth's curse consigned Görgey to the fate of a recluse waiting for decades for some vindication of the military leadership he had exhibited during the lost war of independence. Kossuth fostered a nagging "what if" in popular discourse. This reduced Hungary to a nation so vulnerable it could fall victim to a traitor. Mihály Vörösmarty's 1850 poem "Átok" [Curse] gave the myth of the traitor a high cultural resonance. The counterpoint to a martyrology focusing on unjust defeat and persecution was a demonology, i.e. a negative dialogue with the repressors. Kossuth's nationalist rhetoric blended demonology and martyrology. A martyr was a witness for his cause; the demon became a figure to be driven from one's environment. Dominating the stage aside from the traitor Görgey were

the dictator Haynau and the villainess Archduchess Sophia. Kossuth proclaimed during his tour of America that the latter, "the mother of the present usurper of Hungary," was to be "cursed through all posterity," for she was "the source of all misfortune which now weighs so heavily upon my bleeding fatherland."[7]

While celebrated abroad as never before, Hungarian national identity felt besieged and vulnerable at home in the reactionary early part of the 1850s. The discrepancy between Kossuth's oratory abroad and the stillness bred by enforced silence at home highlighted the exile community's growing divergence from the reality in the homeland and its impoverished political speech.[8] Kossuth's foreign adventures were unique to his person and the conditions abroad, making them impossible to emulate within the country. At the same time Kossuth's demonology was, ultimately, too apocalyptic. Internal critics such as Zsigmond Kemény sought to counter the weight of Kossuth's heroics and the pursuit of a futile policy. It was naive to have assumed that the European powers would have allowed Hungary to emerge from the revolution as an independent country, and more than fanciful to imagine that cheering English-speaking crowds could make any difference to Hungary's future, Kemény argued. He feared Kossuth's nationalist enterprise would further Hungary's isolation and narrow the perimeters of Hungarian potential. Kemény championed Deák as the intellectual architect of the turn away from Kossuth, the "people's apostle" who had allowed the ship of state to capsize. Kemény countered the pessimism of the exiles. Instead he argued, "Everything is new, everything is untried, everything is unusual." "Epimenides' long sleep is inappropriate for us in these eventful times."[9]

The Hungarian experience of defeat required a recognition that the system of ideas that had sustained action during the revolution had collapsed, and that action was unequivocally restricted. Nevertheless, Kossuth dominated the Magyar imagination throughout the decade of counter-revolution. Hungarian boys continued to imagine themselves as proud heroes in Kossuth's army. "The Kossuth Song," initially sung as a recruiting ditty during the general mobilization of December 1848, evoked the experience of the uprising more strongly than anything else. Therefore, the public singing of "The Kossuth Song," with its six hundred variants, would become the favored act of defiance during the next decade-and-a-half.[10] Cheers for Kossuth, or wearing the Kossuth cap, were grounds for arrest during the 1850s, but "Éljen Kossuth" [Long Live Kossuth!] graffiti also appeared. Occasionally, prescriptions for disobedience, supposedly from Kossuth, appeared on wall placards, or in proclamations and manifestos that were passed around.[11] In Szeged, on one market day in 1851 when the town was filled with peasants, a file of prisoners crossed the spot where Kossuth had delivered a recruiting speech two years before. The first prisoner in line suddenly stopped, took off his hat, and shouted repeatedly "Éjlen Kossuth!" The whole square suddenly joined the refrain, and Austrian forces had to be called out to prevent any serious incident.[12]

The very cry "Éljen!" became suspect among the authorities, who feared any cheer would turn into a yell of "Éljen Kossuth!"

Hungarians continually combed over their memories in order to make sense of their situation. Memory at home became a hybrid between that which had happened and solutions for life in the present. Émigré memory was more static. Even while he was being mythologized, Kossuth's actual political sway waned. Kossuth's message from America to his people was, "Be patient; hope, and wait thy time!"[13] "Be faithful as hitherto, keep to the holy sentences of the Bible, pray for thy liberation, and then chant thy national hymns when the mountains reecho the thunder of the cannons of thy liberators!"[14] This was the prescription for an unquiet wait: sustaining the invisible crowd through hymns, prayer, and memory.

Kossuth remained the man on the outside, ready to topple the system on the inside. He attempted to spark insurrections within Hungary at the outbreak of the Austro-Italian war of 1859 and the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. Kossuth's proclamation of June 23, 1866, concluded, "I embody a principle called 1849." Hungary had been isolated then, he said, but now, as an ally of Prussia, "we are neither alone nor abandoned," and will reap the fruits of Hungarian efforts in 1849.[15] The bid for independence failed, and eighteen days before the coronation of Franz Joseph as King of Hungary, Kossuth published his "Cassandra Letter," condemning the Compromise of 1867 as a surrender of national independence. The argument was published in newspapers, alternately entitled "Freedom," "Liberty," "Fraternity," and "March 15." The threat that the Kossuthites might disrupt the coronation dissolved in the face of a skeptical, but also buoyant, celebratory crowd on coronation day. In the aftermath of the coronation, the new Andrássy-led government launched a vigorous campaign against "Kossuthite subversion" in certain Kossuth strongholds, such as Heves County.[16] The government also staged a show trial, targeting the publicist László Böszörményi for publishing Kossuth's "Váci Letter," in which Kossuth restated his repudiation of the Habsburg Monarchy and insisted that there could be no compromising of a free Hungary.[17] With the Böszörményi trial the "Kossuth cult" was, in effect, placed on trial and convicted of being impractical. While stalwart Kossuthites mobilized the old martyrology, the Andrássy regime succeeded in marginalizing Kossuth and his supporters as fanatics.

Kossuth retreated into the role of the hermit of Turin. It was a time of writing memoirs, greeting Hungarian delegations, and periodically issuing missives to the homeland. The media would turn their attention to Kossuth on March 15, Kossuth's birthday, name day, the anniversary of the seizure of the Buda castle, and the day of the Arad martyrs. By the 1870s the ranks of his generation were also beginning to thin. As he mourned their passing, he remarked that he had heard their voices calling him from the grave: it is your turn now! In 1872 he was wondering, "Why

am I hanging around here anymore? I am just using up oxygen uselessly. ... I just leave a myth behind me, not any actual accomplishment."

The clear divisions between Deákists and Kossuthites broke down in the early 1870s, especially when the economic crash of 1873 exposed the frayed edges of the Deákist camp. Scandals had followed the agreement, and few of those who had forged the compromise remained in Budapest to reform the system. The ailing Deák grew ever more disillusioned with his tarnished party. Furthermore, the economic downturn led to a paralysis that forced the political class to look for some new solution. There was a yearning even among Kossuthites for some resolution in which neither the defenders of the Compromise of 1867 nor the unreconciled would have the last word. Or rather, a Janus-faced system that spoke simultaneously out of both corners of the mouth. This was poignantly expressed at a March 15th banquet in 1874 when Lajos Mocsáry toasted Kossuth; only to follow that up with another toast where he voiced the hope that in time all of Hungary "would turn into a large banquet for the March 15, 1848 memorial holiday," and its toastmaster would be Franz Joseph.[18]

When Deák died in 1875, parliament commissioned a Deák statue.[19] One Kossuthite deputy dared to object, "lest every majority apotheosize its men." The usually aloof Kálmán Tisza, the architect of an emerging fusion of Deákists and Kossuthites, "became pale from excitement," the newspapers reported. "His hands trembled, and at first, his words were halting... He unleashed 'holy anger' on Ernő Simonyi's head" and vociferously defended the compromise and the wisdom of its architect."[20] But Kossuth would have the last word. In a letter he reminded the Hungarian public that Kossuth, "an exile from the fatherland, was also exiled from Deák's heart."[21]

Kálmán Tisza did succeed in patching together a new alignment in the Liberal Party that co-opted some of Kossuth's followers. A gangling, dour Calvinist party boss, Tisza fended off Kossuth's influence by relegating the self-styled hermit of Turin to an older generation already transfixed in time, consigned to the role of the idiosyncratic conscience of 1848.[22] In sharp contrast to the flamboyant Gyula Andrássy and the oracular Kossuth, Tisza's political style was decidedly bland. He was content that Franz Joseph and Kossuth would cast long shadows, so long as he might stand in between them. Kossuth also adapted to his role. In 1877 he flatly turned down any thought that he might return to act as the intermediary between the king and the nation. During the Kálmán Tisza era from 1875 to 1890, the king adapted to the party system in Hungary, carving out a central role for himself. In March 1879, a great natural disaster permitted Franz Joseph to project an image of the concerned father of his Hungarian kingdom. The government received a telegram reading, "Szeged was. We are saving what can be saved."[23] When Franz Joseph toured the second-largest city in Hungary, a high drama en-

sued that was not dependent upon orchestrated ceremonials and fanfare. The sovereign came prepared with words of comfort and promises of aid for the flooded-out city, but when he came face to face with the immensity of the tragedy, he wept while making his address. This prompted Kossuth to write, "I, who don't recognize the power of your king, who view with complete indifference the glitter of purple luxury, bow myself in tribute and respect at the sight of the king in whose eyes the tears of human involvement shimmered."[24]

The publication of Kossuth's diary brought forth the old schism and reignited the old refrain of injustice.[25] The old martyrology was more comfortable, even if it did not conform to the dualist social reality. Kossuth had assumed the role of the monarch in exile, but he could not stem the social dynamics that were unraveling the consensus of Hungarian politics that had made almost everyone liberal and in favor of industrialization. He bristled at the Hungarian socialists' repudiation of Kossuth as a gentry politician with outdated views.[26] In early 1883 Kossuth countered that the lower and middle gentry were the very pillars of Hungarian liberalism, a beleaguered elite worthy of and needing defense; and by that summer the losers of industrialization, urbanization, or liberalism had lost their patience. During the Tisza-Eszlar rioting in the summer of 1883, Kossuth would stand together with Tisza and Franz Joseph in denouncing the anti-Semitic crowd. The racist rioting was a blow to his notion of liberal politics. It had been the proudest claim of Hungarian liberalism that the old power relation between sovereign and subject was being replaced by the distinction between the cultivated and the uncultivated, and that the liberal elite was entrusted in cultivating the unenlightened. Liberalism was elitist to the present and democratic to the future, projecting political inclusion to all who were educated and owned property. In the Hungarian context this had provided a path for assimilation of Jews, who were willing to matriculate through a Hungarian school system, but remained exclusive to other language minorities who wanted to develop their own language cultures. The new political anti-Semitism threatened this conception. On the danger of this anti-Semitic nihilism, Franz Joseph, Tisza, and Kossuth were in full agreement, struggling to check it in their own domains. Against the liberal strategy two avenues of resistance lay open to the disenfranchised of the eighties: one leading to the forming of a distinctive socialist subculture or in the case of the minorities an alternative identification, and the other leading to an ultimately nihilistic attack on the liberal concept of culture. The chastened crowd had been open to those who embraced the martyrology of a defeated revolution. Kossuth represented the myth of Hungarian martyrdom, which implied a certain solidarity among loser groups. The anti-Semitic crowds, by contrast, repudiated such openness; they represented the exclusivist resentment of the losers from industrialization. Kossuth sighed, "As a man of the nineteenth century, I am ashamed by this anti-Semitic agitation, as a Hungarian it embarrasses me, as a patriot I condemn it."[27] But the Kossuthites were wrenched

by division, with some of their numbers attracted to the exclusivist nationalism of the anti-Semites. At their March 15, 1884 rally in Cegléd the anti-Semitic faction stoned Gábor Ugron, one of their principal critics in the Independence Party.[28] Although this wave of anti-Semitism soon passed, Kossuth's sense of isolation increased.

Tisza resigned over the most symbolic of issues, refusing to take responsibility for a law that, in effect, would deprive the eighty-seven-year-old Kossuth of his Hungarian citizenship.[29] Kossuth declared, "I believe that I am the only one on earth" that is without a fatherland. "Yet even if Hungary abandons me, I will not renounce Hungary."[30] The act of burying Kossuth, which for so long seemed a looming responsibility for Tisza, passed to his lieutenants in the Liberal Party. In 1894 the liberal regime lost the goading presence of Kossuth. By having to contend with the hermit as hero, the liberal regime had gained a greater dynamism and the illusion of democracy. The emerging socialist opposition confronted the liberals with a new type of politics, the politics of the streets, and with demands for serious suffrage reform. To this juncture, the factions of the political elite, however disparate, had agreed on the restricted electoral system. The Kossuth radicals had wished the exclusion of the minority nationalities, and neither the compromise liberals nor the conservatives had desired to include workers or peasants.

The Liberal Party clung to power but with an increasingly aging hierarchy that found itself on the defensive. The very success in urbanizing Hungary rendered the rotten borough system on which the Liberal Party had manufactured its majorities indefensible, and the prospect for a mass base for liberalism began to dim. In reaction, the liberal elites, as the last representatives of the revolutionary tradition of 1848, as well as the generation that had fashioned the liberal compromise, sought to memorialize their achievements by anchoring liberalism in a thousand-year past. Modernists yearned for a break with the liberal culture of the preceding half-century. They were tired of the aesthetics of storytelling, and repudiated, in particular, the passion for tracing the nation's teleological development from its existence on the steppes under the barbarian chieftains. Modernists mocked the eclectic historicism and the aggrandizement of self-important individuals at the core of the memorializing project of Hungarian liberalism. Still the role of the mass as a passive but impressionable audience remained much the same for both the politicians and the modernists, and each sought to erect Kossuth monuments in their own image. There was outrage in the Budapest art world when Ferenc Kossuth, the son of the great revolutionary leader and heir to the stewardship of the Independence Party, tried to sway the jury away from a modernist design for the Kossuth mausoleum in the Kerepesi Cemetery.

The Kossuth cult was boosted still further by the discovery of the remains of Ferenc Rákóczi II (1676–1735) in Turkey. The identification of Kossuth with

Rákóczi, grafted the homage felt toward Rákóczi onto the martyrology of Kossuth. In order for Rákóczi's remains to be officially buried in Hungary, Franz Joseph was forced to acquiesce in the annulment of the 1749 law declaring Rákóczi a traitor and to accept the political cult of an anti-Habsburg rebel. Nationalists celebrated "an injustice purged," as if Kossuth himself had been rehabilitated. Ceremony after ceremony followed in rapid succession for three years, primarily in Transylvania and the outlying areas, but eventually in Budapest, as well.[31] The Kossuthites had supported an expanded suffrage in theory, even expansion into the national minority communities. Their radical-liberal struggle in the name of "the nation" had also been presumed to be in the name of "the people." But when "the nation" proved unable to accommodate universal male suffrage, the "nation" was redefined negatively in relation to the nationalities, and the Kossuthites banded together with the government party in ethnically mixed regions.

Statues of Kossuth – the most evocative symbol of public discourse – proliferated on the urban landscape in the decade-and-a-half before World War I. Lingering monarchist qualms about erecting Kossuth statues in consideration of the king were brushed aside. The unveilings were invariably attended by Ferenc Kossuth and the Independence Party establishment. The Marxist theorist Ervin Szabó wrote no fewer than three articles in 1902 attacking the idolization of Kossuth and suggested that the memorializing Kossuth had remained a significant part of popular passion.[32] Even as Szabó railed against the historicization of the hero of the liberal crowd, he was forced to acknowledge the Kossuth cult's peculiar staying power in Hungary. What passion a Kossuth statue could stir was evidenced in Szeged in 1903.[33] The commanding officer of the Szeged garrison ordered the removal of a wreath placed by some soldiers at the Kossuth statue on the Day of the Arad Martyrs – a holiday which still underscored the gulf remaining between Hungarian nationalists and the dynasty. When the situation escalated, police occupied the square, and 10,000 demonstrators angrily confronted the army in front of its barracks. Two civilians were wounded when the troops opened fire.

Marosvásárhely, the capital of the Székely lands bordering Romania, erected one of the first Kossuth statues, placing it directly across from a statue of General Bem in the town square. The message to the Romanians and Saxons could not have been made clearer. In the pouring rain 20,000 Székely marched four abreast in village companies, with military-like bearing under distinctive village flags. The maladroit Ferenc Kossuth appeared in a garish yellow travel jacket that looked incongruous amidst the Magyar gala of the Székely dignitaries. A poem celebrating Kossuth's prediction of Austria's disintegration was read. Less than twenty years later, when the monarchy did shatter, this area became part of Romania and this statue was torn down in Tîrgu Mureș.

At the funeral of Ferenc Kossuth in the weeks just prior to the outbreak of World War I two hundred thousand spectators turned out on the capital streets.

Mourners in black hats and suits massed along the long boulevards and maintained a pious stillness. The crowd was a fraction of the size of the 1894 Kossuth funeral; still, people wanted to see how the son of the great man was buried next to his father. The name Kossuth had lost little of its wondrous ring, but there was also the sense that the funeral marked the end of an era. Many made this the final opportunity to express their pain publicly over the loss of everything for which the name Kossuth had once stood.[34]

Notes

1. On the role of the crowd, see Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848–1914* (Baltimore and Washington, D.C.: Johns Hopkins University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000).
2. Adlerstein, Jankotvckh, *Chronologisches Tagebuch der magyarischen Revolution* (Vienna, 1851), vol. 1, 83.
3. Headley, P. C., *The Life of Louis Kossuth, Governor of Hungary. Including Notices of the Men and Scenes of the Hungarian Revolution. Appendix: His Principal Speeches* (Auburn, N.Y., 1852), 323.
4. "Two years after the bloody day of Arad, I first landed on the shores of England, a homeless wanderer, powerless and poor; and I saw my landing become the signal for a universal outburst of sympathy with my country's wrongs, such as no people ever experienced from a foreign nation. Hungary, a couple of years before, scarcely known by name, I found a household word in every British heart..." "My Country and English Sympathy," *The Atlas,* October 13, 1855, in Éva H. Haraszti, ed., *Kossuth as an English Journalist* (Budapest, 1990), 292.
5. Headley, *Kossuth,* 380.
6. Kossuth, Lajos, Open letter to the Hungarian ambassadors and diplomatic corps in England and France, Vidin, September 12, 1849 in Lajos Kossuth, *Írások és beszédek, 1848–1849-ből* (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1987), 522.
7. Headley, *Kossuth,* 382–383.
8. For the history of the Hungarian emigration see, Lajos Lukács, *Magyar politikai emigráció, 1849–1867* [Magyar political emigration] (Budapest, 1984); Tibor Frank, *Marx és Kossuth* [Marx and Kossuth] (Budapest, 1985); Thomas Kabdebo, *Diplomat in Exile, Francis Pulszky's Political Activities in England, 1849–1860* (New York, 1979); Tibor Tóth Somlyói, *Diplomácia és emigráció "Kossuthiana"* [Diplomacy and emigration "Kossuthiana"] (Budapest, 1985). For a contemporary account, see Dániel Kászonyi, *Magyarhon négy korszaka* [Ungarns Vier Zeitalter (lst ed. Leipzig, 1868)] (Budapest, 1977), 397–512.
9. Zsigmond Kemény, *Forradalom után* [After the revolution] (Pest, 1850), 1–3.
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12. Charles Loring, *Hungary in 1851; with an Experience of the Austrian Police* (New York, 1852), 43.
13. Headley, *Kossuth,* 323.
14. Headley, *Kossuth,* 215.

15. A. Kienast, *Die Legion Klapka* (Vienna, 1900), 100.
16. Sándor Sebestény, "Regierungsfeindliches Auftreten der Oppositionskräfte des Komitates Heves nach dem Ausgleich vom Jahre 1867," *Annales Sectio Historia,* vol. 15 (1974): 195–219.
17. "Louis Kossuth's response to Joseph Rudnay, President of the Vác electoral district, published in *Magyar Ujság,* László Böszörményi, editor, 28 VIII 1867.
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19. *Neue Politische Journal* (hereafter *NPJ*), February 12, 1876.
20. *NPJ*, February 17, 1876.
21. *NPJ*, February 29, 1876.
22. András Gergely and Zoltán Szász, *Kiegyezés után* [After the Compromise] (Budapest, 1978); Gusztáv Gratz, *A dualizmus kora* [The dualist era], 2 vols. (Budapest, 1934); Friedrich Gottas, *Ungarn im Zeitalter des Hochliberalismus: Studien zur Tisza-Ära 1875–1890* (Vienna, 1976). István Nemeskürty, *A kőszívű ember unokái: A kiegyezés utáni első nemzedék, 1867–1896* [The stone-"hearted" man's nephews: The first generation after the Compromise] (Budapest, 1987).
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34. *NPV*, May 29, 1914; *Vasárnapi Újság,* June 7, 1914; *Pesti Hirlap,* May 29, 1914. See also, Gyula Krúdy, *Kossuth fia* [Kossuth's son] (Budapest, 1976).

KOSSUTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY HUNGARIAN PROGRESSIVES

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The progressives were those who preferred universal secret suffrage to restricted and open voting, modern sociology to old-fashioned hair-splitting over public law issues, secularism to the extensive political economic social and cultural influence of the Churches. Kossuth was a key figure for them. Kossuth's program integrated all the liberal and national aims close to their hearts.

Keywords: Democracy, universal suffrage, land reform, secularism, modern sociology, historiography, national minorities, tradition

Progressives – the Original Interpretation

Scholarship calls for clearly defined concepts, and I am afraid that the term "Progressive" in the title of my paper does not meet this requirement. First of all, I have to make clear to our American colleagues that our use of the term "Progressive" in Hungary has little to do with the American understanding of the "Progressive Era" – especially the years of Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. What the American and Hungarian Progressives did, however, have in common was that they tried to address some of the most fundamental and topical social, economic and political problems of their respective societies during the first decades of the twentieth century. On the other hand, we must always be aware that unlike the American Progressives, who lent their name to an entire era, Hungarian Progressives controlled state power only for a few critical months following the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy in the aftermath of World War I.

This observation, however, constitutes only the first step towards clarifying my own interpretation of the concept "Progressive." Had I been asked to give this presentation twenty or twenty-five years ago, I do not think that I would have had any reservations. Without any hesitation I would have described what I at that time considered to be a very clear and unquestionable definition of progressive politics and the progressives in early twentieth-century Hungary.[1] I would have argued that the platforms of the three major groups that entered into a coalition in

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the Hungarian National Council at the end of October 1918 represented the progressive tendencies in early twentieth-century Hungarian politics. The social democrats, the so-called "bourgeois radicals," and the "progressive wing" of the "independents," Mihály Károlyi's party, questioned the legitimacy of the establishment and initiated proposals that could have lead to a fundamentally new economic, political and social order in Hungary. Universal political suffrage, land reform, coming to the terms with the demands of the national minorities (the "Achilles-heel" of Hungarian democracy) appeared on their agendas. Consequently my interpretation was quite simple: the issues that later appeared in the program of October 1918 revolution were the components the progressive platform. In the broader sense of the word, and very much under the spell of Zoltán Horváth's outstanding study,[2] this interpretation of the progressive camp included all those intellectuals who were more interested in pinpointing and critically analyzing the "antiquated" social, political institutions of the country than in the pseudo-patriotic anti-Habsburg rhetoric. Progressives were those who – to use emblematic names – preferred Ady to Ferenc Herczegh, the review "Huszadik Század" to "Magyar Figyelő" and especially to "Magyar Kultúra," "Nyugat" to "Budapesti Szemle," "Világ" to "Budapesti Hírlap," Mihály Károlyi to István Tisza and even more to Béla Bangha or Mihály Réz, universal secret suffrage to restricted and open voting, modern sociology to old-fashioned hairsplitting over public law issues, as well as secularism to the extensive political, economic, social and cultural influence of the Churches, especially the Catholic Church. It was the 1905–6 political crisis and its aftermath that substantially contributed to the polarization of these conflicting views.

The Progressives Revisited

A number of factors, however, have made me rethink my previous approach. The experiences of living in a multiparty democracy, seeing a great number of my colleagues in senior political positions, and listening to their reports on decision making procedures led me to the conclusion that it is much more difficult to divide actors of political life into "progressive" and "reactionary" camps than I had originally believed. Much more difficult, but not impossible. Even if the emotions generated by the creative artist appeal to his heart, a historian has to understand and put into context Ady's passionate criticism of István Tisza. The historian has to recognize that Tisza had serious arguments against universal suffrage. The agrarian experts of the Tisza-establishment were just as much aware of the problems of land ownership as Oscar Jászi and his friends, even if their policy proposals were fundamentally different. When speaking about secularization, one has to be aware of the indispensable social and cultural services rendered by the Churches; and a

great deal of evidence shows that democratization does not directly and immediately resolve national conflicts, nor does it necessarily weaken the centrifugal political aspirations of national minorities. I started to wonder whether or not one can reasonably exclude members of the political, economic, cultural establishment from the ranks of the initiators and proponents of progress, once one becomes more aware of the responsibilities coupled with power.[3] However, in spite of all these considerations, less spontaneously but most consciously, I will retain my earlier definition of the progressives as a group. My motivation, however, is by now less supported by the particulars of their political, social, economic program and more by the ethical standards they set and followed. As György Litván so aptly summarized in reference to the lifework of Oscar Jászi:

> Our century has been torn between individualism and collectivism, capitalism and socialism, democracy and dictatorship, reform and revolution, reason and violence, modernization and tradition, nationalism and internationalism. While the century lurched between extremes, Jászi was able to formulate a balanced view of all these issues from a position of ethical politics, weighing both sides of the problems and often rejecting all the usual solutions... Jászi seemed again and again to be a loser, only to be subsequently – and often tragically – proved right.[4]

The main components of this ethical politics might be summed up as follows:

1. Political ideologies are not simply a means for acquiring political power.

2. The values of human dignity are not to be subordinated to political considerations; and politics is to be accepted as a field of open competition with clearly defined rules.

3. Consequently ideological and political convictions are not to be transformed into life and death struggles, into unbridgeable cleavages. The aim is to defeat and not to destroy the political rival.

The Progressives' Image of Kossuth

Here I will at last bring Kossuth into the picture and come to the major part of this short presentation. A key point of reference for the dominant group of the progressives was – both before and after 1918 – Lajos Kossuth. This was not an easy choice for them because Kossuth was also at the center of the political rhetoric of the nationalist and conservative establishment. Nevertheless, most Progressives saw the conservative and nationalist appropriation of Kossuth as a distorted and manipulative image of the revolutionary leader. In order to examine the shaping of this "progressive Kossuth cult," let me now invite you to an intel-

lectual tour of the ideas of three key personalities belonging to the Hungarian Progressives. I am going to speak about the respective ideas of one of the wealthiest Hungarian aristocrats, a man who became the president of the first and short-lived Hungarian republic in 1918. Furthermore, I will also explore the views of the son of a doctor in a small town on the Romanian–Hungarian border, a man who became a prestigious expert on the ethnic-national complexity of the Danubian basin. In addition I will also refer to the political thought of the son of a poor lower middle class Jewish family from the north of Hungary, a man whose most fragile body hid one of the most charismatic and active minds in early twentieth-century Hungarian intellectual life and whose inexhaustible energy focused on the theory and practice of socialism. Mihály Károlyi and Oscar Jászi lived long lives and died in 1955 and 1957 respectively; while Ervin Szabó's funeral in early October 1918 constituted a prelude to the October 1918 Hungarian democratic revolution. Different as their backgrounds might have been, they all challenged the establishment of their times, and they were all representatives of what we defined as ethical politics. This is, of course, only a small segment of the Progressives' group but the constraints of time compel such a small selection here. To refer only to the most obvious omissions, I will not speak here about Ady, Ignotus, Bartók, or Szende.

Ervin Szabó and the Social Democrats

Our tour begins almost exactly one hundred years ago, in September 1902, when Ervin Szabó, one of our protagonists, "commemorated" Kossuth's 100th birthday with the following words: "...Lajos Kossuth can not be listed among the celebrities of the Hungarian proletariat, who cherish Sándor Petőfi and Mihály Táncsics."[5] This view was also reflected in the respective resolution of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary. Nevertheless, this view was almost unanimously rejected by Hungarian public opinion. Endre Ady observed in *Nagyváradi Napló*: "...how painful it is that the Hungarian socialists, whose arguments are accepted by an increasing number of people, and whom we have also not once defended, could make such a great mistake. The Hungarian socialists should recognize that a hundred articles in the bourgeois press did not do their cause as much harm as this single resolution without any commentary."[6] Szabó's closest friend, Oscar Jászi was also unable to convince him that he and his socialist comrades should not underestimate the significance and impact of the national principle. As a common friend of the two young men, who were both under thirty, Lajos Leopold argued in a private letter:

> The name Kossuth still has a huge latifundium in the Hungarian heart, in the quiet dreams of Hungarian cotters. No doubt, this latifundium is still extensively cultivated, exploited, robbed ... and so only grows prickle and thistle. What about bringing modern machinery and rich harvest to this latifundium?... Kossuth was a man of his capitalistic, doctrinarian, liberal age, from this point of view not our man, however, also a republican, in his later years anti-militaristic and infused our people with a vague, subconscious hatred against power.[7]

Jászi and Károlyi on Kossuth

Leopold's approach in a much more sophisticated form became the platform that would make Kossuth a central figure in the historical and political argumentations of Jászi and Károlyi, in the social-political thought of what Zoltán Horváth defined as the second reform generation in Hungary. Not many personalities in modern Hungary have been able to weld successfully national and democratic aims into ethical politics in thought and occasional action as well. In combining "free thought" with "Hungarian thought"[8] Kossuth was their prime example. His moral integrity has not been questioned even if many of his views, decisions, and actions had been subjected to criticism. For most members of this second reform generation (with the significant exception of more orthodox socialists) Kossuth's program was the democratic alternative to the Hungarian establishment in the Dual Monarchy. Two heroes of our intellectual tour, Jászi and Károlyi, presented Kossuth as their political and human model even after the First World War. In striking contrast to what they described (quite unfairly) as antiquated nationalist mainstream historiography, they paid tribute to Kossuth as a successor to György Dózsa (the leader of the peasant revolt of 1514), Ferenc Rákóczi (the aristocratic leader of the early eighteenth-century anti-Habsburg uprising) and Ignác Martinovics (the head of a late eighteenth-century anti-Habsburg conspiracy, whom a number of sources have described as a paid Habsburg agent). They were:

> ...sublime but tragic shadows amidst the tortures and oppressions, which the people of Hungary continuously suffered from the feudal oligarchy and from Habsburg absolutism ... The next to the last successor of these broken heroes, Louis Kossuth, synthesized ... all the tendencies of the first three on a higher level of historical evolution, exactly as the last martyr of the same struggle, Michael Károlyi, continued the secular struggle of all the four and succumbed with them under the blow of class absolutism and foreign enemies.[9]

On another occasion Jászi developed this argument the following way:

> It is only the American way that can save us ... Dismemberment of the feudal estates, free trade... autonomy for all national minorities, separation of the state from the churches, economic confederation with the neighboring states, a free and liberal education... in a single word: a republic for the people and by the people... That was the real legacy of Louis Kossuth, which Michael Károlyi tried to continue. But as Kossuth failed in 1848, Károlyi failed in 1918, it is the tragic destiny of our people that his best men can not carry on their unselfish and bright ideas...[10]

Jászi and Károlyi frequently compared the October 1918 revolution to 1848: "Mihály Károlyi took seriously the message of Kossuth and divided his latifundia among his peasants..."[11] Paying tribute to Kossuth's personality and moral integrity was far from constituting an unconditional acceptance of all his views and policy proposals. In a most interesting 1933 article,[12] on the occasion of the publication of the Kossuth – László Teleki correspondence in 1850, Jászi described with great empathy Kossuth's vision of Hungary's possible dismemberment into six parts in case a "liberated" Hungary, separated from Austria grants provincial autonomies to her national minorities. The champion of the emancipation of the national minorities in pre-World War I Hungary appreciated Kossuth's feeling of responsibility for the preservation of Hungary's territorial integrity and his awareness of the utmost significance of the nationality problem in Hungarian politics. In the Teleki–Kossuth controversy, however, he feels much closer to Teleki, who believed that Kossuth's plan of a confederation of Hungary, Romania and Serbia was hardly possible without an internal federation with the nationalities of Hungary. From Jászi's point of view, who together with Mihály Károlyi in Hungary during the period between the two world wars was frequently blamed for their "naive" foreign policy of 1918–1919, the federation with Hungary's nationalities was a key issue. Namely, according to this unjustified accusation, such naivite paved the way to Trianon. But he could point out that as early as 1850 Kossuth had indicated,

> ... ever since Hungary's nationality problem had become acute, she had been threatened with dismemberment along the lines not dissimilar from those laid down in the Trianon settlement, unless her statesmen pursued a wise and judicious policy of conciliation and fair play toward the subject nationalities.[13]

In his Memoirs Mihály Károlyi also refers to Kossuth as his predecessor, praising him for realizing in his exile that

> ... his crucial error had been in antagonizing the non-Magyar races. Living outside his country, his vision was clarified by distance, and he drew up the plan for a Danubian confederation, directed against the Habsburgs. This scheme would have made Hungary the center of a group of democratic states lying along the Danube, thus giving her the role of pioneer amongst homologous and equal neighbors. His followers did not wish to remember this Kossuth of later years; and it was characteristic that as long as he appealed to national conceit, he was considered the greatest Hungarian, but as soon as he launched a scheme of greater value his popularity diminished. For it implied that Hungary would recognize as equals the alien races within her borders, as she could never succeed without their co-operation. Even today [1954] the only solution to the Central European problem is based on this concept of his, and no estimate of Kossuth's statesmanship would be complete which overlooked it.
>
> My aim was to revive Kossuth's plan in a modernized form, and a Slavophile policy was the stepping-stone to this. The events of the past ten years have proved without doubt that Europe's fate would have been very different had a powerful Federal State of 88 millions been able to stand up to Hitler in 1938.[14]

Sancho Panza Combined with Don Quixote

The parallel also applied to the personal fates of Jászi and Kossuth. Jászi wrote in a letter to the editor of the Times on January 8, 1926:

> Unfortunately I was unsuccessful in all my efforts and the League of Nations determined to save the compromised and financially broken Horthy regime... Since that time I abandoned all kinds of political activity seeing that the Hungarian cause became a res judicata and the situation became somewhat analogous to that when Louis Kossuth ceased to struggle against the Habsburgs after the Compromise of 1867... I felt it to be unfair to do anything which could impede the work of financial reconstruction even in the case that it reinforced the power of the absolutist regime.[15]

Jászi and his very few surviving Progressive friends remained loyal to their Kossuth cult throughout their lives. Kossuth is again the point of reference when on March 15, 1948 Jászi (who had spent three weeks in his beloved Danubia the previous year) complains:

> ... unfortunately Kossuth's name which is still our greatest capital in America, has been expropriated both by rightist and leftist extrem-

> ists ... although the big estates had been dismembered, the spirit permeating the whole (political life) is not the spirit of Petőfi, Kossuth and József Eötvös but the totalitarian atmosphere of the East.[16]

Let me conclude this short survey of the Kossuth image of some early twentieth-century Hungarian progressives with three hypothetical conclusions as to why Kossuth was such a key figure for the political thought and action of my protagonists. One reason was that Kossuth's program integrated the liberal and national aims that lay close to their hearts for implementation by an ethical politics. The other element might have been that Kossuth's example proved: failure in the short run doesn't necessarily mean the failure of a strategic aim, or that moral integrity is more important than non-ethical political gambling that can produce only fragile short lived successes. The third is that for them Kossuth represented a statesmanship that Jászi once described as "led by the sense of reality of Sancho Panza and animated by the non-compromising idealism of Don Quichote,"[17] which is a remarkable example of their own self-image.

Notes

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3. Cf. Gábor Vermes, *István Tisza, the Liberal Vision and Conservative Statecraft of a Hungarian Nationalist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). Chapter VII of this outstanding biography gives a very balanced account of the complexity of progressive politics in early twentieth-century Hungary.
4. György Litván, "Introduction," in Oscar Jászi, *Homage to Danubia* (Rowman and Littlefeld Publishers, Inc., 1994), XI.
5. Quoted by György Litván in his essay "Szabó Ervin, a történetíró" [Ervin Szabó, the Historian] in *Szabó Ervin történeti írásai* [Ervin Szabó's Historical Writings], ed. György Litván (Budapest: Gondolat, 1979), 9.
6. In György Litván, 9.
7. In György Litván, 9–10.
8. Cf. György Litván, *"Magyar gondolat – szabad gondolat"* [Hungarian Thought – Free Thought] (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1978).
9. Untitled manuscript in the Jászi Collection of Butler Library, Columbia University in New York.
10. Untitled manuscript of a presentation delivered by Oscar Jászi in the Hungarian Civic Club in New York on January 24, 1926 in the Jászi Collection of Butler Library at Columbia University in New York.
11. Oscar Jászi, "Falsified Kossuth." A Speech Undelivered at the unveiling of the Kossuth Monument in New York, March 15, 1928. Manuscript in the Jászi Collection of Butler Library at Columbia University in New York. Published in Hungarian: "Kossuth Lajos meggyalázása."

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12. Oscar Jászi, "Kossuth and the Treaty of Trianon," *Foreign Affairs* 12 (October 1933): 86–97.
13. *Ibid.*, 97.
14. Michael Károlyi, *Faith Without Illusions* (New York: E. P. Dutton,1957), 41–42.
15. Copy of the letter of January 8, 1926 in the Jászi Collection of Butler Library at Columbia University in New York.
16. Manuscript in Hungarian, prepared for a commemoration of March 15, 1948 in the Jászi Collection of Butler Library at Columbia University in New York.
17. Manuscript of a speech introducing Michael Károlyi at Oberlin College on January 17, 1930 in the Jászi Collection of Butler Library at Columbia University in New York.

KOSSUTH AND THE IMAGES OF HUNGARIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AFTER 1989

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The folkloristic image of Kossuth reveals to us the Kossuth of legend, the Kossuth of folktunes and popular anecdotes, while the other view has been shaped by the shifting political traditions and professional historiographic assessments. The changing interpretations of Kossuth are a historical phenomenon of intellectual history and reflect the various political situations as well as the intellectual climate of the past 150 years of Hungarian history.

Keywords: Historiography, folkloristic image, historical memory, Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, intellectual history

According to Gyula Szekfű, arguably the most influential twentieth-century Hungarian historian, Hungarian collective memory has two different images of Kossuth. The folkloristic image reveals to us the Kossuth of legend, the Kossuth of folktunes and popular anecdotes, while the other view has been shaped by the shifting political traditions and professional historiographic assessments.[1] As far as the folkloristic image is concerned we can say that Kossuth and the fifteenth-century ruler Mathias Corvin are by far the most popular national heros with whom Hungarians have a special relationship of intimacy and familiarity.[2] There is for instance much less folkloristic material about the other iconic figure of the Hungarian Reform Era (1825–1848) István Széchenyi, but the scholarly literature on Széchenyi is far more extensive.[3]

How can we define the difference, if there is one, between the Kossuth folklore, the images of Kossuth produced and dissemminated in the political culture, and the views promoted by academic historians? Here there will be no opportunity to discuss the extensive literature of the Kossuth folklore, which still awaits its historian. On the other hand one fact appears clearly: the question is not to asses whether or not the folkloristic image despite its structural ahistoricity is more authentic than the politicised image preponderant in high culture but rather to explore the dichotomy of the folklore and the political traditions.[4]

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Even if we exclude folklore from our scope of attention as intellectual historians, this operation should by no means imply the denial of the evident plurality of our so-called historical memory, or the approval of an implicit and usually quasi-spontaneous privilegization of academic historiography by the representantives of the historical profession. One cannot arbitrarily elevate academic historiography above the clouds of historical memory, which consist of a loosely definable collection of diferrent media. And when we take account of the complex nature of the historical past of the Kossuth images, it is no wonder that these media quite often overlap one another.

The changing interpretations of Kossuth's life and work along with those of the Revolution of 1848 and War of Independence are a historical phenomenon of intellectual history and reflect the various political situations as well as the intellectual climate of the past 150 years of Hungarian history. Certainly up until now the different judgements on Kossuth and on 1848 followed in most of the cases a pattern of sharp dichotomies. Regardless of their constant methamorphoses, the incredible capacity for renewal of such dichotomies makes the political mobilisation of the historical memory not only possible but almost inevitable. The alternative historicist conception of the historical memory on the contrary emphasizes the retrospective complementarity of the opposing discourses of a given historical period and tends to cultivate conservative and conciliatory approaches. Behind the discoursive exploration of the dichotomies there is usually an *Erwartungshorizont* (horizon of expectation), which has been described by Reinhard Koselleck as the hope for and the desirability of a future that will be essentially different from the past.[5] In contrast of this dichotomical design of social transformation the historicist view of the history displays the wholeness of the time, the preservation of a supposedly consensual status quo, the desire of a cautious improvement within the familiar set of what has already been assimilated from the past. The traditional historical writing offers perspectives for both conceptions: the traditional "critics-from-the-middle" history suggests the relativity of the historical antagonisms,[6] while the "history-of-identity" approach commemorates the historical events and contributes to the mobilisation of the present by emphatically arguing for the permanent validity of the former antagonisms.[7]

The one hundred fifty year-old history of the metamorphoses of the images of Kossuth provides examples for both of the above-mentioned epistemological models. It is somewhat ironic that the earliest efforts at a holistic view date back to attempts at the end of the nineteenth century, which tried to harmonize the cult of Kossuth with that of his greatest adversary Francis Joseph the Habsburg ruler of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy during a time when the catchword of "1848" expressed the most spectacular, although deeply misleading, dichotomy of Hungarian political life over the opposing interpretations of the constitution of 1848. We are told that the liberal conservative regime of the interwar period prefered

Széchenyi to Kossuth. Nevertheless, this widely shared belief needs to be adjusted because the leading cultural politician of the period Kuno Klebelsberg in summarising his program urged his compatriots to follow the example of Kossuth, who had been able to synthetize the idea of nation with that of the social reform.[8]

The totalitarian Rákosi regime of the 1950s, a highly bigoted Hungarian version of "Big Brother" Stalinism, cultivated an extremely dichotomical cult of history. The Communist Party declared itself to be the only true follower of the Hungarian revolutionary movements of 1848–1849, the only depository of the progressisve traditions, and the long-awaited fullfillement of the dreams of the revolutionaries. It may seem paradoxal but the regime instead of choosing such radicals as the poet Petőfi or the journalist Tancsics declared Kossuth to be the central hero of its radically exclusive image of 1848–1849. One can attribute this to two factors. On the one hand Hungarian society identified 1848 and Kossuth, and on the other hand because Petőfi and Táncsics had never seized real power as Kossuth and the Communists had, allegedly in the same revolutionary way. In addition, Kossuth provided the same model of the father of his people that Rákosi, the "wise leader," himself was also fond of adopting. One of the darkest aspects of this cult of Kossuth were the historical books justifiing the "Justizmords," the show trials, and the deportations of thousands of "class enemies" as following in the footsteps of the revolutionary legality of Kossuth.[9]

From the 1960s on this sharp dichotomy started to be mitigated by gradually providing an opportunity for the partial revision of the unconditional condemnation of the dualist period, which ensued after the Compromise of 1867. Historians, especially those who came from the school of György Szabad, embraced a larger conceptual framework and took interest in the whole period of the bourgeois transformation, a process by which the feudal order was replaced by a system of democratic and individual rights, parlamentarism and entreprenurial freedom.[10] This conception, which stressed the "lawfulness" of the Revolution of 1848,[11] still retained for Kossuth a central place, although lost his exclusive importance and iconic reverence.

In the period of the change of regime, and especially during the fervent months of 1989, the Revolution of 1848 became again the central symbol of independence and democratic transformation. The demonstration of March 15 mobilizing more than one hundred thousand people on behalf of the opposition was one of the few highlights of the "negotiated revolution"[12] and can be seen as the true starting point of the *annus mirabilis* of 1989. While the officialy sponsored celebrations attracted barely twenty thousand people, the far larger crowd attending the demonstrations organised by the opposition can be said to endorse with its enthusiastic presence the opposition's program, which called for free elections, democracy and national independence.[13] At the same time, in focusing more and more on the processes and the forms of the representation of core elements of the

collective memory rather than on the events themselves, the demonstration of March 15 also anticipated the semantical shift of the collective memory, which occurred around the middle of the 1990s.

The collective memory caters to our conceptions about national identity, and academic historiography, as I noted above, is only one medium among others through which the collective memory takes shape. Architecture, uses of public spaces, films, journalism, textbooks and high-school curricula, political statements, legal acts and commemorative speeches – to mention just a few – have quite often a more lasting and deeper impact, although they are rarely studied and unveiled.[14] True, there are numerous passages and channels connecting these media, and the different genres of messages transmited by this entangled web of communication reach us as an amalgam of emotions and ideologies through the complex process of reception, which takes place both synchronically and diacronically. Overshadowed by the suffocating presence of the collective memory, professional or academic history can remain neither neutral nor intact, although as part of its liturgy it loudly proclaims its distance from day to day practical politics and actuality. It is all the more important to take into account these inherent features of our province of knowledge when analyzing the metamorphoses of the image of Kossuth in the past crucial decade of democratic transition towards a pluralistic society.

In the minds of most historians the memories of the politically motivated abuses of the memory of Kossuth and the Revolution of 1848 are still very much present. This may partly explain why we appear unable to single out strikingly marked new conceptions on Kossuth and 1848. In the historical profession the revision started well before the dawning of the new political freedom. Consequently most historians try to explore the already established conceptual patterns, which in some cases anticipated the catchwords of our own day.

Nevertheless, the critical reassessment of the historical tradition of 1848 and in particular the examination of the various ways and proceedings by which the tradition was appropriated in different political situations became an important new ambition of Hungarian historians after 1990. In that respect one of the most important contributions was in 1994 by Domokos Kosáry, the *doyen* of the Hungarian historians.[15] In his magistral essay Kosáry undertook to reevaluate the exhaustive historiography of the military leader of the 1848–1849 War of Independence Artur Görgey, who immediately after the defeat was unjustly stigmatised by Kossuth as a traitor of the Revolution. Kosáry's monograph focused on questions that today seem to be obsolete. His aim was to eliminate at last the primitive mythology that degrades the revolution and its main figures to the antagonism between good and evil. In the mirror of this oversimplified superstitious dichotomy the more Görgey is blackened the more Kossuth's fame shines. Although this seems hardly be the case any more today, Kosáry's book – *habent sua fata libelli!* – warns us to be prudent. When as a young historian Kosáry published the first edition of his

book in 1936, he was right in his belief that the stigma of the treason had definitively to passed away in the face of the archival documents, and he had successfully proved not only that Görgey was a most loyal servant of the cause of independence but also that he was an excellent military leader, whose involvement was instrumental in all the major successes of the War. But the most horrific chapters of the treason theory came only later, during the 1950s, which did not leave Kosáry's personal fate unaffected either. In the dark years of totalitarianism, show trials, and summary executions Görgey became the very embodiment of both the internal traitor and the class enemy.[16]

Another new characteristic of the post-1989 historiography of 1848 is the growing interest in the religious aspects of 1848. In that matter especially the controversial activity of the Catholic Church came under intensive investigation. More than one Hungarian Catholic is embarrassed that the Catholic Church's involvement in one of the most remembered events of Hungary's collective memory is somewhat ambigous. Consequently the identification of Catholicism and nationality is highly problematic. At the same time the nineteenth-century liberal protestant criticism that accused Catholicism of being excesively loyal to the Habsburgs against interests of the nation was also highly misleading and has by now been discarded.[17] After a forty-year hiatus under Communism ecclesiastical history has returned. Péter Zakar and Máté Csaba Sarnyai have analyzed in a series of articles the tergiversations of a divided, interest-driven, and inherently conservative Catholic Church hierarchy in the face of the possibility of autonomy, as well as the emergence of an increasingly popular liberal Catholicism among the lower ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.[18] The sympathies of these young historians, who dismisses equally the underlying biases of a denominational historiography and the slanders of an excessively anticlerical communist historical writing,[19] are clearly in favor of liberal Catholicism and the democratic conception of autonomy, which stipulated the separation of the church and state. In short, they symparthize with a version of Catholicism that failed in 1848 due to the stubborn resistance of the church hierarchy led by an unbending Holy See, which itself became converted to a clearly antiliberal stance. Yet some aspects of contemporary European religious and social history need further consideration and deeper understanding in view of the firmly established and widely accepted correlation between a conservative ecclesiastical attitude and succesful resistance to secularising tendencies in the western part of the continent. These new studies tend to speak of a conflictual autonomy instead of the ideologically undermined categories of the traditional progressive-versus-conservative antagonism of modern religious history.[20]

But above all the heritage of 1848 and its iconic figures gained powerful new momentum because the transformation into a free and civil society became the much discussed central element of the political discourses of the 1990s in Hungary. In that respect the importance of the coming of the era of an unlimited ideo-

logical pluralism and competition with the newly opened European perspective in general and with the victoriously returning liberalism in particular can hardly be overestimated. The contest between the conflicting interpretations logically led to an intensified interrogation of the historical roots of these ideas. In the early 1990s there were two liberal parties in the parliament, and the ruling coalition also had a faction that defined its political identity as "national liberal." Collection of the works of Hungarian and liberal thinkers and dozens of scholarly essays were published during the period.

It is not surprising to see that the competing discourses of a multy-party democratic system have not refrained from using the symbols and ideas of 1848 for their own political purposes. Nevertheless, there are significant differencies between the parties that have constructed their political legitimacy mainly on historical arguments and those parties that prefer a pragmatist political marketing of "presentism" and/or try to instill oblivion into the electorate about their past record. Yet, the tendency is clearly indicated by a growing historical awareness on behalf of the public opinion. Of course the various *lieux de mémoire* (Pierre Nora) of the national identity are mobilised in different degrees. Besides 1848 and the Reform Era, the foundation of the state, Trianon, and the 1956 Revolution are the most important "realms" for the explorations of collective memory.

The first clash between the opposing interpretations in which the representation of these ideas have been at stake took place during the 1990 parlamentary debate on the new national coat of arms. The Christian Democratic coalition majority eventually opted for the arms with the royal crown symbolising the unbroken continuity of a thousand year-old Hungarian history rather than the Kossuth shield, with its overtones of 1848, the War of Independence, and the 1956 Revolution. Those who were for the arms without crown (that is to say for the Kossuth shield) argued that the royal crown with its monarchial connotations is incompatible with the republican state, that it can hurt the sensibilities of the neigboring countries, which may see revisionist claims attached to it, and most importantly that the Kossuth coat of arms symbolizes in the best way the close connections between national independence and democratic traditions. Not only liberals but also some of the members of the governing parties shared these opinions. The reasoning of the opposite side can be summarised in their passionate advocacy of a Hungarian history imbued with a thousand-year-old European Christian culture and traditions and a continuous statehood integrating all important chapters of Hungarian history.[21] It was along the same line of argument that the parliament granted a higher status to August 20, (the feast of Saint Stephen, the first Hungarian King) in the ranks of the Hungarian national holidays than to March 15 (the anniversary of the 1848 Revolution) and to October 23 (the beginning of the 1956 Revolution).[22]

During the following years the symbol of March 15 was quite often cited in many ways and on many different occasions. Nevertheless, the events of greatest significance for the emerging political crystallisation, such as the Democratic Charta rally in the Autumn of 1991, which put an end to the political isolation of the postcommunist party and endorsed its alliance with the liberals of the left, or the funeral procession of the Christian Democrat József Antall, the first prime minister after 1990, were not closely connected to images of 1848.

The postcommunists of the Socialist Party (MSZP), who governed the country in an alliance with the liberal Free Democrats (SZDSZ) in the mid-1990s, put forward a pragmatist ideology advertising "expertise" and cultivating oblivion, while clearly relying on the Kadarian nostalgia of large segments of the population. Beginning in 1996 FIDESZ integrated the dispersed groups of the moderate right by launching an astonisingly succesful offensive in the field of the political semantic under the banner of the concept of the *polgár* (citizen) and evocating the ideas of the lawful transformation of 1848. The government formed in 1998 by FIDESZ and its partners promoted itself as the "government of the citizens" and put the figure of Széchenyi in many ways in the heart of its discourse. FIDESZ emphasized Széchenyi's commitment to a gradual and reform-oriented nation-building, as well as material and spiritual advancement. Considering Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's first March 15 commemorative speech from this point it is all the more understandable that he celebrated on March 15 "the epoch of growth and peaceful development." Széchenyi's name was cited three times in the speech but that of Kossuth and the word revolution were conspicuously omitted.[23] At the last congress of his party in February 2002 Orbán recommended to his fellow party members that they follow the path of Széchenyi, "who has been neither conservative nor liberal and neither retrograde nor progressive". His *Weltanschauung* had been quite simply a Hungarian synthesis of careful selection of the ideas of his times.[24] This markedly conservative view of history was quite naturally inclined to celebrate in the millenium of the foundation of the state the Hungarians' capacity for survival and the wholeness of a thousand-year-long Hungarian history in Europe. It is noteworthy that in the face of the lingering process of European enlargement and the building up of an introverted "fortress Europe" the problematic normativity of the concept of Europeanness has become more and more questioned, and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, while trying to secure recognition for their cultural equality, have bitterly experienced a continuing condescension from their their Western European counterparts.[25]

The refurbishment of the Kossuth image in order to put it at the service of a political mobilization against the dynamic marketing of this historicist conservative discourse is a quite recent idea. It can be interpreted as a reaction of the liberal intellectuals and the ideologues of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) to the

succesful appropriation of the collective memory by the conservatives. Its immediate cause was the transfer of the Holy Crown and the royal insignia from the National Museum to the Parliament initiated by the conservative government. The Alliance of Free Democrats protested vehemently against what it considered as an anachronistic symbol and accused the government of authoritarian sympathies. When the SZDSZ launched its campaign for the 2002 parlamentary elections last autumn it proclaimed an alternative interpretation of the Hungarian collective memory, and placed Kossuth in the center of this competing view of history. Displayed on a special web page of the SZDSZ and put together by such historians as András Gerő or Gábor Pajkossy, it constituted a striking example of the entanglement of the different mediums of the collective memory. Here the image of modernity and the liberal heritage of 1848 challenged "the eclecticism of a feudal and Christian rethoric of conservative nationalism."[26] This modernity is exemplified primarily by the figure of the liberal Kossuth. What is so conspicuously missing in this perception is the image of Kossuth as the hero of the nation. In this political vision nationalism has been discredited and replaced by an enthusiastic endorsement of the idea of the "constructed" nature of the nationalisms.

In a more sophisticated way the paper of László Kontler published in *Hungarian Quarterly* also expresses this dichotomical view of Hungarian history through a refined criticism of the prevalent pathos and the "need for pride" in the national identity.[27] Hungarian historical consciousness, being severly taken to task due its inherent lack of realism, produced its brightest chapters when a (self-)critical and responsible historical perspective helped the Hungarian collective identity to reasses the peculiar challenges of the given situations. According to Kontler this attitude reached its climax in the period immediatly preceding 1848. For Kontler the most promising message of 1848 has been the idea of solidarity between the different strata of the society. The defeat of the revolution and the consequent Compromise of 1867 led to the marginalisation of this progressive heritage in exchange for an illusiory pursuit of the mirage of greatness. The current day celebration of Saint Stephen and the Holy Crown is reminiscent of a kind of the cult of power. Kontler implies that between the two foundation myths associated with March 15 and August 20 respectively solidarity and failure are set against statesmanship and power. For Kontler Hungarian history seems to have shown that you cannot have all the positive elements of these combinations together, so cultivating a holistic view of Hungarian history is a sign of a discrepancy between the general acceptance of modernity and the transition to the democracy on the one hand, and the selection of meaningful traditions on the other.[28] Kontler is well aware of the fact that March 15 is the *par excellence* national day for the public and he acknowledges – at least in the slightly different Hungarian version of his publication[29] – that setting this dichotomical framework he became also guilty of an anachro-

nism. Nevertheless, his output is a well articulated attempt to exorcize the allegedly dangerous spirit of nationalism from the collective memory.

The concise essay of Ágnes Deák designates Kossuth's place in the history of political ideas also from the liberal perspective of a criticism of nationalism.[30] In her understanding Kossuth belonged to one of the few nineteenth-century politicians who were able to synthetize liberalism with democratic convictions. Liberalism and nationalism easily paired off during and after the *Vormärz*, and democratic republicanism and nationalism often worked together. But the harmonization of democratic radicalism with the liberal establishment was beyond reach for most European statesmen and political thinkers until the very end of the nineteenth century. Naturally Kossuth and a few others constitute the exceptions.

In that context Ignác Romsics's recent study on nation and state in modern Hungarian history is also revealing.[31] For Romsics Hungarian nationalism almost always gave inadequate responses to the different challenges of the country's historical development during the last two centuries. Despite the warnings of Széchenyi and a few perspicacious but rather isolated politicans the generation of the Hungarian Reform Era shared quite unanimosly the illusory optimistic belief that social emancipation of the national minorities will calm their separatist claims. These illusions were shipwrecked during the bloody ethnic conflicts in 1848-1849. In the same way the dualist regime of the post-1867 period forced assimilation instead of exercising tolerance and granting autonomy, and this policy had in no small degree paved the way that led to the catasthrophe of Trianon after the First World War. According to Romsics the only way to avoid the failures of the nationalist utopias would have been the federalization of the Hungarian state as early as 1794 along the lines that the Hungarian Jacobin (and *agent provocateur*) Ignác Martinovics envisioned in his writings.[32] Much in the same spirit Kossuth's plan for a Danubian Confederation in 1862 pushed forward the most realistic concept of a state based on decentralized and democratic self-government.[33] Both Romsics and Kontler seem to draw inspiration from the thoughts of such twentieth-century Hungarian political thinkers as Oszkár Jászi and István Bibó, whose general devaluations of the period before 1918 describe the developments in terms such as "self-deception" and "blind alley" and continue to exert great influence on Hungarian intellectual life.[34]

It's not by accident that historians of such different backgrounds and horizons as Kontler, Deák and Romsics display a more and more unequivocal refusal vis-à-vis the problematic nature of *national* collective memory. Nationalism is increasingly seen and described as "constructed," "contingent," "exclusivistic," and "irrational."[35] Nothwithstanding the success of the dominant pattern of criticism of the geneological concept of history, which takes its roots in the organicist view of Herder, the antigeneological concept has also its blind spots. Critics point out the

methodological and theorethical shortcomings of a rigid application of the multiculturalist antropology, and the ideological biases of the teleologically oriented antigeneological concepts.[36] In the face of the recent wars and the religious and ethnic tensions in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and the gratification of tribal and national virtues by cynical politicians one is easily tempted to see and condemn in the concept of the nation an inherent feature of exclusivism. Yet it may lead to a seriously distorted and dogmatically ignorant optic of historical understanding.

At the end of this intentionally eclectic review of the collective memory one must soberly diagnose that more than a decade after the "negotiated revolution" none of the *lieux de mémoire* of the collective memory enjoys consensus, and 1848 is no exception. Instead, there is a competing and even conflictual pluralism of the different historical discourses at work. Those who emphasise the national character and the continuity of a thousand-year-long Hungarian history put Széchenyi in the forefront and tend to ignore Kossuth; while the liberals try to revitalise Kossuth's memory by iconizing him as a modern, progressive, liberal and democratic statesman and leaving his emphatically nationalist rhetoric in the shadows. Still far from being primarily the property of intellectual curiosity, the *primum movens* of historians, Kossuth's memory continues to haunt our designs of the present and the future.

Notes

1. Gyula Szekfű, "Az öreg Kossuth", in *Emlékkönyv Kossuth Lajos születésének 150. évfordulójára*, I–II, Ed. Zoltán I. Tóth (Budapest, 1952), II, 409–410.
2. See Róbert Hermann, "Kossuth Lajos életútja", in *"... Leborulok a nemzet nagysága előtt", A Kossuth-hagyaték* (Budapest, 1994), 155.
3. Béla G. Németh, "Nagysággal gyengeség gyengeséggel nagyság", *Magyar Tudomány* 1994/9, 1045–1046.
4. On the epistemological distinction between the national identity see Pál Hatos, "Emlékezet, identitás, ünnep. A genfi történeti hagyomány eszköztára", in *Rendi társadalom – polgári társadalom XIV* (to be published in 2002).
5. Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 349–375; on Koselleck's views, see Reinhard Mehrings, "Carl Schmidt and His Influence on Historians", *Cardoso Law Review* vol. 21 (2000): 1659–1664.
6. See especially Hayden White, *The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and De-Sublimation in the Content of the Form Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 58–82.
7. François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 23–24.
8. Kunó Klebelsberg, "Reálpolitika és neonacionalizmus" [1928] in *ibid., Tudomány, kultúra, politika, Gróf Klebelsberg Kunó válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917–1932)* (Budapest: Európa, 1990), 445; on Klebelsberg see Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, *A Cultural History of Hungary* (Budapest: Corvina–Osiris), 2000, 214.

9. Róbert Hermann, "Az 1848–1849-es forradalom és szabadságharc a magyar történetírásban", in *Aetas* 1999/1–2.
10. *Ibid.*
11. István Deák, *The Lawful Revolution Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians, 1848–1849* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).
12. Rudolf L. Tőkés, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution. Economic Reform, Social Change and Political Succession, 1957–1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
13. See Tamás Hofer, "The Demonstration of March 15, 1989", in *Budapest: A Struggle for Public Memory. Program on Central and Eastern Europe,* Working Paper Series 16 (Cambridge, Mass.), 316; and Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848–1914* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press and the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).
14. Although stated from different perpectives, the necessity of the consideration of the synchronical plurality of the historical memory and other discourses of time is the underlying methodological assumption of the two most important contemporary account of the connection between national past and modernity: see Reinhart Koselleck, "Einleitung", in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-socialen sprache in Deutschland,* I, (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1972), I–XVII; and Pierre Nora, "Entre Mémoire et Histoire", in Pierre Nora, ed., *Lieux de mémoire,* I–III (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), vol. 1, I–XXI.
15. Domokos Kosáry, *A Görgey-kérdés története,* 2 vols. (Budapest: Osiris, 1994).
16. The process by which the communist party state transformed Kossuth and 1848 are the subject of various recent publications. On the history of the celebration of March 15 see György Gyarmati, *Március hatalma – a hatalom márciusa. Fejezetek Március 15 ünneplésének köréből* (Budapest, 1998); on the communist expropriation of the cenntenial commemoration of 1848 see András Gerő, *Az államosított ünnep. Az 1848. centenáriuma* (Budapest, 1998); on the organisation of the 1948 in the capital see Róbert Szabó, "Politikai propaganda és történelmi ünnep. Adalékok az 1948. márciusi centenáriumi ünnepségek történetéhez", *Történelmi Szemle* 1998/3–4, 215–228.
17. On documents relative to the Catholic Church's involvement in the 1848 Revolution and War of Independence see István Elmer, ed., *A haza, az egyház és a trón érdekében* (Budapest, 1998).
18. See Máté Cs. Sarnyai, ed., *Állam és egyház a polgári átalakulás korában Magyarországon* (Budapest: METEM, 2001); Zakar Péter, "Isten és a szabadság 1848–1849 Magyarországán. A forradalom és a szabadságharc egyházi megközelítései", *Századvég* 2001/Summer.
19. On the Catholic view see Antal Meszlényi, *A magyar katolikus egyház és az állam 1848–1849-ben* (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1928); on the communist historiography see Erzsébet Andics, *Az egyházi reakció 1848–1849-ben* (Budapest: Szikra, 1949).
20. Margaret Lavinia Anderson, "The Limits of Secularization On the problem of the Catholic Revival in Nineteenth-Century Germany", *Historical Journal* 1993, 647–670; Hugh McLeod, ed., *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities, 1830–1930* (London: Routledge, 1995) and H. McLeod, *Secularization in Western Europe, 1848–1914* (London: Routledge, 2000).
21. For the protocolls of the parlamentary debate see the official web page of the Hungarian Parliament http://www.mkogy.hu34/014/0042.htm
22. Ignác Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century* (Budapest: Corvina–Osiris, 1999), 441.
23. The speech is downloadable on http://www.meh.hu/Kormany/Kormanyfo/1999/03/990315.htm
24. Viktor Orbán, "A jövő erői felsorakoztak. Orbán Viktor miniszterelnök beszéde a FIDESZ–MPP kongresszusára", *Magyar Nemzet* February 18, 2002, 4.
25. See Tony Judt, *A Grand Illusion? An Essay on Europe* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), especially 70–76.
26. See http:/kossuth.szdsz.hu/index.html and Gábor Pajkossy, Kossuth évszázadai http:/ www.szabaddemokratahirlap.hu/publikacio/kossuthev.htm

27. László Kontler, "The Need for Pride. Foundation Myths and the Reflection of History in Modern Hungary", *Hungarian Quarterly* 160 (Winter 2000), 54–74.
28. *Ibid.*, 72.
29. László Kontler, "Alapításmítoszok és történeti reflexió – Milleneumi számvetés", *Holmi* 2001, 274–284.
30. Ágnes Deák, "Kossuth Lajos és a 19. század koreszméi", *Vigilia* 1998/11, 830–834.
31. Ignác Romsics, "Nation and State in Modern Hungarian History", *Hungarian Quarterly* 164 (Winter 2001), 37–61.
32. *Ibid.*, 41.
33. *Ibid.*, 45.
34. See Oszkár Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1929); István Bibó, *Democracy, Revolution, Self-determination. Selected Writings.* Ed. Károly Nagy (Highland Lakes, NJ: ARP, 1991).
35. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
36. Anthony Smith, "Nationalism and the Historians", in Gopal Balakrishnan, ed., *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996), 175–197; Elias José Palti, "The Nation as a Problem: Historians and the 'National Question'", *History and Theory* (October 2001), 324–346; Andrzej Walicki, "Ernest Gellner and the 'Constructivist' Theory of Nation", in *Cultures and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Essays in Honor of Roman Szporluk. Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 22 (1998): 611–617.

KOSSUTH'S EFFORT TO ENLIST AMERICA INTO THE HUNGARIAN CAUSE[1]

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Kossuth hoped that during his tour of the United States he would be able to persuade the American Government to intervene on behalf of the Hungarian cause. He was mistaken. Following his so-called "triumphal tour," he was forced to return to Europe as a bitter and disappointed man. Kossuth's disillusionment was not with American democracy. Rather, it was with his inability to persuade America's political leadership to part with the principle of nonintervention laid down by George Washington.

Keywords: Lajos Kossuth, Habsburg Empire, Hungarian Revolution, American nonintervention, Gettysburg Address, American foreign policy

Louis Kossuth's visit to the United States in 1851–1852 was perhaps the most momentous event in American-Hungarian relations in the course of the past century and a half. His impact was so extraordinary that it has reverberated ever since. And Kossuth's name has not been forgotten. He is being remembered and quoted even today; much more so than any other prominent Hungarian with American or international connections, including such widely-known personalities as Franz Liszt (1811–1886), Michael Munkácsy (1844–1900), Béla Bartók (1881–1945), Béla Lugosi (1882–1956), Imre Nagy (1896–1958), Cardinal Mindszenty (1892–1975), Zsazsa Gábor (b. 1917), George Soros (b. 1930), or Andy Grove (b. 1936).

As put by Gyula Szekfű (1877–1955), one of Hungary's greatest twentieth-century historians, "Kossuth alone did more for the popularization of Hungary and for arousing sympathy for the Hungarians than all the efforts of all the successive generations since."[3] This is undoubtedly an accurate assessment of Kossuth's place in Hungarian-American relations. In point of fact, Kossuth's brief presence in the United States impacted not only upon Hungary and the Hungarians, but also upon the whole of American society and politics. This was true even though – or perhaps because of the fact that – the period of his coming to America coincided with one of the most tumultuous periods in American history. It was the period

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that foreshadowed the great Civil War, which pitted the anti-slavery North against the slave-owning South, and ultimately cost more American lives than all of America's other wars combined.

Kossuth's hold upon the American Mind

Kossuth's presence in the United States was accompanied and followed by the publication of dozens of books, hundreds of pamphlets, thousands of articles and essays, as well as nearly two hundred poems written to him or about him.[4] The authors of many of these literary pieces included some of America's greatest intellectual figures, among them Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1892), John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892), Horace Greeley (1811–1872), James Russel Lowell (1819–1891), and Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896).[5]

Kossuth's human magnetism, brilliant oratorical skills, and his very presence was so overpowering that millions of Americans fell under his spell. The name of Hungary's revolutionary "Governor-President" [*kormányzóelnök*] reverberated and resounded everywhere during the early 1850s, and his cult spread far and wide across the continent. Counties, cities, towns, streets, town squares, and even babies born during his American tour were named after him.[6] He even influenced American fashion during those days. The most visible manifestation of this Kossuth-fashion-craze was the appearance of the so-called "Kossuth-hat" (a tall black hat decorated with feather plumes in the front), the "Kossuth-jackets" (braided Hungarian nobleman's jackets), the "Kossuth-trousers" (Hungarian cavalry or hussar trousers), and even the "Kossuth-beard" which surrounded the individual's face in a horseshoe fashion.[7] The combination of these items, particularly as worn by Kossuth with his elegant noble demeanor, presented an overpowering spectacle to mid-nineteenth-century celebrity-hungry Americans.

Kossuth's influence continued for many years following his visit to the United States. As an example, barely a decade after his visit, the speech he had delivered to the Ohio Legislature in February 1852 had influenced President Lincoln in composing his now famous "Gettysburg Address" of 1863. Moreover, a century after his visit, and fifty years after his death, a World War II "liberty ship" was named after him.[8] Politicians and statesmen quoted Kossuth routinely on many topics, for many decades, and in many different connections. Even as recently as June 1999, when President Árpád Göncz of Hungary made his first official state visit to the United States, President Bill Clinton began his welcome speech with a quotation from one of Kossuth's orations that he had delivered a century and a

half ago.[9] But above and beyond this, Kossuth is the only Hungarian, whose name is generally known to most Americans, and who is represented in the United States by three life size standing statues, a life size bust, and about half a dozen bronze plaques.[10]

Kossuth's Love of America

Kossuth grew to admire America and American democracy while studying the writings of such founding fathers as Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), George Washington (1732–1799), and Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), and while reading the portrayals of such European connoisseurs of the American social and political scene as the French Marquis de Tocqueville (1805–1859) and the Hungarian Sándor Bölöni-Farkas (1790–1842). Kossuth was also familiar with the writings of such other well-known American authors as Washington Irving (1783–1859) and James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851), whose books were in his library.[11] To Kossuth, the young American republic across the Atlantic – at least as viewed through the prism of the above writings – represented the most ideal form of human existence. Consequently, following the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Liberation (1848–1849) and his two years of exile in the Ottoman Empire (1849–1851), he naturally looked upon his upcoming visit to America with great anticipation. He hoped that during his seven to eight-month tour of the United States he would be able to persuade the American Government to end its policy of neutrality and intervene on behalf of the Hungarian cause. But Kossuth was badly mistaken. Following this so-called "triumphal tour" that reflected his extraordinary popularity among the masses – but also his inability to alter American foreign policy –, he was forced to return to Europe as a bitter and disappointed man.[12] Kossuth's disillusionment, however, was not with American democracy, which he continued to admire. Rather, it was with his inability to persuade America's political leadership to part with the principle of nonintervention laid down by George Washington in 1796 in his farewell address to the nation.

Kossuth's failure to achieve his political goals was not paralleled by the loss of his popularity. As shown above, the latter continued to shine for many years, as did Hungary's prestige. In point of fact, the image of Hungary and the Hungarians has never been as high and as lofty as in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Kossuth's name radiated with unparalleled brilliance and also reflected upon the fame of his nation.[13]

Kossuth's Knowledge and Use of English

Kossuth was a man of great political dedication, unusual linguistic ability, and phenomenal oratorical skills, who had idealized American democracy already in his youth. His use of English was on such a high level and quality that he charmed and overpowered his audience, all of whom succumbed to his influence. This was true even for the greatest contemporary American orator, Daniel Webster (1782–1852), who also fell under Kossuth's spell, and was at a loss to divine and explain the secrets of Kossuth's oratorical ability. As described by the celebrated Hungarian actor, Gábor Egressy (1808–1866), who during his political exile became an anti-Kossuth secret informer for the Habsburg Imperial Government, Kossuth had a "supernaturally beautiful voice! Against his magic we have to tie ourselves to the mast like Ulysses, so that unwittingly we do not follow him."[14]

During his tour of England and America, Kossuth often claimed that he had learned English while a political prisoner in the Castle of Buda (1837–1840), and did so solely with the help of William Shakespeare, whom he identified as "the single source of his English."[15] This, however, is not quite true. Like many members of his class and generation, Kossuth had also studied and read English years before his imprisonment in 1837, which he also acknowledged in a letter to his mother.[16]

Shakespeare did have a major role in the development of Kossuth's English fluency, because the English Bard had become quite popular in Hungary already in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In point of fact, Kossuth himself had translated the first five scenes of Macbeth directly from English. (Most of the early translations came via German.)[17] But the English he spoke after his emergence to the limelight of international politics was not Shakespearian English, but rather the language of the Romantic Age. This has also been pointed out recently by Tibor Frank, who in his study on the governor's linguistic competence observed that "the English Kossuth spoke and wrote, its imagery, vocabulary, and style, was essentially Romantic in nature rather than Elizabethan."[18] Kossuth's emphasis on Shakespeare as the sole source of his English fluency was the product of a conscious myth-making, with the intent of serving his political goals, or, as put by Frank, "to... win the goodwill of the English-speaking countries."[19] In other words, "Kossuth retroactively reorganized his life-story, giving it a slightly mythological touch. He clearly understood that the source and circumstances of his knowledge of English would play a crucial role, and the gently rewritten version of his autobiography did in fact contribute to his success in putting Hungary on the political map of Europe."[20] This was undoubtedly true, for whatever success Kossuth had achieved – even if of little immediate political significance – that success was largely the result of his oratorical skills delivered in the language of the highly respected English Bard.

Kossuth and American Democracy

While in the United States, Kossuth had visited all of the major centers of American culture, learning and politics, as well as scores of minor settlements between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi River. Wherever he went he made speeches, hammering repeatedly on the need to enlist American support for the Hungarian cause. Altogether he delivered about 400 official addresses and many more impromptu speeches.[21] He delivered some of his longest and most memorable speeches on the East Coast between New York and Washington, where he also addressed the U.S. Congress. But he likewise made compelling speeches in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Indianapolis, St. Louis, New Orleans, as well as in numerous other southern and eastern cities. The most momentous among the latter was his speech delivered in Columbus, Ohio, on February 7, 1852. It was on that occasion when he uttered the oft-quoted sentence about the nature of democracy, which subsequently was borrowed in a slightly altered form by President Lincoln for his Gettysburg Address. Kossuth defined democracy as *"All for the people, and all by the people. Nothing about the people, without the people,"*[22] which appeared in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address as *"government of the people, by the people, for the people."*[23] The similarity between these two definitions of democracy has undoubtedly been recognized by others before us, for these nearly identical expressions are inscribed on commemorative plaque on one of the inner walls of Columbus City Hall,[24] as well as on the external wall of the Kossuth House in Washington, D.C.[25] Of course, these nearly identical definitions by these two great leaders contain views that have been part and parcel of the basic definition of American democracy ever since the late 18th century. They have certainly found expression in the spirit, if not in the exact words of the Constitution of the United States of America (1788).

Fifty of Kossuth's most important speeches have been incorporated into a work edited by Professor Francis W. Newman (1805–1897), the brother of Cardinal John Newman (1801–1890), with Kossuth's express approval. He published them with his his own scholarly introduction in 1853.[26] Unavoidably, Kossuth often repeated himself, but at the same time he also introduced new elements into most of his speeches. He did this either in the way he phrased and rephrased his main ideas and political goals, or by introducing elements of local history into his speeches. Notwithstanding these repetitions, Kossuth himself regarded these fifty political addresses to have been so significant that he agreed and encouraged their publication in the above-mentioned separate volume.

In the Ohio capital Kossuth was received with great enthusiasm and much generosity by Governor Reuben Wood (1792–1864), Lieutenant Governor Joseph Medill (1823–1899), the members of the Ohio Legislature, as well as by the local chapter of the "Association of the Friends of Hungary." The latter was an organi-

zation which had branches in cities and towns throughout America, and which had been established even before Kossuth's arrival to the New World. In their enthusiasm for Kossuth, the members of the Ohio State Senate went so far as to pass a resolution which authorized the Governor of Ohio "to deliver to Louis Kossuth, constitutional Governor of Hungary, on loan, all the public arms and ammunitions of war belonging to the state ..., to be returned in good order upon the achievement of Hungarian Liberty".[27] This, of course, was a well-meaning, but rather naive act on the part of the Ohio Legislature, which could never have been implemented without the approval of the U.S. Government. Even the Ohio legislators realized their folly after Kossuth's departure, for subsequently they tabled this resolution and then conveniently forgot about it.

Kossuth and American Nonintervention

At the time of his coming to the United States Kossuth may have been vaguely aware of America's noninterventionist sentiment inherited from the "Father of the Country," but he certainly was not aware of the depth of that sentiment. He was sure that he would be able to change this belief in favor of a new policy of intervention, particularly with the support of the newly emerging Young America Movement. "Young America was... an amorphous movement... identified with aggressive nationalism, manifest destiny, and sympathy for the European revolutions of 1848...."[28] The movement reached its climax at the time of Kossuth's visit to the United States, when George N. Sanders (1812–1873) of Kentucky[29] "formulated a program of southward expansion, aid to the republican elements in foreign countries, and free trade."[30] This was precisely what Kossuth needed and wanted. Thus, he established contacts with Young America even before coming to the United States. Then, upon his arrival he expanded these contacts into a close working relationship with the leaders of the movement, all of whom espoused anti-isolationist sentiments, supported America's rise to a great power position, and for the same reason advocated a policy of intervention, favored by Kossuth. The most prominent among them were Senator Lewis Cass (1782–1866) of Michigan, Senator Henry Foote (1804–1880) of Mississippi, and the French-born Senator Pierre Soulé (1801–1870) of Louisiana – the latter being not only an "advocate of American imperialism," but also "a strong protagonist of slavery."[31]

There were also others who sympathized with the policy of intervention, but they were generally more careful and less outspoken than the above. Moreover, they always viewed intervention from the vantage point of American foreign policy interests, and tended to disregard ethically and emotionally based arguments, which generally characterized Kossuth's speeches. Among the latter were President Zachary Taylor (1782–1850), who died unexpectedly on July 9, 1850, and Sena-

tor Stephen Arnold Douglas (1813–1861) from Illinois, known as the "little giant," who in 1860 was Abraham Lincoln's rival for the presidency of the United States.[32]

Triumph of Nonintervention

Notwithstanding Kossuth's tumultuous reception during his nearly eight months tour of the United States,[33] he was unable to nudge the American Government in the direction of intervention. This became evident already in January 1852, when he paid a visit to President Millard Fillmore (1800–1874), who left no doubt in Kossuth's mind that no cause of any sort could make him break with the Washingtonian policy of nonintervention. When speaking to Kossuth, Fillmore basically pointed to his "State of the Union Message" delivered a few days earlier, where he asserted that "no individuals have the right to hazard the peace of the country, or to violate its laws upon vague notions of altering or reforming governments in other states. ... Friendly relations with all, but entangling alliances with none, has long been a maxim with us. Our true mission is not to propagate our opinions, or impose upon other countries our form of government by artifice or force; but to teach by example, and show by our success, moderation and justice, the blessings of self-government and the advantages of free institution."[34]

Although initially more flexible on the idea of intervention, by the end of 1851 Daniel Webster was also of this opinion. Even before Kossuth's arrival to the capital, Webster wrote to his friend Richard Milford Blatchford (1798–1875) that he would "treat him [Kossuth] with respect, but shall give him no encouragement that the established policy of the country will be from any degree departed from. ... If he should speak to me of the policy of intervention, I shall have ears more deaf than adders."[35]

This view was generally shared by most Americans, and it gained even more currency when Kossuth began to question the Washingtonian policy of neutrality. When Kossuth undertook to criticize this policy – however slightly – it was viewed as an uncalled-for personal attack by a foreigner against the "father" of the American nation.

One of the typical examples of this new phenomenon was the attitude expressed by the Boston Unitarian clergyman, Rev. Francis Parkman, the father of the noted historian Francis Parkman (1823–1893), who, in November 1852, made the following statement about Kossuth's efforts to undermine the Washingtonian principle of nonintervention: "No one respects the talents of Louis Kossuth more than I do. But if the Archangel Gabriel and his brother Michael were to quit their celestial homes and come to Boston, clothed in white robes and bearing palms in their hands, and should undertake to teach the doctrines of Washington's Farewell Address – so help me heaven, not meaning to be profane, I should pluck them by

their robes and say to them, go back where you came from, praise God, and mind your own business."[36]

Kossuth returned to Europe shattered and disappointed by the lack of American willingness to intervene into the affairs of Hungary and the Austrian Empire.[37] Like many others before and after him, he too was unable to crack America's attachment to the policy of nonintervention that had dominated American thinking and American foreign policy for over a century, right up to World War I; and then also through much of the interwar years. Yet, his disappointment with American foreign policy never altered his admiration for American democracy, nor for American society – with the exception of the institution of slavery. Slavery was an institution that he could never fathom, and which was the second of the two major issues that had torpedoed his efforts in America.

When interviewed four decades later, at the age of eighty-eight, by James Creelman (1859–1915) of the *New York Herald*, he still held on to his belief in the greatness of American democracy. He declared that "he had lived to see all his idols shattered, all but the great republic across the Atlantic Ocean."[38] And then he continued: "Your country is the one power that is steadily gaining strength. Your greatest danger is your wealth. When nations become rich they lose their energy and gradually drift away from their moral ideals. ... Yet, God forbid that harm should come to the United States, the hope of mankind in the future!"[39]

The Slavery Question in Pre-Civil War American Society

In addition to Kossuth's inability to break America's attachment to the Washingtonian principle of neutrality and nonintervention, the other cause of Kossuth's failure during his American tour was his inability to deal effectively with the slavery question. The anti-slavery forces tried to enlist him into their ranks, but Kossuth fought desperately to avoid being dragged into the quagmire of American domestic politics, which – he feared – could only hurt his cause.[40] His admiration for American democracy is amply demonstrated by his continued praise of the American political system and the American way of life throughout his stay in America.[41] His disdain for slavery, however, is crouched in obtuse sentences. He feared that his remarks during those emotional antebellum times would turn half of the nation against him and thus hurt his hope for American support.

It is indicative of Kossuth's powerful influence that his presence and views impacted even upon American domestic party politics. Following his arrival to America both political parties consciously sought his favors and his support. These included the Democratic Party, which, while saturated with the ideas of Jacksonian democracy, supported the institution of slavery; as well as the Whig Party,

which favored federalism, but opposed slavery. Kossuth's misfortune was that upon arrival to the United States he found himself right in the middle of this emotional controversy that was tearing the country apart, and taking it in the direction of a civil war.

The abolitionists, who viewed Kossuth as the "champion of human freedom," rightfully expected him to support their cause. But when this did not happen, when the "champion of liberty" declined to be dragged into the slavery controversy under the pretext of "nonintervention" – even though at the same time he advocated intervention on behalf of Hungary – many anti-slavery crusaders became disenchanted with him, and a number of them turned bitterly against him.

The most prominent among the latter was William Lloyd Garrison (1805–1879), the founding president of the American Anti-Slavery Society (1833), who virtually overnight turned from an ardent Kossuth-admirer into a vitriolic Kossuth-hater. According to this pioneer anti-slavery crusader, "the independence of Hungary alone absorbs his [Kossuth's] thoughts. ... He placed his selfish mission above the transcendent interest of the human race – subordinating American slavery to European political oppression."[42] In consequence of this decision – so Garrison claimed – Kossuth "means to be deaf, dumb, blind, in regard to it [slavery]!" Moreover, "to subserve his own purpose, and to secure the favor of a slaveholding and slave-breeding people, he skulks, he dodges, he plays fast and loose, he refuses to see a stain on the American character, any inconsistency in pretending to adore liberty and at the same time, multiplying human beings for the auction block and the slave shambles."[43]

Edmund Quincy, one of Garrison's major sympathizers and collaborators, also switched his views on Kossuth and defined the latter's goals in America as follows: "He came for men and for money, for loans and for bayonets, for an American legion under the Hungarian flag, for an American fleet sweeping the Baltic and thundering at the gates of St. Petersburg. The sympathy for which he asks is that uttered by the cannon's mouth and urged home at the point of bayonet. Resolutions either by mobs or of Congress are but so much foul breath, unless they stand for these things."[44] In other words, similarly to Garrison, Quincy also came to conclude that Kossuth had a one-track mind and only a single goal in life: the liberation of Hungary. They undoubtedly knew that he was sympathetic to the plight of the slaves, but they were also convinced that he was willing to sacrifice all basic human goals for the only goal that prompted him to visit the New World.

Having come to this conclusion, Garrison and his supporters took every chance to condemn Kossuth when the latter spoke commendingly about American society and praised American democracy. And because Hungary's ex-governor-president routinely characterized and applauded the United States as the homeland of freedom and democracy, the anti-slavery advocates invariably attacked him left and right. When Kossuth referred to the United States as "this free, great and

glorious country"[45] the anti-slavery crusaders countered by describing the same country as "the homeland of institutionalized slavery." They generally drew parallels between the allegedly oppressive social and political systems of the the Habsburg Empire, and the slave-harboring society of the United States. They carried these parallels to a point where they compared Kossuth to an escaped slave, while at the same time calling Emperor Francis Joseph (r. 1848–1916) his former salve-master.[46]

Before Kossuth's arrival to the United States, Garrison and his supporters were convinced that through his presence they would gain a powerful friend in their crusade against slavery. Thus they supplied him with a vast amount of anti-slavery propaganda material, and beseeched him to join their ranks in their struggle against slavery. Upon his arrival, however, when Kossuth began his unchanging praise of the United States, they inundated him with hundreds of letters and asked him to cease praising American society. Garrison himself went so far as to write a poem about slavery in America, in which he called upon Kossuth that in his capacity as "an apostle of human freedom" he should "take the slave's part" and put his moral weight on the side of human liberty:

> Say slavery is a stain upon our glory,
> Accursed in Heaven, and by the earth abhorred;
> Show that our soil with Negro blood is gory,
> And certain are the judgments of the Lord;
> So shall thy name immortal be in story,
> And thy fidelity the world applaud.[47]

Notwithstanding Garrison's efforts, however, Kossuth declined to be drawn into the struggle against slavery, claiming that it was strictly an internal affair of the United States. In reality, having Hungary's future in his eyesight, he tried to stay out of the slavery controversy simply because he did not wish to alienate the slaveholding interests, who may perhaps decide to support his call for a political and military intervention in Europe. Upon realizing Kossuth's reluctance to support their cause, Garrison and the Anti-Slavery Society immediately switched trains and went on to condemn him and the whole Hungarian cause. They launched a virtual crusade against him, which at times degenerated to a series of vitriolic attacks. One of Garrison's associates, for example, declared in reference into Kossuth that "I had rather have a great man, than the political liberation of twenty Hungarys."[48]

Garrison himself went far beyond this point, launching attack after attack against the Hungarian statesman, referring to him by all sorts of derogatory adjectives. He called the former Hungarian governor-president "cowardly," "slippery," "selfish," "deaf, dumb and blind," "a criminal," and he also claimed that Kossuth was "as demented as the renowned Don Quixote."[49] He asserted that, similarly to his Spanish

predecessor, Kossuth was unable to differentiate between giant warriors and windmills. Moreover, his persistent praising of American society was similar to one going "into a notorious house of ill-fame, and praise its polluted inhabitants as the most virtuous of all flesh."[50] Garrison incorporated all of his accusations into a book-size "Letter to Louis Kossuth" in which he systematically refuted all of Kossuth's arguments concerning America as the land of liberty. He also characterized the former governor-president of Hungary as a double-faced hypocrite, who is willing to say and do virtually anything to curry favor with Americans, so as to gain their financial, political, and military support for the Hungarian cause.[51] Thereafter, Kossuth remained a perpetual target of Garrison's venomous attacks, who seized every opportunity to discredit the exiled Hungarian statesman and thus undercut his effort to gain American support for his national cause.

Conclusions

Kossuth's attitude toward the slavery question in pre-Civil War America is perhaps understandable from the vantage point of an exiled statesman, whose primary goal was to liberate his own country. In retrospect, however, it appears to have been both blundering and unethical. Kossuth's questionable approach to the emotional problem of human slavery resulted in the loss of some of his moral credit, as well as the support of a significant segment of American society. Moreover, staying out of the slavery question did not really gain him any support from the South. The Southern slave-holders were fully aware that Kossuth's basic sentiments were against slavery, and that his lack of support of the anti-slavery campaign was simply a calculated political decision. Consequently, Kossuth never acquired any friends in the deep South, and his tour of the southern states brought him very little acclaim and even less expression of support. The lack of warm reception and support in the South could not really be counterbalanced by the visible (if empty) success of his tour in the northern states. True, he was continuously feted, celebrated, and paid homage to in the North, but most of these celebrations constituted only a flash in the pan, without the promise of meaningful political and financial support. As such, upon his return to Europe, Kossuth could only take with him the memory of romantic speeches and sonorous celebrations, along with a whole set of political accusations and recriminations, but without any hope of support by the United States.

In light of the above, in July 1852, Kossuth returned to Europe as a deeply disappointed man, and did so under the pseudonym of Mr. Alexander Smith. Notwithstanding the show of mass sympathy in the North, he was unable to budge the young American Republic from its path of neutrality and non-involvement. Moreover, by his neutral stand on the slavery question he lost some of his political pres-

tige and his personal credibility. It is a marvelous act of fate, that this loss of prestige turned out to be only a temporary phenomenon.

Kossuth's disappointment with the United States was very deep. This disappointment, however – as emphasized earlier – did not alter his respect for American democracy, which he retained throughout his long exile. In point of fact he was convinced even in his old age that "if the experiment of self-government does not succeed in the United States, it cannot be successful anywhere."[52] Therefore, outside the reprehensible institution of southern slavery (which was solved by the bloody Civil War a decade after Kossuth return to Europe) Kossuth's disappointment was basically with the American presidency, whose powers, in his view, were too broad and too comprehensive in the conduct of foreign affairs.[53] He was thoroughly convinced that his own failure in America was due not so much to George Washington's anti-interventionist views, but rather to the isolationist policies of President Millard Fillmore (r. 1850–1853).

A century and a half has passed since Kossuth's American tour. Since then, many hundreds of thousands of Hungarians have immigrated to the United States. Most were average people. But their ranks also contained many noted and prominent personalities, among them internationally known scientists, inventors, artists, statesmen, musicians, and scholars.[54] Yet, none of them can or could vie with Kossuth in popularity. Although deceased well over a century ago, to the average American it is still Kossuth who best represents Hungary and the Hungarians. He is still the Hungarian most quoted by statesmen and politicians, and whenever we hear Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, it is still Kossuth's words that ring in our ears. Kossuth's name and fame is still intimately intertwined with American democracy.

Notes

1. Since during the last few years I have published over half a dozen articles about Kossuth and his relationship to the United States, it is unavoidable that the current study should contain some duplications. Some of my most important relevant studies include: (1) "Kossuth amerikai 'diadalútja' 1851–1852-ben" [Kossuth's 'Triumphant Tour' of America in 1851–1852], *Debreceni Szemle* [Debrecen Review], New Series, 6/3 (1998): 331–339; (2) "Louis Kossuth's Words in Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address," *Eurasian Studies Yearbook* 71 (1999): 27–32; (3) "Kossuth Lajos hatása az amerikai társadalomra és közgondolkodásra" [Louis Kossuth's Impact upon American Society and Mentality], *Valóság* [Reality] 42/9 (September 1999): 36–43; (4) "Kossuth és az amerikai demokrácia" [Kossuth and American Democracy], in *Emlékkönyv L. Nagy Zsuzsa 70. születésnapjára* [Memorial Volume on the Occasion of Zsuzsa L. Nagy's 70th Birthday], eds. János Angi and János Barta (Debrecen: Multiplex Media–Debrecen University Press, 2000), 173–182; (5) "Kossuth Lajos Amerikában 1851–1852-ben" [Louis Kossuth in American in 1851–1852], *Amerikai Magyar Népszava / Szabadság* [American Hungarian People's Voice / Liberty], 111/17 (May 11, 2001): 14–16; and (6) "Epilogue.

Kossuth and Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," in *The Life of Governor Louis Kossuth, with his Public Speeches in the United States, and with a Brief History of the Hungarian War of Independence.* Illustrated by Handsome Engravings. By An Officer of the Hungarian Army (New York: Published at 128 Nassau Street, 1852. Reprinted in Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2001), 181–199.

2. In Hungarian I publish under the name "Várdy Béla."
3. Bálint Hóman and Gyula Szekfű, *Magyar történet* [Hungarian History], 5 vols. (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1943), V. 453.
4. See Joseph Széplaki, *Louis Kossuth: "The Nation's Guest"* (Ligonier, PA: Bethlen Press, Inc., 1976), 11. Széplaki lists over 1600 mostly contemporary publications that deal with Kossuth, among them 189 poems addressed to the Hungarian statesman. Kossuth's unusual popularity is demonstrated, among others, by Reverend Edmund [Ödön] Vasváry's (1888–1977) archival collection of Hungarica-Americana, which after his death ended up in his native city of Szeged, Hungary. About ten percent of the collection – 34 out of 436 boxes – deal with Kossuth and his relationship to America. Cf. András Csillag, "The Edmund Vasváry Collection," *Hungarian Studies* 1/1 (1985): 123–130. Concerning Rev. Vasváry, see Steven Béla Várdy, "Reverend Edmund Vasváry: Personal Reminiscences about a Chronicler of the Hungarian–American Past," *Eurasian Studies Yearbook* 71 (1999): 207–212; and Várdy Béla, "Vasváry Ödön, az amerikai-magyar múlt krónikása" [Edmund Vasváry, Chronicler of the American-Hungarian Past], *Vasváry Collection Newsletter* 19 (1998/1): 3–4.
5. Greeley's, Whittier's, Emerson's, and Lowell's tributes to Kossuth are reprinted in Endre Sebestyén, *Kossuth. A Magyar Apostle of World Democracy* (Pittsburgh: Expert Printing Company, 1950), 207–218.
6. Concerning this Kossuth-cult, in addition to Széplaki's above-cited work, see Kende Géza, *Magyarok Amerikában. Az amerikai magyarság története* [Hungarians in America. The History of Hungarian Americans], 2 vols. (Cleveland: A Szabadság Kiadása, 1927), I, 77–115; István Gál, "Az amerikai Kossuth-kultusz" [American Kossuth Cult], in István Gál, *Magyarország, Anglia és Amerika* [Hungary, England, and Amerika] (Budapest: Officina, 1944), 187–194; Donald S. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America. A Study in Sectionalism and Foreign Policy, 1848–1852* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1977), 29–81; John H. Komlós, *Kossuth in America, 1851–1852* (Buffalo: East European Institute, State University of New York College at Buffalo, 1973), 75–94; and Sebestyén, *Kossuth,* 205-218.
7. See Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 60–63.
8. Béla Várdy, *Magyarok az újvilágban* [Hungarians in the New World] (Budapest: Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, 2000), 384.
9. The author and his wife, Dr. Agnes Huszár Várdy, were invited guests at this White House reception for President Göncz on June 8, 1999.
10. These include the full standing Kossuth-statues of Cleveland (1902), New York City (1929), Algona, Kossuth County, Iowa (2001), and the Kossuth-bust in the U.S. Capitol (1990). Bronze plaques can be found in Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, Columbus, St. Louis, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and perhaps a few other cities. Unfortunately, a recently published handbook that contains a list of Kossuth-statues in America, fails to mention the original one in Cleveland. See *Magyar Amerika. A tengerentúli magyarok mai élete történetekben és képekben* [Hungarian America. The Current Life of Overseas Hungarians in Stories and in Pictures], ed. László Tanka (Budapest: Médiamix Kiadó, 2002), 211.
11. György Szabad, "Kossuth on the Political System of the United States of America," in *Etudes Historiques Hongroises 1975* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975), I, 510–511; and Tibor Frank, "Give me Shakespeare: Lajos Kossuth's English as an Instrument of International Politics," in Tibor Frank, *Ethnicity, Propaganda, Myth-Making. Studies on Hungarian Connections to Britain*

and America, 1848-1945 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1999), 210–211; hereafter: Frank, "Kossuth's English."

12. On Kossuth's tour of the United States, see Várdy, "Kossuth amerikai 'diadalútja'," 331–339.
13. On the changing image of Hungarians in the United States, see Steven Béla Várdy, "Image and Self-Image among Hungarian-Americans since the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *East European Quarterly* 35/3 (September 2001): 309–342; and its two slightly different Hungarian versions: Béla Várdy, "A magyarság változó képe Amerikában az elmúlt másfél évszázadban" [Changing Image of the Hungarians in America during the Past Century and a Half], *Valóság* [Reality] 43/9 (September 2000): 70–89; and "A magyarságkép alakulása és jelenlegi állása az Egyesült Államokban" [The Development and Current Status of the Hungarian Image in the United States], in *A XL.Magyar Találkozó Krónikája* [Proceedings of the 40th Hungarian Congress], ed. Gyula Nádas (Cleveland, Ohio: Árpád Könyvkiadó Vállalat, 2001), 46–65.
14. Gábor Egressy, as quoted in Andor M. Leffler, *The Kossuth Episode in America* (Ph.D. dissertation, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, 1949), 95; and in Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 54–55.
15. Frank, "Kossuth's English," 211.
16. Kossuth's letter to his mother, December 24, 1837, published in *Kossuth Lajos iratai, 1837. május – 1840. december* [Lajos Kossuth's Papers, May 1837 – December 1840], vol. 7, ed. Gábor Pajkossy (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989), 317; also quoted by Frank, "Kossuth's English," 210.
17. The first to do so was Ferenc Kazinczy (1759–1831), who translated Hamlet from German in 1790. Cf. Miklós Szenczi, Tibor Szobotka, Anna Katona, *Az angol irodalom története* [The History of English Literature] (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1972), 139.
18. Frank, "Kossuth's English," 222.
19. *Ibid.*, 223.
20. *Ibid.*
21. See Leffler, *The Kossuth Episode in America*, 31.
22. See the article "Ohio Legislature," *Ohio State Journal* (February 7, 1952). I would like to thank Mr. Béla Kovách of Columbus, Ohio, for sending me xeroxed copies of the *Journal*'s relevant pages. The manuscript version of Kossuth's speech can be found in the Széchényi National Library, Budapest, Analekta 10467, which appeared in a printed form already in 1853. Cf. *Selected Speeches of Kossuth. Condensed and abridged with Kossuth's express sanction* , ed. Francis W. Newman (London: Trübner & Co., 1853), 185. See also also Széplaki, *Louis Kossuth. The Nation's Guest,* 10; Sebestyén, *Kossuth,* 130; and Komlós, *Kossuth in America,* 119.
23. For Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," see *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln,* ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953–1955), VII, 23.
24. Széplaki, *Louis Kossuth,* 11. This similarity has also been noted by György Szabad in his "Kossuth on the Political System of the United States of America," 513–515.
25. The author personally examined the plaque at the Kossuth House.
26. Newman, *Selected Speeches of Kossuth.* The speeches delivered in Cleveland and Columbus respectively were printed in *Report of the Special Committee appointed by the Common Council of the City of New York to Make Arrangements for the Reception of Gov. Louis Kossuth, the Distinguished Hungarian Patriot.* (New York, 1852), 527–563. Many of the drafts of Kossuth's speeches are deposited in the Hungarian National Archives, R 90. 28.
27. Quoted in Komlós, *Kossuth in America,* 119.
28. Richard B. Morris, ed., *Encyclopedia of American History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 217.

29. George Nicholas Sanders of Kentucky was the editor-in-chief of the influential *The Democratic Review,* which became a fanatical herald of the policy of American expansionism and interventionism. See Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 116–120.
30. *Ibid.,* 217–218.
31. *Dictionary of American Biography,* vol. IX. 406.
32. *Ibid.,* 18–27, 37–47, 112–116, 137–140.
33. Concerning the main stops on Kossuth's tour of the United States, see Joseph Széplaki, *Louis Kossuth,* 22–24.
34. *Congressional Globe,* 31st Congress, 1st Session, p. 15; quoted by Komlós, *Kossuth in America,* 103.
35. Webster to Blatchford, December 30, 1851, in *The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1903), XVIII, 501–502; also quoted by Komlós, *Kossuth in America,* 100.
36. Quoted in Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *The Journal of Richard Henry Dana,* ed. Robert F. Lucid, 3. vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), II, 52; and Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 172.
37. Kossuth's lack of success in gaining American military and political support for the Hungarian cause is discussed by this author in his above cited study, "Kossuth amerikai 'diadalútja'," 331–339.
38. James Creelman, *On the Great Highway. The Wanderings and Adventures of a Special Correspondent* (Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 1901), 243.
39. *Ibid.,* 253.
40. On Kossuth and the slavery question, see Várdy, "Kossuth és az amerikai demokrácia," especially 178–180.
41. See Gyula Szekfű, "Az öreg Kossuth, 1867–1894" [Old Kossuth, 1867–1894], in *Emlékkönyv Kossuth Lajos születésének 150. Évfordulójára,* [Memorial Volume on the Occasion of the 150th Anniversary of Louis Kossuth's Birth], 2 vols. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1952), II, 341–433.
42. *The Liberator,* vol. 22 (1852), 138; quoted in William Lloyd Garrison, *The Story of His Life as Told by His Children,* 4 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1894), III, 340, 345. See also Komlós, *Kossuth in America,* 143.
43. *The Liberator,* vol. 22, (1852) p. 203; quoted in John L. Thomas, *The Liberator: William Lloyd Garrison* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1963), 371. See also Komlós, *Kossuth in America,* 141.
44. Edmund Quincy's article in the December 18, 1851 issue of *The National Anti-Slavery Standard.* Cf. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 80.
45. This phenomenon was also noted by Frederick Douglass (1817–1895), a noted black publicist with close connections to William Lloyd Garrison. Cf. *The Liberator,* vol. 21 (December 12, 1851). Cf. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 72.
46. *Ibid.,* 71–72, 103–104.
47. Wendel Phillips Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805–1879.* 4 vols. (Boston, 1889), III, 346. See also Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 71.
48. William H. Furness to William Lloyd Garrison, 1851. december 30; reprinted in Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison,* vol. 3, p. 347. See also Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 78.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *The Liberator,* vol. 21, December 18, 1851. Cf. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 78.

51. William Lloyd Garrison, "Letter to Louis Kossuth concerning Freedom and Slavery in the U.S.," in *The Liberator,* January 9 and February 20, 1852. See also Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America,* 76–81.
52. *On the Great Highway,* 253.
53. Concerning Kossuth's view of the power of the American presidency, see Szabad, "Kossuth and the Political System of the United States," 25–28.
54. Concerning Hungarian immigration to the United States see the following major works: Emil Lengyel, *Americans from Hungary* (Philadelphia–New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1948); Julianna Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States, 1880–1914* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982); Steven Béla Várdy, *The Hungarian-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985); Steven Béla Várdy and Agnes Huszár Várdy, *The Austro-Hungarian Mind: At Home and Abroad* (New York: East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1989); Albert Tezla, *The Hazardous Quest. Hungarian Immigrants in the United States, 1895–1920* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1993); Julianna Puskás, *Ties That Bind, Ties That Divide: 100 Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States,* trans. Zora Ludwig (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 2000); and the already cited Várdy, *Magyarok az újvilágban.*

KOSSUTH, CLAUSEWITZ AND THE HERO'S JOURNEY

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The Hero's Journey is a universal pattern. Although it can be infinitely varied, the basic form is both universal and constant. Kossuth first crossed the threshold when he entered national politics. After his imprisonment for disloyalty and sedition, he emerged as a national martyr and hero. He became and remained a revolutionary. He never reached the resurrection stage, made no compromise, and became a symbol for independence and liberty.

Keywords: Hero's journey, tragic hero, mythological figures, resurrection, democracy, revolution, compromise, Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence

Joseph Campbell, in his book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces,* states that, "Wherever the poetry of myth is interpreted as biography, history, or science, it is killed."[1] Such was the fate of Lajos Kossuth as he traveled Britain and America between 1851 and 1852 in hopes of resuscitating a dead revolution. Here was a person who befits the romantic age in verse, appearance, and sentiment. Like the mythical figures of Gilgamesh, Odysseus, Aeneas, and Beowulf, Kossuth too embarked upon an adventure that mortals must undertake in their lives in order to become heroes. It was no different for Lord Byron earlier in the century: a veritable Don Quixote chasing windmills in the southern Balkans. Unfortunately, Kossuth's adventure becomes one of failure because of his unwillingness to accept change and his reluctance to compromise.

Kossuth's journey is more than history. It is symbolic like the man himself. It is as poignant as those journeys taken by literary heroes. Historians, for Alexander Dumas, simply defend points of view and select heroes who help them in this endeavor. Novelists, however, are impartial, they do not judge, they show.[2] Kossuth's life is as metaphoric as Edmond Dantes in Dumas' novel *The Count of Monte Cristo,* where the hero escapes from his unjust imprisonment to seek revenge against those responsible for his fate. It is as dramatic as Sir William Wallace and Robert the Bruce in Jane Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs,* the story of a courageous and honorable man and the ideals and country for which he died. Kossuth

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too is a tragic hero because, in spite of his Herculean efforts, his journey must end in failure.

Many authors write about the tragic hero. Aristotle, however, is still the "major authority on tragedy." For Aristotle, in order to be a tragic hero the individual must have a major flaw. Usually the flaw is *hubris,* or excessive pride.[3] Kossuth's pride is evident in his failure to compromise on an independent Hungary. His travels in Britain and America and his life as an exile reveal that he would never be willing to accept that his cause, his *raison d'état* had ended.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán referred to Kossuth's failure on Monday, 11 February 2002 in a speech on European Security at Tufts Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Orbán told his audience that 150 years ago the governor of Massachusetts welcomed Kossuth to Boston and said, "The moment is near when we will welcome Hungary to the family of republican, constitutional, sovereign states." Orbán remarked that "this moment took 138 years to arrive."[4] Kossuth's tragedy goes beyond his own quixotic behavior. As István Deák states, "Kossuth was a child of his age: a liberal and nationalist for whom the two ideologies were not incompatible."[5] Unfortunately for Kossuth, his ideas were incompatible in an age of growing imperialism and empire. He was attempting an impossible task: the creation of a nation-state without the assistance of a Great Power. Moreover, such powers were all empires involved in either the expansion or maintenance of their empires, and were not interested in an independent Hungary or a republic unless it served their purposes.

Initially it may seem unfair to consider Kossuth, an international hero, and a champion of freedom and liberty, along with poets and mythological figures. Such figures, however, are more emblematic of the hero. The British poet Siegfried Sassoon continued his journey far beyond the trenches of World War I. He, along with such literary men as Robert Graves, Max Plowman, Cecil Lewis, and Edmund Blunden, were all involved in the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Their literary legacies are a testament of their journeys, which did not cease with the end of hostilities. This generation produced "most of the novels and poems and plays that constitute Western literature" in the twentieth century.[6] For this generation the "romance of war died on the Western Front."[7] Whereas the romantic spirit allowed poets and artists to stretch the limits of creative expression, it was disastrous for statesmen.[8] Kossuth is different in that he is a hero who refuses to complete his journey. His journey is as tragic as Byron and Wilfred Owen, both of whom die before their journeys are completed. Inevitably, Kossuth's failure was a result of his "inability to face the world as it was instead of as it might have been."[9]

According to Vogler, "The pattern of the Hero's Journey is universal, occurring in every culture, in every time. It is as infinitely varied as the human race itself and yet its basic form remains constant ... The ideas embedded in mythol-

ogy and identified by Campbell ... can be applied to understanding almost any human problem."[10] In the beginning the hero finds himself or herself in the ordinary world, such as Hungary before the Revolution of 1848. Afterward our "hero is presented with a problem, challenge, or adventure to undertake."[11] At this time the hero is confronted with a call to adventure. In the case of Kossuth, he must leave the comfort of his everyday ordinary world. It is here that he is confronted with a challenge of modernizing and democratizing the Hungarian nation and state. It is here where our hero will initially be reluctant to answer the call. Kossuth then abandons his ambition "to make a name for himself as a scholar or a playwright," and turns to politics.[12] It is then that Kossuth is introduced to his mentors, his "Merlin-like character(s) ... (who) prepare the hero to face the unknown."[13] It is in the Reform Diet of 1832–36 where Kossuth is encouraged by István Széchenyi's example, and the radicalism of Baron Miklós Wesselényi and the poet Ferenc Kölcsey.[14] Now Kossuth is ready to cross the first threshold; he is committed to the adventure and ready to face the challenge and consequences posed by the journey. It is here when he "encounters new challenges and tests, makes allies and enemies, and begins to learn the rules" of the game.[15] Kossuth's *Parliamentary Reports* and more radical *Municipal Reports* bear witness to his entrance into this stage. They help to lead him to the next important stage, his approach to the inmost cave, the dangerous place or lair of his enemy. He is now Theseus entering the labyrinth of the Minotaur, or in modern mythology, Luke Skywalker entering the Death Star in *Star Wars*. Upon entering this place our hero will cross the second major threshold.[16] Kossuth enters it when he is arrested and imprisoned for three years for disloyalty and sedition. He successfully passes this test as he emerges from prison with the reputation of "a national martyr and hero."[17] Now Kossuth is prepared to face his ordeal, the revolution. The experiences of the preceding stages have led up to this moment. It is here where our hero "must die or appear to die so ... (he) can be born again."[18]

The Revolution of 1848 made Kossuth an international celebrity and a voice of freedom. Revolution was a new force in the modern world. It heralded new "challenges and announce(d) the coming of significant change."[19] Unfortunately, for the remainder of his life he was unwilling to abandon his role as a revolutionary. That role had taken him from a well-known Hungarian politician in the Habsburg Empire to world prominence. The revolution became his purpose in life. He could never accept that there was no role for him in the future unless he changed and showed willingness to compromise with his former enemies. Mazzini, for example, learned that lesson during his revolution in Italy. He realized that the creation of Italy had to take precedence over a republic. Once Italy was created, the republic would become the next objective. These were stages of his hero's journey. Kossuth failed to realize that the revolution was only a stage in his journey. It is only one stop on the call to adventure for our hero. As a consequence of his failure

to move forward, Kossuth never reaped his reward. The reward, or the seizing of the sword, is the next stage of the journey. "The 'sword' is knowledge and experience that leads to greater understanding and a reconciliation with hostile forces."[20] It is here when Kossuth fails in his reconciliation by not coming to grips with the realities of his failed revolution. Kossuth never makes the decision to follow the road back, to once again return to the ordinary world. It is a stage when "the hero realizes that the Special World must eventually be left behind."[21] In Judaism and Christianity, this stage is "coming down from the mountain top," as Moses did with the tablets of the Law, or as Christ did after the transfiguration. In Kossuth's case, it is abandoning the revolution for compromise.

Kossuth's mistake was his decision to take his revolution to England and American instead of attempting to resurrect the April Laws of 1848 within the context of the Habsburg Empire. Ironically, as early as September 1848, Kossuth offered to resign as long as the April Laws and national self-determination were guaranteed.[22] By failing to give up the revolution, he never reached the resurrection stage where the hero must be "reborn and cleansed in one last Ordeal ... before returning to the Ordinary World."[23] It is during this stage where Kossuth was tested to see if "he really learned the lesson of the Ordeal."[24] It is a stage where a hero has new insight. It was a stage that Abraham Lincoln, an early supporter of Kossuth and his Hungarian cause, entered when he spoke at Gettysburg of America having "a new birth of freedom." Lincoln spoke of the creation of a new America after the Civil War. He realized the war had changed him and his nation. It was an important stage in his journey. Kossuth was never transformed into a new being because of his experiences. He never returned, as Campbell deemed necessary, with the elixir and ultimate victory. Kossuth was destined to become a symbol, a metaphor for independence and liberty for Hungarians and oppressed people throughout the West. Although an international hero, he experienced personal failure. In the end he never returned with the Holy Grail, or the knowledge of what he learned would be useful to creating a more democratic Hungary. He becomes the tragic hero who helps to initiate Hungary on a path that will lead to the Compromise of 1867, the Trianon Peace of 1920, the post-World War II Soviet domination, and eventually to freedom following the collapse of Communism in 1989 (that Prime Minister Orbán spoke of in his speech). Kossuth's war eventually became what Clemenceau believed to be "a series of catastrophes which result in victory."[25]

While considering Kossuth's dilemma, I recalled an article that I read years ago on Clausewitz that focused on Napoleon at Waterloo. It included a quote from a Belgium peasant who watched the emperor pass by on his way to battle. The peasant was suppose to remark that if Napoleon's face had been a clock one would be too frightened to look at it to tell the time. It is a poignant remark, an appropriate metaphor. After all, how practical or useful is a clock that cannot be used to tell

time? It is worthless. It fails to change. Consequently, it has no functionality. So it was with Napoleon. Here was someone whose revolutionary approach to war and politics had dominated the continent for over a decade. He seemed to be a titan wrestling with the gods. Yet he failed to recognize that his opponents, particularly the Prussians under vom Stein, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau, in order to defeat the French, had been practical enough to adopt many of the changes Napoleon himself had initiated. They had been willing to change and adapt to the new realities. When Napoleon took Moscow in 1812, he fully expected Alexander to make peace. After all, that is what the tsar had done following his previous defeats at the hands of the French. This time, however, Alexander showed he had learned from his previous mistakes. Eventually it would be the conservative coalition that would march down *Des Champs Élysées* and across the fields of Belgium. Like Napoleon, Kossuth failed to understand that the game had changed. He failed to adapt to the new reality. Time had inextricably passed him by.

Clausewitz, like Kossuth, was a revolutionary. However, he was pragmatic. He understood the reality of great power politics and the balance of power. He knew that "revolutionary movements will seek to turn themselves into revolutionary governments."[26] What impressed Clausewitz and the other reformers was that the French Revolution gave Napoleon the weapons he needed to defeat the old monarchies. It was those weapons they wanted to introduce to Prussia, not the revolution.[27] Change, modernization was his goal, not the destruction of the Prussian state. He was not willing to use military power against the state for revolutionary ends.

Clausewitz's journey reached its threshold in 1811 when he spoke out against the treaty with the French as being a surrender that was both unheroic and politically unwise. With some thirty officers he resigned his commission in the Prussian army. Afterward he enlisted in the Russian army and continued his fight against Napoleon. According to Peter Paret, Clausewitz "carried the revolutionary message that under certain conditions a Prussian officer's conscience or political judgement took precedence over his oath of obedience."[28] Even though the course of events would justify his actions, Clausewitz would be branded a revolutionary and deemed untrustworthy by the king and court conservatives. This label proved significant as the state became more conservative and reactionary after the French threat subsided.

Clausewitz understood the primacy of state power and the significance of the international balance of power. He knew that public opinion was not a reflection of state interest. During the Polish revolt in 1830 Clausewitz wrote his reaction to this revolution in two articles, "On the Basic Question of Germany's Existence," and "Europe since the Polish Partitions." Clausewitz determined that state power had primacy over ideology and moral sympathy.[29] He believed that support for the Poles should not be seen as a substitute for a state's political interest.[30] Even though

revolutions "resulted from internal dissension, most had international implications."[31] Clausewitz analyzed revolutions from a foreign policy perspective. He was concerned about "the threat they posed to Prussia's security and to the balance of power."[32]

It is in revolution that both Kossuth and Clausewitz approached Campbell's "black moment" or Ordeal. It is here where they encountered both supreme wonder and terror.[33] It is here where our heroes pass through "the belly of the whale."[34] Clausewitz passed the test on two occasions. Prussia was strengthened and the European balance was maintained. But Clausewitz paid a steep price for his principles. His journey resulted in the loss of both the ambassadorship to the Court of St. James and his life. Kossuth, however, never fully understood that his revolution would have to take on an evolutionary cycle to be successful. It would not end with defeat in 1849. On the contrary, it would take until the compromise of 1867 to fulfill the revolutionary mission. Initially the revolution's goals were the April Laws of 1848. Even after their removal with Hungary's defeat and the establishment of the Olmütz or Stadion Constitution, it was always possible to achieve their objective with patience and compromise. This fact is evident by the accomplishments of both Ferenc Deák and József Eötvös.

Kossuth made two tragic mistakes on his journey. The first and most catastrophic mistake was not granting democratic and autonomous concessions to the minorities once he assumed power during the revolution. His second mistake was when he dethroned the Habsburg Monarchy on 14 April 1849 in Debrecen. This decision ruled out a compromise with the monarchy, while costing Kossuth the support of many conservatives, loyalists, and monarchists within Hungary. This group was the most important and influential one that respected and supported the monarchial system.

After Hungary's defeat in 1849, Kossuth became an exile and embarked upon one adventure after another to keep alive his dream of an independent Hungary. Early in his emigration he reached the conclusion that the monarchy was obsolete, and that change, or his vision of change, was necessary if Hungary was to survive. The emergence of a democratic Hungary required a give and take, but as long as he had power within the emigration community, compromise with the Habsburgs was out of the question. Kossuth was left with two other alternatives. The first was to seek assistance from the West to keep Russia from intervening in Hungary's future struggle for independence. This solution would exclude the Danubian Principalities and Serbia from participation in the struggle, although their assistance would be considered quite valuable to the Hungarian cause. The support of the national minorities within Hungary would be awarded with the creation of a federated democratic state that would welcome their participation in its processes. The Croats, because of their historic constitution and tradition of statehood, would be given the opportunity for independence if they desired. Ironically, in the years

before the revolution, Kossuth advocated independence for Croatia.[35] But Fiume with a corridor to the sea had to be given to Hungary as a price for this independence.

Kossuth's second alternative was to reach an accommodation with the other nations in the Danubian basin for joint cooperation in creating a confederation for the mutual protection and benefit of each national group. It took Kossuth time to realize that he had to look beyond the Hungarian problem and include the other nations in a solution that could guarantee an independent and democratic Hungary. He needed to broaden his horizon and realize that the issues involved the whole basin and not just Hungary. Unfortunately, Kossuth advocated these solutions from a position of political weakness. He was not in a position to implement such a policy. He advocated such solutions when he was not faced with the political responsibilities for their implementation. More important, both these solutions could only be successful if Britain and France supported them.

Although Kossuth supported accommodation with the nationalities while in exile in Turkey, he abandoned such cooperation when he left for Britain and America. At this stage of his journey he hoped to use public opinion to influence the governments of both states to accept his principle of intervention for non-intervention. Unlike Clausewitz, Kossuth mistakenly believed that public support would eventually translate into government policy in the western democracies. He was hoping that an Anglo-American alliance could be used to counter-balance the alliance of despots and prevent Russia from aiding Austria during his second war of Hungarian independence.

Up to the Crimean War, Kossuth's speeches illustrate that he firmly believed Hungary was strong enough to secure its independence as long as Russia was not allowed to interfere. He believed that he was dealing from a position of strength. He needed neither the nationalities nor an association with them to achieve the Hungary he desired. Cooperation with the nationalities would mean giving them territorial concessions within historic Hungary. All Kossuth needed was to convince both Britain and America to accept his vision and Hungary would be as good as free. This task was as unrealistic as it was immense: try and force public opinion to convince the Palmerston government, which acquiesced in the Russian suppression of Hungarian independence in 1849, to violate its own self-interest and adopt Kossuth's idealistic vision; then to convince Americans, on the verge of Civil War themselves, to abandon their isolationism and ally themselves with their main antagonist against the alliance of despots in Europe.[36]

Despite Kossuth's preparations, Britain and America would not join forces in an alliance. Besides its impending domestic crisis, the United States had differences with Great Britain in South America. Americans felt that Britain was its main nemesis. And in actuality, they had more to fear from Britain than any other power. It is also important to realize that America's closest great power friend was

Russia, which desired a strong America to counterbalance British power in the Mediterranean. Both America and Russia saw the main threat to their expansive policies as coming from Britain. What Kossuth failed to realize was that reality took precedence over ideals. Democracy also played second fiddle to world politics.

Afterward, neither the Crimean War, the Italian Wars of Unification, nor the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 would bring about Kossuth's dream of independence. He and his cause were used as pawns in international politics. Failing once again, Kossuth renewed his cooperation with the nationalities that he had abandoned once he left Turkey in 1851. On 22 May 1867, Kossuth sent his famous "Cassandra" letter to Deák, criticizing the impending agreement with the Habsburgs. Ironically, others, inside of Hungary, would use Kossuth for their own political objectives. His letter was important in silencing the remaining objections of the landed nobility to the Compromise of 1867.

Edmund Burke said "that a State without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation."[37] Deák used the legality of the Pragmatic Sanction and the April Laws as the basis for negotiations. Kossuth's rejection of a compromise with the Habsburgs was of valuable assistance to both parties – to Francis Joseph and the Hungarian Diet – in reaching a final settlement.[38] Kossuth, considering himself a patriot, realized that the Compromise did not deal adequately with the nationality question, besides not coming to any workable accommodation with the surrounding states. He felt that the next conflict would be initiated in Hungary as a result of these failures. More important, it would end with the destruction of historic Hungary.[39] In the end, the Compromise embodied most of the legal and humanistic rights that Kossuth had been demanding for the Hungarians in the years before and including 1848. It was another stage in Hungary's road to independence and democracy.

Independence from Austria, however, was not an option. It should not have been Kossuth's objective. He failed to realize that Hungary's often-tarnished sovereignty was partly a consequence of its unfortunate geographical position. Austria's existence was essential to the Eastern Question and the European power balance. The formula for the nineteenth century included empire and great power politics. Austria was much too valuable to this equation to risk its replacement on a series of weak successor states or a loosely constructed and unreliable confederation. As far as the great powers were concerned, there was no place for an independent Hungary in this equation. For Britain, the maintenance of the status quo in the Balkans depended on Austria's ability to counterbalance that of the Russians. An independent Hungary, or a confederation, could in no way replace Austria's role as desired by Britain. As such, Britain never supported and often hindered these ideas and Kossuth's plans. Without foreign support his goals were

unattainable. As George Bernard Shaw stated, "Revolutions have never lightened the burden of tyranny, they have only shifted it to another shoulder."[40]

In the final analysis, Kossuth as a tragic hero is important for Hungary and the democratic West primarily for the symbolism he represents. He became an icon of liberalism and democracy. It is important to remember that "Tragic heroes are often superior people with extraordinary powers."[41] According to Sir Archibald Wavell, "No amount of study or learning will make a man a leader unless he has the natural qualities of one."[42] Kossuth had those qualities and the ability to exert his influence on Europe and America for a brief moment in history. The hero's journey is just a metaphor for what goes on in a human's life. The needs of the individual dictate the structure of the story.[43] Kossuth's journey was doomed to fail, but his legacy was destined to endure. It is this endurance that is embodied after 138 years in his goal of an independent and democratic Hungarian state.

Notes

1. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton, NJ: Bollingen Series/Princeton University Press, 1973), 249.
2. Patrick Rambaud, *The Battle,* translated by Will Hobson (New York: Grove Press, 1997), 301.
3. Christopher Vogler, *The Writer's Journey,* 2nd edition (Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 1998), 91–92. "Over weaning pride or insolence that results in the misfortune of the protagonist of a tragedy. *Hubris* leads the protagonist to break a moral law, attempt vainly to transcend normal limitations, or ignore a divine warning until calamitous results." William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman, *A Handbook to Literature,* 83rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 255.
4. Viktor Orbán, "Speech on European Security at Tufts Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy," *The Tufts Daily,* 11 February 2002, http://www.tuftsdaily.com/.
5. István Deák, *The Lawful Revolution, Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians, 1848–1849* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), xvi.
6. Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 32.
7. *Ibid.,* 75–76.
8. John H. Komlos, *Kossuth in America 1851–1852* (Buffalo: East European Monographs, 1977), 15.
9. *Ibid.,* 26.
10. Vogler, *The Writer's Journey,* 10–11.
11. *Ibid.,* 15.
12. Deák, *The Lawful Revolution,* 13.
13. Vogler, *The Writer's Journey,* 17–18.
14. Deák, *The Lawful Revolution,* 27.
15. Vogler, *The Writer's Journey,* 18–19.
16. *Ibid.,* 20.
17. Deák, *The Lawful Revolution,* 33.
18. Vogler, *The Writer's Journey,* 21–22.

19. *Ibid.*, 61.
20. *Ibid.*, 22.
21. *Ibid.*, 24.
22. György Szabad, *Hungarian Political Trends Between the Revolution and the Compromise* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977), 50.
23. Vogler, *The Writer's Journey,* 24.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Georges Clemenceau, cited in *The Military Quotation Book,* James Charlton, ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 50.
26. Peter Paret, *Understanding War: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 23.
27. *Ibid.*, 82.
28. *Ibid.*, 103–104.
29. Carl von Clausewitz, *Historical and Political Writings,* Peter Paret and Daniel Moran, eds. and trans. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 377.
30. Paret, *Understanding War,* 194. Ironically, during the 1830 Revolution in Russian Poland the two reformers Clausewitz and Gneisenau were ordered to the Russian border at the outbreak of hostilities. It was here where they would both contract cholera that would eventually kill them.
31. *Ibid.*, 191.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Vogler, *The Writer's Journey,* 145.
34. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces,* 90–95.
35. György Szabad, "Hungary's Recognition of Croatia's Self-Determination in 1848 and its Immediate Antecedents," *War and Society in East Central Europe,* vol. IV, *East Central European Society and War in the Era of Revolutions, 1775–1856,* Béla K. Király ed. (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs: distributed by Columbia University Press, New York, 1984), 596.
36. The independent Hungary that Kossuth desired was impossible to implement under the current political situation. Even if Britain and the United States fully supported Kossuth, the political reality was such that an independent Hungary would never have taken place. It would have required the military defeat of Russia, and the destruction of the Habsburg Empire and the balance of power.
37. Edmund Burke cited in Mountstaurt E. Grant Duff, *Francis Deák Hungarian Statesman* (London: np, 1880) 26.
38. C.A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1790–1918,* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 537.
39. Lajos Kossuth, *Kossuth Lajos nyílt levele Deák Ferenchez és Pulszky Ferency nyílt válasza Kossuth Lajoshoz* (Szeged: Burger Zsigmond, 1867), 1–4.
40. George Bernard Shaw, cited in *The Military Quotation Book,* 45.
41. Vogler, *The Writer's Journey,* 92.
42. Sir Archibald Wavel, cited in *The Military Quotation Book,* 61.
43. Vogler, *The Writer's Journey,* 238.

RETREAT AND PREPARATION: THE PRELUDE TO HUNGARY'S AGE OF REFORM

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The functioning of a civil society allows for a variety of possibilities. At the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, enlightened literature and the few journals reached only a small segment of the Hungarian population. Correspondence, a significant part of civil society, compensated for what was missing. The acceptance of free thought and pluralism by the elite prepared the way for their eventual acceptance by a growing number of individuals during the Age of Reform.

Keywords: civil society, public life, censorship, correspondence, free thought, pluralism

Much ink has been spilled on analyzing the relationship between history and sociology. This certainly is not the place to delve into this subject in all its intricate details, but historians should definitely be gratified by sociology's contribution to the study of history. I am thinking of the concept of civil society, an old idea which gained particular currency in the 1980s, primarily though not exclusively by sociologists, denoting the brave resistance offered to tyranny in the Soviet Bloc. This resistance was done by groups extolling the ideas of freedom, autonomy, and pluralism. To use the language of sociology, the aim of these groups was "the revitalization of the public sphere."[1]

In Jan Kubik's phrase, this endeavor had a "tremendous emotional and public I appeal to people living under authoritarian or (post)totalitarian regimes."[2] This statement was truer in certain countries, such as Poland, at the peak of Solidarity's popularity, and less true in others, such as Hungary or Czechoslovakia, where the resistance was limited to small groups of intellectuals. But in either case, civil society offered a new conceptual frame of reference, "the idea of institutional and ideological pluralism," in Ernest Gellner's words.[3] Or, as Andrew Arato formulated it, as dictatorships were transformed first in Eastern Europe, and then in Latin America, "the concept of civil society became a focal point of orientation."[4] These and other sociologists' focus of attention, for the most part, has been either

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on the present or the future, and thus their application of an ideological bias to civil society is fully understandable. For instance, Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato excluded market economy from their definition of civil society because of their belief that "it represents a great danger to social solidarity." Victor Perez-Diaz repudiated such thinking, attributing it to those purist sociologists – he called them minimalists – who would exclude the economic markets from the definition of civil society, thereby reducing it to an "empty shell."[5]

Historians on the other hand, when discussing civil society, see the topic from a historical perspective when they narrate and analyze those past periods that witnessed the opening up of various public spheres in absolutist regimes. This statement is not meant to disparage the critical contribution by sociologists, but it hopes to establish a definite vantage point, from which one may criticize certain sociologists' tendency to generalize in ways that is not being supported by historical evidence. At the same time, historians drawing general conclusions from their own area of particular expertise is equally incorrect. In both cases one gets a skewered view of what in fact represents a broad spectrum of possibilities.

This is so because defining the terrain between individuals and groups on the one hand and the state on the other lends itself to a bewildering variety of explanations and nuances that tend to negate subjective summary statements. Especially, when the concept is applied to the past, what attributes belonged to a certain civil society and what the exact nature of relationship between it and the state was depended to a considerable extent on particular past circumstances. Naturally, each scholar evaluates these circumstances differently, but they must do so within a framework of historical veracity. For instance, the sociologist Ernest Gellner was wrong claiming that in both the English Civil War and the American War of Independence society triumphed over the state, because societies in both instances were split in their respective loyalties. Equally wrong was the historian Robert Morns in defining civil society on the basis of his expertise in British history, describing its main features as those of the rule of law, derived from Parliament, trial by jury, and the spread of market economy.[6]

In contrast to a near-consensus among sociologists, positing the state as separate from if not antagonistic to civil society, a nuanced historical judgement would state when that was indeed the case and when it was not, or when it was something in-between. For example, Laura Engelstein correctly described eighteenth century Russian society as having "a lively public life" with printing presses, debating societies, literary salons, theaters, and Masonic lodges, yet, "fatally dependent on the autocrat's good will." And Robert Morris was right in pointing out that in the 1830s, the British government did offer subsidies to a limited number of associations. Klaus Tenfelde wrote about the severe restrictions associations suffered in most German states during the first half of the nineteenth century, but Ian McNeely was able to show another and brighter side of the same social and politi-

cal environment at the very same time through his depiction of how the so-called "Intelligenzblatter" were able to reinvigorate German small town life, leading to public participation and civic improvements.[7] The building blocks of civil societies, newspapers, clubs, associations, organizations of various kinds should be seen as situated along a spectrum that has historically embraced oppression at one end of the spectrum and co-operation at the other, with all kinds of situations existing in between these two extremes.

All this is not to say that a sociologist's study of civil society, if he or she deals with the past, or a historian's, should be reduced to the marshalling of supporting evidence, without, at the same time, being mindful of the big picture. In turn, this big picture of interplay between state and society would remain woefully deficient without the specifity of its details. It should be noted that there are many sociologists and historians who have successfully negotiated this balancing act.

The classic historical case of the emergence of a civil society in an absolutist state is eighteenth century France. The literature of this period is enormous, and it is not the aim of this paper to dive into it in any detail. Sufficient to say that royal absolutism there was progressively incapable and sometimes unwilling to impose total conformity. Behind the façade of universal compliance, supposedly enforced by censorship and assorted penalties, punishment of violators was capricious and never too harsh; at times the authorities looked the other way. Inefficiency on their part was infused by their sense of futility. After all, they faced a growing proliferation of journals, books, libraries, theaters, salons, cafes, academies, clubs, and masonic lodges. According to Roger Chartier, all of these generated the kind of publicity that turned them into arbiters of aesthetic judgement, cutting into the monopoly of opinion-making by the traditional authorities. Chartier also emphasized the importance of reading in this newly formed public sphere, to the point of entitling a chapter in his book, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, "Do Books Make Revolutions?" He documented the growth in both the ownership and the size of libraries, and he also traced the transformation of the content in several books from the religious to the secular, frequently with incendiary potential.[8]

Alexis De Tocqueville remarked that French literary life in the Ancien Regime did prepare Frenchmen for eventual political action. The historian Dena Goodman strongly reinforced this remark. According to Goodman, Diderot, particularly his *Supplement Voyage de Bouganville*, succeeded in making the discernible reader into "an agent responsible for political change. A new critical readership, in Goldman's judgement, would break with the traditional "common way of thinking." Goodman quotes to great effect Louis Sebastian Mecier, who, in the 9th volume of his *Tableau de Paris*, published in the 1780s, wrote the following, "A nation that can read, carries within it a particular happy strength which can defy or confound despotism."[9]

Correspondence was an equally if not more significant activity, completely central to many lives. In Márta Mezei's formulation, the eighteenth century was the century of letters, as those letters aided in the marking and shaping of the evolving public sphere. To Daniel Roche, the exchange of letters transformed the community of dispersed and separated individuals into a coherent whole. "The philosophers," wrote Dena Goodman, "increasingly and creatively used letters to bridge the gap between the private circles they gathered in and the public arena they sought to conquer." But the number of letters exceeded the number of philosophers, creating a "vibrant epistolary network." By no means were only philosophical matters broached, but every possible other subjects as well, "practical matters, ordinary concerns, travel, relationships, love affairs, etc." "Correspondence," remarked Roche, "played an equalizing role between various parts of the country."[10]

My emphasis on reading and especially on correspondence points to their enormous significance in Hungary at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was not yet so pronounced in the late 1770s, 1780s, and during the first half of the 1790s, when a lively and dynamic literary and political life thrived in Hungary. Unlike in France however, in much less developed Hungary, enlightened literature and the few journals reached only a relatively small segment of the population. On the other hand, while politics in France was possible only in a clandestine fashion for the most part, in Hungary, political activities in the counties and at the national diets were guaranteed by the country's constitution, bearing the grudging consent of the Habsburg rulers themselves, with the exception of Joseph II who was forcefully opposed to it. Associations flourished, including the Freemasons, at least until 1785, when Joseph II curtailed their activities. In 1790 alone, 53 printing presses in Hungary and Transylvania issued 832 publications, and the Diet of 1790/1791 made a momentous decision in setting up nine committees, charged with making recommendations on a whole host of hitherto neglected economic and other issues.[11]

The tempo of activities was already slowing down after the ascension to the throne in 1792 of King Francis I, whose narrow views, archconservatism, and mediocrity had cast a dark shadow over Hungary. The Martinovics conspiracy of 1794 and the public execution of its leaders in 1795 put the finishing touches to the most visible manifestations of the previously thriving civil society. The Court did not only fear domestic dissent but the continuing threat by the French as well. The end of the terror in France did nothing to assuage fears, as it was assumed that the heirs of Robespierre were just as dangerous as he was. Even after the defeat of the Martinovics conspiracy, the minister of police, Johann Anton Pergen, warned Francis about continuing dangers, which, he claimed, could be checked only by "unremitting vigilance by the police," and that alone "could preserve the Monarchy." Baron Johann Thugut, in charge of foreign affairs, vehemently opposed the

Treaty of Basel of 1795 between France and Prussia, saying that "even now the French are sowing the seeds of discontent, insubordination, unbelief, and false freedom everywhere."[12]

The repercussions in Hungary were severe. The conspirators were dead or in jail, so the aim became to extirpate the assumed intellectual and spiritual breeding ground of defiance, and that in turn meant a war against the printed word, even if the threat was deemed potential rather than actual. The young Palatine, Archduke Joseph, much admired later as moderate and statesmanlike, advised the King at that time, on June 18, 1798, to dissolve all reading circles, because "many novels and other books, if not read carefully, or are misunderstood, could lead to the ruin of traditions and to the spread of evil principles." The King obliged and all reading circles were dissolved on June 26, 1798. By 1800, the number of printing presses was reduced to 39 and the number of publications to 488. The police grew into the most important governmental organ, censorship stifled free thought, most associations, such as the Freemasons, were banned, and the ubiquitous presence of police informers spread distrust. In 1803, a newly formed committee retroactively banned 2,500 books which had been published earlier, including works by Montesquieu, Voltaire, Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller. By 1812, the country was left with only two Hungarian language newspapers. The poet Mihály Vitéz Csokonai's lament from 1798 says it all, "We barely woke up from our lazy slumber, and we are back going through it again," he wrote and then added the following, "All of our efforts and industriousness are gone. Each year, barely one or two worthwhile book is being published."[13]

It would be a mistake, however, to ascribe the deterioration of the country's intellectual life to Vienna alone. The bulk of the nobility too became frightened of France and of all what they thought that country was standing for. The Diet of 1796 was brief, and unlike past diets, it was devoid of controversies. Although manifestly reluctant to take the field against the French, the delegates' willingness to comply with the Court's request for recruits and food stuff, gives credibility to the verbal effusions by the personalis, József Nagy Felsőbüki, who, apart from the obligatory expressions of loyalty to the Crown , vowed to defend "the holy constitution" against forces of "perpetual turbulence and every form of impiety."[14]

The change in the Zeitgeist touched members involved in the political-cultural-intellectual ferment of the past years differently. A tiny minority refused to buckle under. Pál Czindery in Somogy county gave such an incendiary speech at the eve of the 1796 Diet that his position as his county's delegate to the Diet was suspended. At later diets, during the first decade of the nineteenth century, speeches by Count József Dessewffy, Baron Miklós Vay, and Pál Felsőbüki Nagy caused consternation in Vienna, the latter among his fellow delegates as well by his strong support for not only national but social progress. His stand was exceptional in this regard, and in general, the defense of the constitution was interpreted by the vast

majority of noblemen at the time in phrases that echoed their deep-seated and tradition-bound commitment to legal-constitutional precedents. There were many fighters for past causes who decided to withdraw into private lives with their respective families and circles of close friends.[15]

The fact that in Hungary, suffering under absolutist practices that ranged from the outrightly oppressive through the mildly annoying, autonomous political institutions were allowed to operate, proves the point made earlier that the functioning of a civil society allows for a variety of possibilities. The mention of legislatures is either absent or sporadic in the literature on civil society, and indeed, in the example used on Ancien Regime France, legislatures did not exist. Another objection may bring up the fact that the county assemblies and diets in Hungary were extremely restrictive in their membership. True, but so were the salons in France. In all their exclusive and predictable character, these conservative institutions were conduits of an amalgam of loyalty to the King and perseverance in maintaining the country's constitutional independence that entailed the preservation of the nobility's privileges and their rights of consultation on a wide variety of issues. In this sense they reflected the relationship of an important segment of society to the state, the focal point in every civil society.

Although the above description may suggest uniform patterns of beliefs and attitudes, this was not entirely true. Many threads tied the writer Ferenc Kazinczy to the social and political milieu of the counties. He congratulated Farkas Cserey on becoming a delegate to the Diet in Transylvania by saying that "there is nothing more beautiful in the country than representing the people and speaking before the nation." But while praising certain nobles in Csanád County as highly intelligent and cultured, he castigated many others, mostly younger nobles, as childish and immature, and he derided the hypocrisy of his fellow nobles, who as speakers lamented the sad state of tax-paying serfs while in no county were steps taken to hinder their merciless exploitation. Yet, in one instance, again relayed by Kazinczy, in a session in Szatmár County with a near-unanimous resistance against theaters as threats to morality and religion, a young nobleman, János Ötvös, did stand up and did defend theaters as "the best schools for refinement."[16]

Even within the traditionalist-conservative framework of the diets, there were occasional progressive rumblings. I already mentioned Pál Felsőbüki Nagy, who at the 1807 Diet took up the then hopeless cause of improving the lot of serfs. Earlier, at the 1802 Diet, the personalis, András Semsey, warned the delegates not to rush into innovations, but telling them at the same time that clinging to the old without modifications would be both damaging and dangerous.[17] Some of the modifications suggested earlier, then, and later included insisting on the publication of the proceedings, a blow to secrecy, perceiving the preservation of forests as public duty, transferring wills from churches to county offices, supporting commerce, and promoting the Magyar language without forcing it on non-Magyars.

Another visible manifestation of civil society was the regular getting together of like-minded people, mostly in Pest-Buda. These meetings were primarily social and therefore beyond the purview of the police, but in the privacy of homes discussions could be freewheeling. István Kultsár, Ferenc Karacs, and Mihály Vitkovics were the best-known and most popular hosts. The range of discussions was broad, usually serious but not always; at times it was interlaced with a great deal of joking and hearty laughter. "I have literary evenings at my home," wrote Vitkovics, a wealthy lawyer, writer, and poet, to Ferenc Kölcsey in 1820. "We are planning many plans for the plans to be planned. What we are gaining by this is that at least our winter evenings pass quickly." To Kölcsey, all joking aside, these evenings generated new ideas and made him see and judge "how our literary life stands at this moment."[18] Anna Fábry and Anna Szalai described the liveliness of the intense interactions, friendships, and rivalries in this group. These interactions were not always friendly, as sharp debates, primarily on language reform, erupted among the writers. Virtual hatred raged between Miklós Révai and Ferenc Verseghy and between their respective camps.[19]

Another even more extensive and potentially more powerful and more significant part of civil society, correspondence, was invisible. Márta Mezei did not say so, but she did describe correspondence as a form of publicity with a mediating function, similar to associations, salons, and cafes. In Hungary, during this period, these were largely absent, and consequently, correspondence filled the void, compensating for what was missing, and in fact creating a thriving public sphere. Because correspondence offered so many opportunities for expression, the themes and problems discussed in letters encompassed the entire range of possible topics in politics, culture, morality, and culture, as well as in private affairs. Correspondence could carry an equalizing function, as shared interests and aims for instance connected the proud noble Ferenc Kazinczy to János Kis who was born into a family of serfs. Correspondence also evaded the imposition that the authorities placed on the literate population with restrictions of all kinds, censorship above all. Correspondence represented the triumph of freedom of expression and the free exchange of ideas. It is no surprise then, that people grasped at these opportunities. It became customary for recipients of letters to show them to others, and some letters were copied and circulated.[20]

It is clear from the above, that letters were mirrors not only into the hearts and minds of individuals, but they also reflected, to a considerable extent, the concerns of the literate segment of society, mostly but not exclusively nobles. In this sense, correspondence became an integral and critical part of civil society.

Ferenc Kazinczy stood at the very center of this epistolary network. The 22 volumes of his collected correspondence, each between 4 and 500 pages long, are truly monumental and they do offer an all-embracing portrait of the age. Kazinczy carried on an exchange of letters with practically anyone who could put pen to

paper, provided he, or less often she, was able to express himself or herself with some style and with ideas at hand. The range of topics discussed in these letters was truly astonishing, running from the most mundane through the most lofty philosophical. If something interested Kazinczy, he copied the same text innumerable times to several of his friends. From a distance of nearly two centuries, it is endearing to peer into his and his friends' private lives, to learn about their love and concern for their respective families as well as for each other.

Life was most precarious for all of them, so news about their babies' births and their wives' or children's or friends' sicknesses carried an additional emotional weight hardly imaginable in our own times. Love then was more intense for them, because any relationship, though not necessarily their underlying love, could end suddenly. This intensity then seeped into their discussion of public affairs, because just as these correspondents were mindful of their own mortality, so they were keenly aware of the finite time they might have to put their own imprint on furthering the common good in the country, their principal mission in life. No one expressed this better than Kazinczy himself "I am a great friend of publicity," he wrote to Farkas Cserey in 1808, "and I would like to see that everybody who reads, listens, experiences... serve the common good. If one thought is transmitted from one head into another, it can catch fire." Writing to the same friend in 1810, Kazinczy's words were inspired, "We have to show examples so the nation will learn. If in Transylvania (where Farkas Cserey was from) ten persons will appreciate that, I won."[21]

Certainly, it is this dimension which makes this and related correspondence part of a civil society, which mere idle chatter would not. Their odds of succeeding in educating their nation seemed slim at the time. Most of those who read at all, were reading calendars or poetry with heroic themes or sentimental novels, nothing taxing. The novels were the soap operas of their times and suspense was not necessarily absent from them. In one well-known novel, Erbia, one could apparently never know which one of the dead would rise up and exactly when. Some read these novels in churches if the sermons were getting too long.[22] No less person than the professor of aesthetics at the University in Pest, Lajos Schedius himself, declared in the foreword of a popular book, translated from French, that "funny and entertaining texts have a much greater resonance among readers than the didactic musings of serious writers."[23]

The serious writers were generally quite incensed. Kazinczy wrote about "illiterate readers" and "our dreadful public." János Kis wrote a popular book so to entice some of the calendar readers; "we should not totally neglect them," he wrote to Kazinczy somewhat sheepishly. Some of those were the common people in the countryside, but they could not hope to reach them either. "The peasants think," wrote Kazinczy in 1814, "that the landowner who reads cannot really be a landowner. But he who smokes a pipe from morning till night or hunts or plays

cards is." Kölcsey sounded a similar note when he wrote in the same year that "if the common people are laughing at us because we are doing what we are doing rather than worrying about our wealth, so be it, that just enhances the bonds between us."[24]

No doubt, this determined small band of correspondents was made up of isolated individuals who felt beleaguered and occasionally despondent by the indifference surrounding them. At the same time, their sense of mission, burning harder in some than in others, kept them going. Part of it had to do with their love of pen, paper, and books. They were voracious readers who discussed and rated among themselves all the writers, poets, and philosophers, whose books they could buy or borrow. "It is dangerous to lend a rare book to anyone," wrote Kazinczy in 1803, with the implication that the lender may never get it back. In another letter, Kazinczy remarked, "without books and paper my life would be very sad."[25]

Their educational mission was not political, it could not be and not only because of Habsburg oppression. Kazinczy, the onetime minor participant in the Martinovics conspiracy, who had spent several years in jail, did not repress the memories of his youth; he wanted the story of his incarceration be published in a Viennese journal in 1810, and he remembered kindly of some of his old comrades, especially those who were his fellow Masons. His thinking however had become much more moderate. Looking back at his youthful writings in 1803, he considered them, with few exceptions, tasteless and incorrect. "I have to rectify my errors," he wrote. Writing about Napoleon in 1805, he remarked, "I think of him as a great and good man who will give religion and morality to that frivolous nation. If it would be up to us, I rather live under a good ruler than under a republican government, where one would be constantly afraid of a conflagration or bloodshed by the guillotine."[26]

As this quote shows, although at the center of his and his friends' mission was not political but cultural renewal, it was impossible to remain a-political during the turbulent times of the Napoleonic wars, the financial crisis in 1811, and the period of restoration following Napoleon's demise. To that end, Kazinczy and his friends made their choice, and that choice was conservatism, at times straightforwardly so, at other times with certain qualifications. To them, Hungary's "ancient constitution" was the anchor that kept the country intact and distant from mortal danger. "We are the chosen children of Providence," wrote Kazinczy in 1806, "who were sitting at the edge of danger with our happy constitution about to be destroyed ... but thanks to Providence we are still standing." When it appeared to him mistakenly that the monarchs, restoring Europe in 1815, were praising constitutional government, he boasted about Hungary as a happy and prosperous country even without commerce because it did have a constitution. In other letters however, he made it clear that his support for it was not without certain nuances. In a 1812 letter to Miklós Cserey, Kazinzy conceded that the love of county was

not always identical with what the Corpus Iuris and Werbőczy demanded, but still, it was important to hold on to them for support. Cserey, in his response, fundamentally agreed with Kazinczy, calling the road on which the "ancient Laws" were built "bumpy" and "uneven," but necessary because the "finite human reason needs some anchor that would not betray us." Then he added, "Believe me I am no enemy of every innovation. It is good to innovate but we must be wary of doing so because we should not get into something much worse."[27]

For his stand, Kazinczy was often written out of Hungary's Pantheon, reserved for progressives alone. That to me is a serious mistake, because he and his friends should not be condemned for having been transitional figures in a transitional age. The most advanced Hungarian thinker of this period, Gergely Berzeviczy, a sharp critic of Hungary's constitution and someone whom Kazinczy attacked ferociously, entertained ideas, the emancipation of serfs for instance, that, apart from their intrinsic merits, were too advanced, anachronistic for early nineteenth century Hungary.

What counted a great deal more, in my opinion, was a drive, spearheaded by Kazinczy, that introduced and reinforced new ways of thinking and attitudes. There was then still a wide-spread strong belief that life stood essentially still, and that treasured values and institutions in society carried the kind of permanence that negated the need for changes. Certainly, lip-service was paid to the necessity of accepting some changes, but this was usually, an empty and meaningless nod to the forces of modernity, whose existence inside and particularly outside the country's borders was hard to ignore. Miklós Cserey claimed to Kazinczy in 1812 that he was no enemy of innovations, but then he added the following, "I do not see anything good in the changes applied to our ancient laws during the past 200 years."[28]

In contrast, Kazinczy had faith in a dynamic view of life, as he expressed it in an 1811 letter, "Mankind goes ahead and not backwards, although some whining people do not wish to see what they are forced to see and keep yelling that everything was better in the past than now. Just let them yell." "A fine future is in store for my country," he wrote in 1814, "and I am sorry that I will not see the budding of our flowers. But I will die gladly, knowing that my country will be happier than in the past." He referred to foreign examples, "Goethe, my favorite among German writers, does he write now in the same way as people wrote 40–50 years ago?" Kazinczy and a good number of his friends believed in a general European trend of progress that Hungarians had to join if they hoped to survive as a nation. In several letters they used the analogy of going forward or else. Those who opposed cultural changes were, in the words of Farkas Cserey, "an ugly breed of darkness." Kazinczy compared them to an architectural student, who rather than going to Rome or Paris to study, decides to draw drafts of "Asiatic huts" by the Don river.[29]

The future to him and his friends was certainly vague in a social or political sense, as the new they were promoting had to do primarily with a better use of language, and higher quality literature and theater. Still, their breaking down the stranglehold on the sense of permanence was helping to mould a new mindset among their contemporaries, preparing the way for others to eventually break down social and political taboos. "Not every eye sees even if it is open," Kazinczy wrote to István Kultsár in 1815, referring to a certain Pál Almásy, who refused to read anything printed after his leaving school a long time ago. If one wishes to summarize Kazinczy's platform, one could say it was to convince people to see and read what they could see and read usefully and improve.[30]

Even if the political contours of a future Hungary were not clear to Kazinczy or his friends, it was going to be a tolerant and refined country. Kazinczy, the Calvinist, was married to a Catholic and proudly took his Catholic daughter to the local bishop for confirmation. He much rather corresponded with an enlightened Catholic than with a retrograde Calvinist. He also had kind words for the Jews, who, he thought, were unjustly oppressed and humiliated.[31] Crudeness was another attribute Kazinczy and his friends abhorred. To Kazinczy, being old-fashioned and crude were the same thing, and he associated both with his archenemies in Debrecen. Although not from Debrecen, the poet, Dániel Berzsenyi, was rather crude himself, and the sophisticated Budapest literati were flabbergasted over the difference between his crude manners and elegant poetry. Berzsenyi sensed their condescension and avoided going there again. Nevertheless, he decided to trim his mustache, a symbol of provincialism if uncouth, and asked Kazinczy's advice whether to cut it off completely.[32]

Finally, Kazinczy and several of his friends were passionate believers and practitioners of free speech and the right to dissent. The latter was challenged by many because the prevailing sense of permanence was tied to the fundamental principles of harmony and Christian morality. To attack someone in writing was perceived by the opponents as a violation of those principles. This battle was critical because intellectual freedom and the idea of pluralism were at stake. The opposition, at least in the Kazinczy circle, often resembled the ambivalence about innovations, that is, dissent was not opposed in principle, but it was circumscribed in order to blunt its rough edges. The writer, József Péteri Takáts for instance acknowledged the necessity of reviews, but wanted them to enhance scholarship rather than diminish the writers themselves. Kazinczy himself wavered between this and a more straightforward position. He once welcomed the vicious attacks against him, saying that controversy called the readers' attention to the subject matter, and he claimed that German literature reached its flowering only after sharp controversies. But generally, when it came to evaluating his own reviewing activities, he was more circumspect. "Without reviews we will not advance," he

wrote to Kölcsey in 1810," if a few writers take that amiss, we should ignore them. If the review is brave but modest, no one should object to it." Kazinczy surely did not think so, but his advise to reviewers was far from clear. "It is one thing to tell the truth freely and bravely," he wrote in 1806, "and another thing to stab someone. To do the first is a sacred duty, while one should never do the second" Gábor Döbrentei's letter to Kazinczy in 1814 shows how widespread this balancing act between modernity and tradition was. "The tone of the reviews should be humane but not harsh, "wrote Döbrentei, "and the admonition should be served up with amiability so the recipient should not be scared off from doing things better."[33]

Only one friend, Ferenc Kölcsey, was implacable in his reviews, giving no quarter to anyone whose standards did not measure up to his own, even if he was the popular poet, Mihály Csokonai Vitéz. "We have to strike and use the whip," he wrote to Kazinczy in 1816, "to shake up our public from its distressing indolence. So we are making enemies? But our cause is just." Later that year, in another letter to Kazinczy, Kölcsey expressed his frustration for not being in Pest or elsewhere where he could have easy access to books, because, in that case, "I would mete out lashes the likes of which not even a Roman lord would have done to his slaves."[34] This debate, with all its caveats, reinforced the spirit of intellectual inquiry and did end up promoting pluralism. Kazinczy was quite adamant in opposing Debrecen, a town that to him represented backwardness and old-fashioned obscurantism, and in one of his frequent tirades against that town, he inadvertently gave voice to an ideal of pluralism. In an 1806 letter, Kazinczy castigated Debrecen for seeing and hearing everything in a certain way without even imagining that others may see or hear things differently.[35]

This elite's activities then carry an immense significance. The idea of free thought is inseparable from the idea of pluralism, and their gradual reception prepared the way for their eventual acceptance by a growing number of individuals, to the point that free thought and pluralism were to become the hallmarks of Hungary's Age of Reform. For that, modern Hungary owes genuine gratitude to Kazinczy and his friends.

Notes

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14. *Diarium Comitorum Regni Hungariae* (Posonii: Joannic Michaelis Landerer de Fuskut, 1796), 2–3. Personalis was the speaker of the Lower House appointed by the King.
15. János Pór, *Kényszerpályák nemzedéke 1795–1815* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1988), 143–174.
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25. Váczy, *Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése,* III (1891), 37. March 3, 1803; *Ibid.,* VIII (1898), 483. May 3, 1811.
26. *Ibid.,* VII (1896), 49. June 3, 1810; *Ibid.,* III (1892), 28. February 27, 1803; *Ibid.,* 290. March 13, 1805.
27. *Ibid.,* IV (1893), 11. January 14, 1806; *Ibid.,* X (1900), 68. August 15, 1812; *Ibid.,* 105. September 5, 1812.
28. *Ibid.,* X (1900), September 5, 1812.
29. *Ibid.,* VIII (1898), 458. April 19, 1811; *Ibid.,* XII (1902), 206. November 29, 1814; *Ibid.,* III (1892), 159. February 12, 1804; *Ibid.,* IV (1893), 97. March 30, 1806; *Ibid.,* III (1892), 303. March 31, 1805.
30. *Ibid.,* XIII (1902), 5. July 1, 1815.
31. *Ibid.,* XII (1902), 87. September 14, 1814; *Ibid.,* IX (1899), 101. September 14, 1812.
32. *Ibid.,* VII (1896), 351. April 6, 1810; *Ibid.*, 86. November 25, 1809.
33. *Ibid.,* VI (1895), 352. April 29, 1809; *Ibid.,* XIII (1902), 363. December 21, 1815; *Ibid.,* VII (1896), 345, March (no day) 1810; *Ibid.,* IV (1893), 139. April 29, 106; *Ibid.,* XII (1902), 286. December 27, 1814.
34. *Ibid.,* XIV (1904), 85. March 28, 1816; *Ibid.,* 185. May 11, 1816.
35. *Ibid.,* IV (1893), 423. December 8, 1806.

SHIFTS IN STYLE AND PERSPECTIVE IN ZSIGMOND KEMÉNY'S *THE FANATICS*[1]

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In this article the author discusses how changes in style in Zsigmond Kemény's novel *The Fanatics* can be construed as shifts in perspective from that of the narrator to that of a character in the novel. By suggesting a distance between the narrator and the narration, these shifts in style render it impossible to consolidate the text as the work of a single agency with an identifiable perspective. The narrating presence, itself a blend of formulas taken from other narratives, evanesces behind the conventions that comprise the text. Rather than offer itself as an account of events told from a particular perspective, the text emerges as a constant wavering between different modes of literary production.

Keywords: Bakhtin, Kemény, narrative

On the first page of Zsigmond Kemény's novel *The Fanatics* the narrator interrupts his account of the Thirty Years' War to draw the reader's attention to the style of the narrative: "But why this elegiac tone instead of the facts to which we should think back?"[2] This interruption suggests the ironic stance of the narrator towards his own narration. By questioning the appropriateness of the style, the narrator denies any sort of authorial ownership of the previous paragraphs. Furthermore he discredits any assumption of meaning in these opening passages, insinuating rather that these statements are merely a convention of discourse.

In this paper I will use Bakhtin's concept of double-voiced discourse to show how the utterances of the third person narrator of *The Fanatics* are pervaded with the voices of the characters of the novel. Adopting as the basis for any distinction between so-called voices the question of how a particular voice differs in style (vocabulary, tone, idiom) from the other voices that comprise a narrative, I examine passages in which it can be argued that changes in styles of discourse imply changes in perspective from that of the narrator to that of the characters. I argue that these shifts in style, like the explicit reference to the act of narration in the opening passages of the novel, render it impossible to consolidate the text as the work of a single agency with an identifiable perspective. Rather than offer itself as an account of events told from a particular perspective the text emerges as a con-

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stant wavering between different modes of literary production in which, as Heidegger suggests, only language can be said to speak.

In passages describing the discord in Rákóczi's princedom, the blend of an elegiac style with more colloquial speech suggests scorn for the discordant factions:

> From morning until late at night messengers departed continuously to the different parts of the country.
>
> You could see that Rákóczi was busying his brain with great things.
>
> Sharpen the sword, saddle the stallion, put the old Zsigmond Kornis and the young János Kemény before two worthy corps of troops under the leadership of the prince himself, flying the flags of freedom of religion and conscience, to push from Tokaj to Nagyszombat, to merge the disruptive elements into an army, with at least sixty thousand men to attack from the besieged Nagyszombat to Moravia or Silesia in order, in a common plan with Baner, the Swedish general, to force Ferdinand III into a decisive battle: this bold plan had already been planted into Rákóczi's head by the leaders of the party that favored war, and, embellished with various flashy alterations, spread around.[3]

The first sentence of the passage sets an epic tone. The syntax lays emphasis on the adverbial phrases ("From morning until late at night" and "continuously") typical of epic. The reference at the close of the sentence to the entire country ("different parts of the country") emphasizes the extent and consequence of the enterprise.

This grandeur is deflated by the sarcastic intimation of the second sentence. The word "látszik," which I have rendered in my English translation as "one could see," introduces a third perspective (neither Rákóczi's nor that of the narrator). The colloquial "great things" [nagy dolgok] and "busying his brain" [jártatja az eszét] seem to express the cynical view of this third party towards Rákóczi's deliberations. No more can the epic style of the passage be read without irony. Though the elaboration of the plan for war contains stylistic features characteristic of epic, these seem to be the borrowed words of scheming warmongers who adopted this style to persuade the callow prince to support their cause. (This conclusion is supported by the clause "had already been planted into Rákóczi's head by the leaders of the party that favored war.") The narrative then quiets down to a more moderate voice, summarizing the elaborate schemes as "this bold plan." The curtness of this summation suggests a suspicious attitude towards the entire design, an interpretation made more plain by the use of the words "flashy" [cifra] and "embellished" [kicicomázva].

At the close of the second chapter a gradual shift in style anticipates the introduction of the capricious Zsófia Báthori. As on the first page of the novel, the narrator addresses the reader, this time with mischievous suggestions:

> But we, who, from our upbringing and our nature, prefer to see and examine passions in private chambers than under the open sky, let us leave now the thronging multitudes, and gently, quietly strolling to the end of Church Street, let us try to go through the gate of the 'third court' into the Prince's residence, in the event that there we find more interesting scenes.
>
> No one will hold us up.
>
> [...]
>
> Let's not be late peeking into the dressing room of the beautiful women.
>
> This is not forbidden to us, even during these bashful morning hours[.][4]

The jest in the first line sets the light tone of the passage, preparing the reader for the change of scene from the streets to the ornate residence. The narrative assumes a new perspective (that of the women of the court) by expressing exasperation with the "thronging multitudes" [tomboló sokaság]. The phrase "gently, quietly" [szép csendesen] blends this implied perspective with a still more subtly implied mocking of the dainty manners of the court. This becomes more obvious with the incorporation into the narrative of a flattering epithet of refined (courtly) speech ("beautiful women" [szép nők]). The narrator concludes by playfully borrowing the word "bashful" [szemérmes] from an understood code (understood by the people at court) of proper comportment. Falling on the heels of the audacious proposal to look into the women's chambers, this suggestion of modesty (the Hungarian "szemérmes" is more suggestive of modesty than "bashful") seems little more than a parody of pretense.

The reader cannot fail, upon encountering Zsófia kneeling at prayer, to recall the narrator's perversion of the statement from the Bible: "blessed are the rich" [boldogok a gazdagok].[5] While the description of Zsófia herself is not nearly so sarcastic, the narrator mocks her mannerisms by mimicking her speech:

> By the prie-dieu in the niche of the window the figure of a woman kneels, head bowed, hands clasped together, in front of her an image of Madonna and child and a crucifix.
>
> With what yearning do her lips mumble the 'Our Father' and 'Ave Maria', while the beads of her rosary roll down through her slender, ivory white fingers!
>
> – Amen! Amen! ... O, heavenly Father! Forgive me for the horrible sin that I am going to commit. God the Father! Plead for me! Saints! Intervene for me! Oh! What a grave sin.[6]

The words in the first paragraph associated with religious ritual ("prie-dieu" [zsámoly], "kneels" [térdel], "crucifix" [fészület]) are perhaps nothing more than simple signifiers used to depict a scene. The phrase "figure of a woman" [nőalak], however, seems a deliberate embellishment of style that implies a distance between narrator and narration. "Figure of a woman" lends the air of an icon to the figure of the woman kneeling in the window recess. The reader may begin to suspect that the narrator is not relating his perception of Zsófia. Rather he is parodying, though with only gentle mockery, her perception of herself as she engages in what is a curious variation on the ritual of confession. This mockery becomes more evident as, in the second paragraph of this passage, the imitation of Zsófia's speech is more apparent. The style of the passage anticipates the style of Zsófia's pleas for forgiveness. The interrogatory "mekkora áhitattal" (in English rendered as "with what yearning") that introduces the exclamation is later echoed by Zsófia herself when she exclaims "Mekkora bűn!" [what a great sin].

Both the style and the terms of Zsófia's direct speech are clearly borrowed from the tradition of confession. She remains faithful to the form of the tradition. However, the fact that she asks forgiveness for a sin that she has not yet committed reveals that she misconstrues the significance of the act. By incorporating Zsófia's speech into his description in the previous two paragraphs, the narrator toys with this awareness of form and suggests Zsófia's fondness for ceremony. Miklós Nagy's contention that "Her forced conversion merely compels Zsófia Báthory to constant pretense"[7] seems misleading. Zsófia's fondness for affectation seems rather an attribute of her character. No doubt this tendency was influenced by the compulsion to convert, but it was not caused by it.

The mix of perspectives in the introduction of István Kassai depicts not only Kassai's deviousness, but also the maliciousness of his detractors:

> The title-less chancellor had yet to speak; István Kassai, the hated and miserly minion, who, so that he wouldn't have to host guests, had himself dubbed simply prothonotary; so that he could satisfy his unbridled thirst for wealth from the plunder, constantly discovered insurrections; and so that he needn't risk his influence because of his cowardice, so that control of affairs wouldn't slip from his hands, continuously clamored for peace.[8]

The adjective "hated" [gyűlölt] suggests the perspective of those who oppose Kassai. The narrator immediately denies the characterization of Kassai as his own and articulates rather the accusations of Kassai's enemies. The narrator in no way disputes these accusations. Neither does he express any solidarity with Kassai's accusers. On the contrary, when the narrator resumes speech in the following paragraph, his characterization of Kassai is far more sympathetic. As Mihály Szegedy-

Maszák has noted, "The characterization of [Kassai] from the beginning is not unambiguous[.]"[9] Through this contrast between the narrator's description and the scornful allegations of Kassai's enemies the "prothonotary" appears not a simple villain, but rather one among many conniving to have his way.

The ironic distance between narrator and narrated, created through the incorporation of the vocabulary, style, and – hence – perspectives of the characters into the narration, need not always be interpreted to imply skepticism or scorn. On the contrary, at times it can seem to suggest sympathy. In the beginning of the third section of the novel the narrator describes Klára's fears concerning her husband's mystifying behavior:

> She knew already her husband's sin, but not the motives, not the horrible temptation, not the dark future, not the inexplicable way in which the cruel spirit succeeded in triumphing so quickly over a noble, an exceptional nature.[10]

The word "inexplicable" [megfejthetetlen] suggests that this is Klára's perspective. The religious, almost liturgical, diction at the close of the passage ("cruel spirit succeeded in triumphing", [bírt a gonosz szellem diadalmaskodni]) is borrowed from the vocabulary of the devout Sabbatarian. Syntactic features also reveal this passage to be Klára's thoughts incorporated into the narration. The structure of the sentence is not simple. Rather it is punctuated with repetitions and amplifications: "not the horrible temptation, not the dark future" [nem az iszonyú kísértést, nem a sötét jövendőt] and "a noble, an exceptional nature" [egy nemes, egy kiváló természet]. The first repetition is the narrator's voicing of Klára's increasingly despairing premonitions. The second constitutes Klára's affirmation to herself of her enduring adulation for her husband in spite of her uncertainties.

In several other instances the narrator borrows Klára's speech. In the following example the distance between narrator and narrated lessens as the narrator almost assumes Klára's perspective:

> She didn't want to weep or sigh, she didn't want to think on her own misfortune, only the thought of freeing her husband turned in her head.
>
> And from what should she free him?
>
> She had to free her husband from sin.
>
> Ah, but if she freed him... could she save him from the accusation of his conscience?
>
> Klára shuddered in her premonition of the grave, the critical hours.
>
> What should she do if her husband lost his self-respect, or if, unable to bear the shame, instead of seeking sanctifying repentance he should sink into the maelstrom of wild despair?
>
> After what had happened it was impossible for Klára not to be-

> lieve that her husband, because of some secret and tremendous temptation, had strayed from the path of virtue, likened himself with God, and risked his eternal being for worldly interests.[11]

Though the grammar of the passages indicates that this is third person narration, the perspective seems to alternate between that of the narrator and that of Klára. The repetition in the first sentence (reminiscent of that in the passage previously cited) suggests that the narrator has again borrowed Klára's style in order to express her resolve. The question that follows: "And from what should she free him?" [S mitől szabadítsa meg?] appears as the narrator's interruption; but the response: "She had to free her husband from sin" [A bűnből kellett férjét kiragadnia] seems to be Klára's. In the following sentence, "Ah, but if she freed him... could she save him from the accusation of his conscience?" [Ah, de ha szabaddá tette... megmentheti-e a lélekvádtól?] the perspectives blur as the narrator seems to wrestle with the same doubts that trouble Klára. The form of the sentence (another question) suggests that this is merely the voice of the narrator. Indeed the "Ah" that introduces the question implies that this question was prompted by the answer (Klára's answer articulated by the narrator) to the previous question. However, the hesitation in the middle of the sentence and the use of a phrase ("accusation of his conscience" [lélekvád]) characteristic of Klára's speech suggest that this is an expression of Klára's thoughts.

This alternating and blurring of perspectives continues throughout the rest of the passage. For example, in the sentence "Klára shuddered in her premonition of the grave, the critical hours" [Klára visszaborzadt a komor, a válságos órák előérzetében] the narrator's use of Klára's name suggests that this is his perspective, but the amplification "the grave, the critical" [a komor, a válságos] expresses Klára's growing apprehension. The following sentence is another question posed by the narrator, though in terms that are borrowed from Klára, "unable to bear the shame, instead of seeking sanctifying repentance, he would sink into the maelstrom of wild despair" [szégyent nem tudva hordozni, a tisztító bánat helyett a vad kétségbeesés örvényébe süllyed]. In the last sentence of this passage the phrase "lehetetlen volt Klárának nem hinni" introduces Klára's thoughts into the narration.

At times this passage seems to verge on free indirect style, and indeed it is tempting to borrow Dorrit Cohn's concept of narrated monologue (the rendering in third person narration of a character's thought).[12] However, the virtue (and perhaps the weakness) of an analysis of voice based on style rather than on the grammatical features that Cohn and others suggest is that ultimately it does not require that any passage or even a word within a passage be attributed to a particular character. On the contrary, it is exactly the ambiguousness of such moments that depicts the ambiguous relationship between thought (the presumed thought of a character) and the language through which that thought is formulated. The

text presents Klára's consciousness in Klára's idiom while evincing an uneasiness with any implied identity between the thought and the language to which it might give rise. Language appears necessarily as a matter of production through which thought may be depicted but in no way subsumed.

This discussion of passages from *A rajongók* suggests an interpretive strategy that does not restrict itself to isolated elements of style within the novel, but rather addresses how several contrasting styles blend in a single text. This appeal to Bakhtin,[13] however, should not be misunderstood to imply agreement with Bakhtin's claim that a reader can infer, from this polyphony of voices, authorial intention. The diversity of voices in a text, themselves a construction based on a reader's perception of stylistic differences, not only thwarts any attempt to locate authorial presence but undermines the concept of authorship entirely. The narrating presence, a blend of formulas taken from other narratives, evanesces behind the conventions that comprise the narrative. The reader is presented with a text in which, as Roland Barthes says of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, "one never knows whether [the author/narrator] is responsible for what he writes (whether there is an individual subject behind his language)."[14] It is this, Barthes claims, that constitutes the essence of writing (écriture): "to prevent any reply to the question: who is speaking?"[15]

Notes

1. "A rajongók"
2. Zsigmond Kemény, *A rajongók* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1969), 7. The Hungarian text reads as follows:

   De minek ily elégiai hang a tények helyett, melyekre vissza kell gondolnunk.
3. *Ibid.*, 10–11. The Hungarian text reads as follows:

   Reggeltől késő éjig szüntelenül futárok indultak az ország különböző részeibe. Látszik, hogy Rákóczi nagy dolgokon jártatja az eszét.

   Kardot köszörülni, megnyergelni a hadimént, a fejedelem személyes vezénylete alatt a vén Kornis Zsigmondot és a fiatal Kemény Jánost két tekintélyes hadtest élére állítani, a hit és lelkiismeret szabadságának zászlóit lobogtatva Tokajtól Nagyszombatig nyomulni, mindenütt a békétlen elemeket a seregbe olvasztván, legalább hatvanezer emberrel a megostromolt Nagyszombatból Morvába vagy Sziléziába rontani, hogy Baner svéd tábornokkal közös hadterv szerint lehessen III. Ferdinándot eldöntő csatára kényszeríteni: e merész terv a hadpárt főnökei által már Rákóczi szájába adatott, s különböző cifra változatokkal kicicomázva terjesztették szét.
4. *Ibid.*, 25. The Hungarian text reads as follows:

   De mi, kik növelésünknél és véralkatunknál fogva inkább szeretjük a szenvedélyeket a szobában, mint a szabad ég alatt látni és vizsgálni, hagyjuk el most a tomboló sokaságot, és szép csendesen a Templom utcán végigballagva, kísértsük meg a 'harmadik udvar' kapuján a fejedelmi lakba menni, hátha ott benn érdekesebb jelenetekre találunk.

   Minket senki sem fog föltartóztatni. [...]

Ne késsünk a szép nők öltözködőtermében is betekinteni.
Nekünk ez a szemérmes reggeli órákon sem tilos[.]

5. *Ibid.*, 31.
6. *Ibid.*, 31. The Hungarian text reads as follows:
Az ablakmélyedés zsámolyánál nőalak térdel, feje lehajtva, keze összefogva, előtte kisded Mária-kép és feszület.
Mekkora áhítattal rebegék ajkai a Pater noster-t és Ave Mariá-t, míg ivor-fehér és finom ujjai közül le-legördül az olvasófüzér gyöngyszeme!
– Amen! Amen! ... Ó, mennyei Atyám! Bocsásd meg az iszonyú bűnt, melyet elkövetni fogok. Isten atyja! Könyörögj érettem! Szentek! Vessétek közbe magatokat! Jaj! Mekkora bűn.
7. *Ibid.*, Afterward, 513. The Hungarian text reads as follows:
Báthory Zsófiát csupán állandó színlelésre késztette kényszeredett áttérése.
8. *Ibid.*, 41. The Hungarian text reads as follows:
Hátra vala még a címnélküli kancellár: Kassai István, a gyűlölt és fukar kegyenc, ki hogy házat ne tartson, magát csupán ítélőmesternek hívatta; hogy szertelen vagyonszomját a zsákmányból kielégítse, folytonosan lázadásokat fedezett fel, s hogy gyávasága miatt befolyását ne kockáztassa, és az ügyek vezetését kezéből ki ne ejtse, szünetlenül béke mellett rajongott.
9. Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, *Kemény Zsigmond* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1989). The Hungarian text reads as follows:
[Kassai] jellemzése már a kezdet kezdetén sem egyértelmű[.]
10. Kemény, 256. The Hungarian text reads as follows:
Férje bűnét tudta már, de indokait nem, nem az iszonyú kísértést, nem a sötét jövendőt, nem azon megfejthetetlen módot, mellyel egy nemes, egy kiváló természeten oly hamar bírt a gonosz szellem diadalmaskodni.
11. *Ibid.*, 256–257. The Hungarian text reads as follows:
Nem akart könnyezni, sóhajtani, nem akart saját szerencsétlenségére emlékezni, csak férje megszabadítása forgott elméjében.
S mitől szabadítsa meg?
A bűnből kellett férjét kiragadnia.
Ah, de ha szabaddá tette... megmentheti-e a lélekvádtól?
Klára visszaborzadt a komor, a válságos órák előérzetében.
Mit tegyen, ha férje elveszti önbecsülését, vagy ha a szégyent nem tudva hordozni, a tisztító bánat helyett a vad kétségbeesés örvényébe süllyed?
Az előzmények után lehetetlen volt Klárának nem hinni, hogy férje valami titkos és nagy kísértés miatt letért az erény útjáról, meghasonlott az Istennel, s földi érdekekért örökkévalókat kockáztatott.
12. See Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).
13. See especially M. M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981).
14. Barthes, Roland, *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), 146. The French of this text reads as follows:
on ne sais jamais s'il est responsible de ce qu'il écrit (s'il y a un sujet derrière son langage)[.]
15. *Ibid.*, 146. The French of this text reads as follows:
l'être de l'écriture (le sens du travail qui la constitue) est d'empêcher de jamais répondre à cette question: Qui parle?

FRANÇOIS MAURIAC ET LÁSZLÓ NÉMETH

ANALYSE COMPARATIVE DE *THÉRÈSE DESQUEYROUX* ET DE *UNE POSSÉDÉE*

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Une jeune femme éprouve une répugnance grandissante envers son mari et, pour se débarrasser de lui, elle commet un crime capital qui reste impuni. La femme coupable ne ressent point de remords de conscience, et elle peut compter à cet égard sur la sympathie du lecteur. Voilà le sujet commun des deux romans : *Thérèse Desqueyroux* et *Une Possédée* ; le premier écrit par un auteur français néo-catholique, François Mauriac, le second, par un romancier hongrois protestant, László Németh. La coïncidence thématique, la problématique commune de la relation compliquée de l'homme moderne à la culpabilité, ainsi que les différences fondamentales entre les principes esthétiques qu'ils représentent et les procédés narratologiques dont ils se servent, permettent une analyse comparative des deux œuvres et des deux visions du monde.

Mots-clés : analyse thématique, répulsion, culpabilité, absolution, anomalies dans la famille moderne, protection de l'autonomie

Une jeune femme décide de se débarrasser de son mari, dont la proximité physique lui inspire une répugnance grandissante. Elle tente de l'empoisonner, mais son geste criminel est découvert avant d'avoir réussi et le mari a la vie sauve. L'affaire sera étouffée pour ne pas nuire à la carrière politique du père de la jeune femme ni à la réputation de la famille de la victime, si bien que la coupable échappe à une mise en cause judiciaire. Par la suite, elle revient en profondeur sur ce qui s'est passé, mais cette autocritique ne l'amène pas à la conscience de sa culpabilité, aux remords. L'auteur, se conformant à cet état d'esprit de l'empoisonneuse, juge son attitude plus favorablement que celle de sa victime. Ce parti pris de l'auteur a pour effet que l'héroïne peut compter sur une certaine sympathie du lecteur. Il n'est pas difficile de reconnaître d'après ce bref résumé que nous parlons du roman *Thérèse Desqueyroux* de François Mauriac.

La proximité physique de son mari suscite chez une jeune femme un écœurement grandissant. L'homme, dont l'organisme est miné par une pneumonie, veut exercer à tout prix ses « droits » conjugaux dans son lit de souffrance. Sa femme ressent ses avances comme une agression sexuelle et, pour se défendre, elle étouffe

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le mari violent avec un oreiller. Le médecin du village l'aide à effacer les traces du crime et elle reste impunie. Elle repasse ultérieurement dans son esprit tout ce qui s'est passé, mais ses réflexions ne suscitent chez elle aucun remords, n'éveillent pas la conscience de sa culpabilité. L'écrivain prend manifestement parti pour la jeune femme contre son époux, victime du meurtre. Par conséquent, la sympathie du lecteur bascule également du côté de l'héroïne. Dans ces quelques phrases nous avons résumé le roman de László Németh, intitulé *Iszony* [répulsion, écœurement, phobie], publié en français sous le titre *Une Possédée.*[1]

Le rapport thématique des deux œuvres est évident, si bien qu'à première vue, nous devons disculper László Németh de l'imitation épigonique de Mauriac, par manque total d'originalité. (Németh a publié son œuvre en 1947, le roman de l'auteur français a été publié en hongrois en 1927, sous le titre *A méregkeverő* [L'empoisonneuse]).[2] On ne peut pas contester l'influence, l'emprunt. Il suffit cependant d'examiner d'un peu plus près le roman hongrois pour constater sa totale indépendance du modèle français.[3] Cela nous permet de nous engager sur une voie positive et de souligner la présence intensive de Mauriac dans la littérature hongroise de 1920 à 1950, afin d'interpréter ensuite la rencontre des deux écrivains dans le domaine de la littérature et plus généralement, de la vie spirituelle.

Il serait difficile de reconstruire plus succintement la réception hongroise de Mauriac à cette époque qu'en citant un passage de Judit Karafiáth : « Mauriac jouissait d'une popularité sans égale dans la Hongrie de l'entre-deux-guerres : les traductions hongroises de ses romans se succédaient à un rythme régulier ; en 16 ans, onze volumes ont paru. En outre, les revues catholiques rivalisaient dans la publication de ses articles et essais. Ainsi dans presque tous les numéros de *Jelenkor* nous trouvons les " cartes postales " de Mauriac – ces petits articles ont paru originellement dans la revue néocatholique française, *Temps présents.* »[4] « L'acclimatation de l'exemple français s'est accomplie en peu de temps. Elle a même un peu trop réussi, si l'on en croit György Rónay, lorsqu'il déplore que la littérature catholique moderne hongroise « ait suivi sans réserves l'exemple français, ait même emprunté sans réserves les problèmes français, ait pratiquement créé une littérature française en hongrois, avec des héros français, des aspirations françaises, avec la mystique française et dans un style français. »[5]

László Németh, en revanche, était de confession calviniste, et je ne suis même pas sûr qu'il ait été croyant. Il n'était probablement pas pratiquant non plus, mais cependant très à l'aise dans la tradition culturelle de l'esprit protestant.[6] Comme essayiste et penseur, il se sentait plus proche de l'esprit allemand, même si son orientation tendait à l'universalisme. Il était fasciné par la littérature française moderne, surtout le roman. L'étude la plus approfondie, la plus exigeante de cette période, écrite en hongrois sur Proust, est sortie de son atelier. L'autre prosateur français contemporain qu'il cite le plus fréquemment est évidemment André Gide.

Il est pratiquement exclu que l'art de Mauriac, si populaire en Hongrie, ait pu échapper à l'attention de Németh, critique représentatif de son époque, intellectuel parcourant régulièrement l'horizon intellectuel de l'Europe contemporaine.[7]

Malgré la différence de générations (Mauriac est né en 1885, Németh en 1901),[8] l'écrivain français et son confrère hongrois ont, du point de vue de l'histoire du style, un dénominateur commun : ils se rattachent à l'héritage du réalisme, ils continuent la tradition du grand roman, constituée au cours des deux siècles précédents.

Mais dans ce cadre commun, Németh se distingue par une caractéristique. Je veux parler de sa « grécité », c'est-à-dire de son mythologisme particulier. Pour plusieurs raisons que nous ne pouvons pas détailler ici faute de place, l'auteur hongrois, au moins dans ses deux principaux romans, *Gyász* [paru en français sous le titre *Le Destin de Sophie Kurátor*][9] et *Une Possédée,* a créé les personnages centraux sur le modèle des personnages féminins des tragédies antiques ou des déesses de la mythologie grecque. Dans la figure de Nelli Kárász de *Une Possédée*, le pendant de Thérèse Desqueyroux, Németh dresse devant nous la réincarnation d'Artémis frappant impitoyablement à mort l'homme qui voulait violer son être chaste (voir la fin misérable du chasseur Actéon guettant la déesse lors de sa baignade).[10] On ne trouve pas ce mythologisme païen, conscient chez Mauriac. L'auteur français n'élève pas la caractéristique psychologique au niveau des mythes. Derrière le rapport de Thérèse et de Bernard ne transparaît aucun modèle éternel (sinon l'exemple pris dans les Évangiles du publicain et du pharisien).

Cette grécité n'est pas seulement un trait de caractère particulier de la poétique de la prose de Németh, elle constitue aussi une divergence essentielle par rapport au catholicisme de Mauriac : Németh traite les problèmes de manière « profane », il isole la question de la femme coupable du système chrétien de coordonnées où elle se situe chez l'écrivain français. Cette différence est d'autant plus importante que les débats autour de la religiosité et plus précisément la querelle entre la mère de Nelli, catholique dévote et son mari, calviniste obstiné, accompagne les héros tout au long de l'action et peut donner l'impression d'une interrogation pseudo-religieuse. Chez Németh, ces débats n'ont pas d'intérêt métaphysique, ils servent à la caractérisation morale des personnages.

La différence fondamentale des deux romans est évidente d'emblée. Le roman de Mauriac est laconique, la narration progresse très rapidement. Plus exactement, elle avance et revient en arrière suivant une stratégie narrative complexe, à la suite d'un départ « in medias res ». Les étapes de la vie dans lesquelles nous voyons les héros, se distinguent nettement les unes des autres : 1) Thérèse avant son mariage ; 2) sa vie de femme mariée jusqu'à l'empoisonnement ; 3) la période succinctement récapitulée du procès ; 4) la jeune femme prise au piège de la famille Desqueyroux ; 5) la libération de Thérèse à Paris. Il s'agit en fait de séquen-

ces agencées indépendamment de l'ordre chronologique dans une composition artificielle, à la fois progressive et régressive (selon un schéma simplifié : 3 – 1 – 2 – 4 – 5). En revanche, l'intrigue de *Une Possédée* développe du début au dénouement un processus linéaire suivant l'évolution des rapports entre Nelli Kárász et son mari, Sanyi Takaró. Les antécédents ne figurent pas de façon autonome dans l'action, ils se limitent à une fonction d'éclaircissement. La période qui suit la mort de Sanyi constitue plutôt un appendice joint à l'intrigue principale, minutieusement continue, prolixe, surtout par comparaison avec la narration du *Thérèse Desqueyroux*. La narration du roman de Németh est logiquement faite à la première personne : c'est l'héroïne qui, en commettant le crime, raconte rétrospectivement ce qui s'est passé. Mauriac, en revanche, alterne la partie du narrateur à la première personne et un discours (impersonnel) à la troisième personne, en y intercalant le cas échéant les monologues intérieurs de l'héroïne.

Vue dans cette perspective, la corrélation des deux compositions semble n'être qu'une coïncidence thématique, ce qui en réduirait l'importance à une banalité. Pour trouver un tel thème, Németh n'aurait pas eu besoin de recourir à la prose française. Dans *Anna la Douce* de Kosztolányi, la petite bonne assassine ses patrons sans raison apparente, et on ne trouve chez elle aucune trace de sentiment de culpabilité. De plus, le lecteur – suivant l'indication de l'auteur – reconnaît la véritable victime non pas dans les assassinés, mais dans leur meurtrière, Anna. Seulement, au-delà de la coïncidence thématique, on peut démontrer entre Németh et Mauriac une affinité beaucoup plus étroite et plus profonde.

Le fameux paradoxe selon lequel il n'y a pas de relation humaine plus intime, plus intense que celle de l'assassin à sa victime, est en général simpliste et déformant, mais il est parfaitement pertinent dans le cas des deux œuvres comparées ici. Dans le cas d'un meurtre, un être humain (le meurtrier) décide, dans une mesure absolue, du sort de son semblable (la victime). Si cette décision n'est pas la conséquence de motifs tout à fait extérieurs à la victime (vol, démence, acte gratuit, etc.), et surtout si l'auteur nous fournit une analyse approfondie et détaillée des circonstances du crime (soit en reconstituant le processus menant au meurtre, soit en jugeant ultérieurement l'acte criminel), alors les textes de ce type permettent au lecteur de faire l'expérience de la symbiose bouleversante de l'intimité et la brutalité. Or c'est ce qui se passe aussi bien dans *Thérèse Desqueyroux* que dans *Une Possédée*. Autour de la scène simple et brutale de la tentative d'empoisonnement comme de l'étouffement, Mauriac et Németh tissent un réseau complexe de causes et d'effets. Et ce sont précisément les mailles les plus importantes de ce filet qui correspondent dans les deux romans, ainsi que d'autres nœuds non moins dignes de notre intérêt. La relation particulièrement intime de l'assassin et de sa victime constitue le noyau des romans comparés. Les images jumelles de cette relation élèvent le rapport de Mauriac et de Németh au-dessus de la banalité d'un parallélisme purement thématique.

Voyons les points où la relation assassin-victime se recoupe dans les deux œuvres. Le fait que les événements évoluent au sein d'un couple marié assure d'emblée la haute intimité de l'arrière-plan de l'acte criminel. Le lien conjugal place le dynamisme de l'amour et de la passion au premier plan des affections et des points de cohésion ou de discorde entre les deux parties. Seulement, l'amour en tant qu'attirance initiale des partenaires est conjugué au passé au cours des années de mariage, et même s'il subsiste plus longtemps entre les époux, il subit inévitablement des transformations considérables. Il doit se mesurer aux difficultés du quotidien. Celui qui aime doit faire face aux faiblesses du partenaire, aux infirmités cachées de l'autre, lutter contre les déceptions de la vie commune.

Or entre Thérèse et Bernard, Nelli et Sanyi il serait difficile de parler d'une passion initiale partagée, donc leur aptitude à la vie commune a été minée, leur mariage n'a fait ses preuves qu'avec peine. Dans les deux romans, la répugnance se développe unilatéralement chez les femmes. Ce sont elles qui cherchent une issue au piège du mariage. Dans les situations de ce type, le mauvais compromis de l'adultère s'impose comme solution, mais Mauriac et Németh écartent l'un comme l'autre cette solution flaubertienne et tolstoïenne. La grossesse avancée de Thérèse la met à l'abri d'un flirt avec le jeune Azévédo aussi bien que le départ précipité du jeune homme pour Paris. En ce qui concerne Nelli, on peut dire – pour plus de simplicité – que c'est son caractère « chaste », ou si l'on préfère, sa frigidité qui la protège de cette variante de révolte contre le mariage.

Qui dit mariage, dit famille. Ceux qui fondent ensemble une nouvelle famille, quittent leur famille d'origine. Ils conservent leurs relations avec leurs parents, grands-parents et autres membres de leur famille, mais doivent les accorder aux nouvelles relations établies avec la famille de leur époux. Il faut établir et maintenir les formes de communication entre les deux familles d'origine. Cela concerne également les rapports personnels, au-delà de la famille. Sanyi essaie de faire accepter ses amis par Nelli, et Bernard est obligé de présenter sa femme « en disgrâce » à son futur beau-frère. Même en restant sur le terrain des relations interpersonnelles, quantité de conflits possibles menacent leur vie familiale. Pour les régler, les neutraliser, il faut des deux côtés beaucoup de diplomatie, de discrétion, d'habileté. Et on n'a pas encore pris en considération les différences de mode de vie, les circonstances antérieures des époux, l'acceptation réciproque d'anciennes habitudes ou leur abandon, l'équilibre des différences culturelles ou confessionnelles. Pour terminer, il s'agit dans les deux romans de familles de propriétaires terriens, l'établissement du régime communautaire des jeunes mariés n'est pas le dernier problème à résoudre pour les Desqueyroux et pour les Takaró. Le risque de conflit y est grand et leur arrangement est de première importance.

Dans le roman de Mauriac, la jeune femme doit vivre dès le début dans la maison des Desqueyroux, elle doit s'adapter à leur mode de vie, et si elle s'attache à ses différences, (par exemple elle ne renonce pas à l'usage du tabac, elle tient à

sa façon de parler jugée frivole et ironique par son entourage), alors elle s'expose à l'indignation de sa belle-famille. Thérèse doit très vite constater qu'une grande entente familiale s'est formée face à elle, tolérant provisoirement à sa manière ses menues déviances, mais où son mari ne prend pas parti pour elle.

La situation de Nelli au moment où elle commet le meurtre est semblable à celle de Thérèse, mais les différences ne sont pas moins importantes. Dans les premiers chapitres de *Une Possédée* nous découvrons la vie de la jeune fille à la ferme, et l'entourage qui lui assure équilibre et satisfaction. Les avances de Sanyi menacent cet équilibre. Nelli se réfugie chez l'une de ses tantes, ce qui permet à l'auteur de présenter une alternative à la situation où la jeune femme est contrainte par le mariage. Mais aux premiers temps de leur mariage Sanyi s'installe à la ferme de ses beaux-parents, ce qui est encore plus supportable pour Nelli qui ne tolère pas les contraintes éprouvées dans la maison Takaró et dans la « vie sociale » du village. L'analogie exacte entre la situation de Thérèse et de Nelli se borne donc à la période villageoise de la vie de la femme de Sanyi et de Bernard. Les analogies et les interférences enrichissent la problématique relative à la constitution d'une nouvelle famille, commune dans les deux romans.

Je ne citerai à titre d'exemple que la tension entre belle-mère et belle-fille et la relation des enfants à leurs parents. Németh connaissait manifestement d'autres romans de Mauriac que celui dont il est question ici. Si on considère la dépendance de Sanyi par rapport à sa mère et la tension entre Nelli et sa belle-mère, on reconnaît l'influence que la terrible caricature de *Génitrix* exerce sur le roman de Németh. L'auteur hongrois établit l'antipode symétrique du conflit belle-mère – belle-fille dans la chronique des débats entre Sanyi et la mère de Nelli. Les parallèles à ce dernier conflit se trouvent plutôt dans *Le Nœud de vipères*. Le remarquable portrait de madame Kárász, catholique dévote, nous permet d'apparenter le roman hongrois à *La Pharisienne* de Mauriac.

Parmi les difficultés de la vie en famille, une question de détail ressort en particulier. Dans les deux œuvres un membre de la nouvelle famille, fruit de l'union des époux, synthétise leurs caractères tellement différents. Au moment des deux meurtres une fillette d'âge mineur constitue un lien biologique indestructible entre la meurtrière et sa victime. D'une part, le recours au personnage de l'enfant permet aux auteurs de donner la mesure de la tension entre les conjoints. La rage des deux héroïnes est si forte que même l'existence d'un enfant commun ne peut retenir leur main criminelle. Ce n'est pas un hasard si ce sont les personnages centraux féminins qui témoignent d'une étonnante indifférence à l'égard de la vie issue de leurs entrailles, indifférence qui défie la sensibilité morale du lecteur. D'autre part, l'état de grossesse des femmes permet aux auteurs de déployer leur remarquable capacité d'analyse psychologique, de démontrer l'effet exercé sur la future mère par l'embryon qu'elle porte en son sein, et sur le futur père qui attend

la naissance de l'héritier des biens familiaux. Les manipulations abjectes des parents et des ascendants avec la nouvelle vie donnent ainsi une bonne occasion à Mauriac et à Németh de faire une critique acerbe de la famille bourgeoise.

On peut voir dans ce qui précède (même nous n'avons pu donner que le cadre des lieux parallèles dans les deux romans) que la parenté entre Mauriac et Németh dépasse largement le niveau purement thématique, et atteint celui d'un parallélisme de visions du monde. Cependant, l'essentiel est le noyau commun, où les analogies concrètes trouvent leur point de départ. Et le noyau commun des deux œuvres consiste en ce que le destin a réuni un être faible et un être fort et les a contraint à vivre ensemble. Le meurtre, dans les deux cas, n'est que la manifestation catastrophique de l'échec de cette coexistence forcée et en même temps impossible.

Le meurtre s'effectue dans les deux œuvres sous une forme non-classique. Dans le cas de Nelli Kárász, il n'est pas difficile de reconnaître que l'héroïne a agi dans une situation de panique. Son acte n'est problématique que parce que même la répugnance la plus justifiée de la vie conjugale n'autorise en rien l'extermination du partenaire sexuel. La réaction défensive de Nelli est justifiée, mais l'intensité en est exagérée. Et même cette exagération trouve une circonstance atténuante : elle a connu son mari avec une forte constitution et lorsqu'elle se défend, elle ne compte pas avec l'insuffisance cardiaque due à la maladie de Sanyi.

Le cas de Thérèse est plus compliqué, puisque chez elle on peut constater la préméditation, la détermination, la persévérance nécessaires pour commettre un empoisonnement, la dissimulation et une impitoyable insensibilité à l'égard des souffrances d'autrui, autant de critères classiques du meurtre. Mais on peut dire au sens figuré qu'elle aussi a agi sous l'emprise de la panique, c'est-à-dire dans un état presque pathologique, anormal, où se mêlent naïveté et désespoir. Les deux meurtres s'accomplissent dans des conditions particulières qui permettent de les dissimuler. Le village et la parenté savaient que Sanyi était malade, obligé de garder le lit, et si son état n'a pas été jugé critique, sa mort pouvait aisément trouver une explication naturelle. Le projet de meurtre de Thérèse se fonde précisément sur les symptômes de son mari, connus de tous, et les médicaments qu'il prend pour y remédier. En cas de « réussite », la mort de Bernard aurait pu être imputée à son mal et non pas aux remèdes.

La parenté des deux œuvres repose sur la chronique des dissensions entre l'homme et la femme, parfois ouvertes, parfois dissimulées, précédant l'explosion des émotions meurtrières. Dans ces disputes, ce sont les héroïnes qui s'avèrent supérieures. Aux yeux du monde, les deux maris sont au moins les égaux de leurs femmes sur le plan intellectuel. Ils ne leur cèdent ni en éducation, ni en expérience. Dans la famille bourgeoise la distribution des rôles est favorable à l'homme. Ce sont uniquement les femmes (et les lecteurs, témoins initiés par les

narrateurs) qui voient leur mari sans illusions, avec plus de réalisme que leurs parents pleins de préjugés en leur faveur, et que leur entourage. Le lieu donc où se manifestent les différences de valeur entre hommes et femmes est la dimension du savoir secret des femmes (sur leur mari). Thérèse et Nelli réalisent leur supériorité par rapport à Bernard et Sanyi dans la suite de leurs réflexions, souvent intérieures, non-manifestées ou à peine articulées.

Les deux jeunes femmes déchiffrent très vite leurs partenaires, tandis que Bernard et Sanyi n'éprouvent même pas le besoin de comparer le comportement, les besoins véritables de leurs épouses avec les stéréotypes, les lieux communs, qu'ils ont formés sur le sexe féminin. Comme ils raisonnent selon des clichés, ils ne parviendraient probablement pas à mieux comprendre leurs compagnes. Les femmes, pour leur part, dénoncent les manœuvres mesquines, les mystifications par lesquelles leurs maris tentent de dissimuler leurs faiblesses. Bernard ne se doute absolument pas que Thérèse le soumet sans arrêt à un examen dont les résultats ne sont guère brillants. Nelli, en revanche, informe Sanyi de ses échecs, à plusieurs reprises et sans pitié, mais il parvient jusqu'au dernier moment à échapper à la nécessité d'avouer ces échecs. Il trouve toujours un subterfuge pour reculer le moment d'affronter la réalité des conséquences néfastes de leur relation.

Mais les personnages féminins ne mettent pas que l'attitude de leurs maris en question. Elles l'emportent aussi sur leurs partenaires dans le domaine de la connaissance de soi. Elles jettent sur leur vie intérieure la même lumière impitoyable que sur l'attitude des autres. C'est cette détermination dans l'autocritique qui les autorise à juger également leurs époux. Le thème principal des deux romans est donc la différence de niveaux infranchissable entre les femmes qui disposent d'un degré supérieur de connaissance des autres et de soi, et les maris qui agissent machinalement dans un univers de stéréotypes, d'idées préconçues. La famille en tant qu'entreprise commune les oblige à recourir l'un à l'autre, tandis que cette différence irréductible les isole inéluctablement les uns des autres. Nous pouvons illustrer la communauté thématique des deux romans en citant l'oraison d'un poète hongrois contemporain : « Hélas, le chemin de l'âme à l'âme! » C'est ce chemin qui se révèle impraticable aussi bien entre Thérèse et Bernard qu'entre Nelli et Sanyi.

La plus grave erreur des maris, la véritable origine des conséquences fatales, est qu'ils ne reconnaissent ni ne respectent le droit de leurs épouses à la solitude, à la prise de décision autonome, ils ne leur permettent pas de vivre selon leur nature. Ils ne respectent donc pas l'univers propre de l'être souverain qui vit auprès d'eux. Ils laissent libre cours à leur tendance à incorporer l'autre, à terrasser le plus faible, à exploiter sans retenue leurs partenaires, proie de leur désir. Cela veut dire que la différence de niveau intellectuel s'étend à l'ensemble des comportements moraux. Vulgarité, étroitesse d'esprit, faiblesse de caractère du côté mascu-

lin – horizon plus large, sensibilité, caractère fort du côté féminin. L'encerclement total des figures féminines, l'incontestable prestige social des maris, et en conséquence, l'abus immodéré de leur force, l'insolubilité des tensions interpersonnelles, l'impossibilité de s'expliquer rassemblent chez les héroïnes une force dévastatrice qui les transforme en furies. Le conflit ne peut se résoudre que par une catastrophe, soit un suicide, soit un meurtre.

László Németh, ce génie de la mauvaise foi, se charge avec enthousiasme de transmettre la vision que Nelli a de l'homme, vision froide, pénétrante, implacable. Dans le processus de rétrospection de la jeune femme, nous pouvons étudier le tableau pathologique complet des fautes, des manœuvres minables, de l'hypocrisie, des tromperies mesquines du mari, Sándor Takaró, cet homme essentiellement médiocre, bienveillant, mais faible. Mais la narratrice ne se ménage pas non plus elle-même dans son diagnostic. Elle brosse l'autoportrait d'une femme frigide devenue hystérique. Elle trouve aussi d'autres sujets qui lui permettent de mettre en valeur aux yeux du lecteur ses extraordinaires capacités de lire et interpréter le langage non-verbal des gestes et de la mimique des autres. Elle pénètre jusqu'au fond du cœur de sa mère, la pharisienne ... Elle déchiffre avec virtuosité les gestes, les démarches rusées des amis vulgaires de son mari qui lui font la cour. Cette passion de démasquer n'épargne que quelques personnages du roman : le père silencieux et résigné de l'héroïne, son beau-père, vieux paysan gravement malade, sa tante restée vieille fille. Enfin, la langue de Nelli s'apitoie également sur sa belle-mère avant la mort de cette dernière. Németh fait un rapport extrêmement conséquent, homogène, dense du processus aboutissant au meurtre, et ce faisant il dépasse sans doute la caractéristique psychologique que Mauriac donne de Thérèse. On peut en tout cas reprocher à l'écrivain français des lacunes dans la cohérence de l'image qu'il donne du personnage central.

Mais cette critique n'est légitime que dans son rapport à László Németh, et si on reste dans la logique du roman de Mauriac, ces reproches sont pédantesques et injustes. L'auteur français, contrairement à ce qui se passe dans le roman de Németh, ne se contente pas de donner la chronique du processus menant à la tentative d'assassinat, il passe relativement vite sur les détails où Németh s'attarde longuement, pour arriver à la partie la plus mémorable du roman qui relate la vengeance de la famille Desqueyroux sur la jeune femme coupable. Thérèse, victime de ces gens dépourvus d'imagination, hypocrites, cyniques – ces pages compensent le manque de minutie dans l'analyse du comportement de l'héroïne à l'étape de la préparation du meurtre. La fuite de Thérèse et sa conversation avec son mari à Paris ouvre une dimension passionnante qui fait défaut chez Németh. Mauriac pose les problèmes de façon plus complexe que Németh, et son roman, à la composition plus large, est par conséquent moins élaboré dans les détails. Le parallélisme direct des deux romans se borne donc au processus de la maturation du

meurtre, parallélisme où Mauriac est relativement laconique, et où Németh excelle dans la rédaction de l'encyclopédie d'une connaissance de l'homme accusatrice et de mauvaise foi.

Il faut enfin brièvement revenir sur l'interférence très instructive du rôle respectif de l'inspiration religieuse dans les deux romans. Contrairement à la dévotion profonde de sa mère, Nelli témoigne une assez grande indifférence aux questions de la foi et de l'exercice du culte. Elle puise sa foi, s'il y a lieu d'en parler à son sujet, dans une sorte de panthéisme. L'attitude des représentants des Églises catholique et calviniste l'irritent plutôt. La jeune femme semble à cet égard le porte-parole de l'opinion de l'auteur. L'intérêt de Németh se porte sur la place de l'homme dans le monde immanent. Ce sont les relations entre les êtres humains qui le préoccupent et plus particulièrement – on l'a déjà dit – le blocage du chemin d'une âme à une autre. Nelli, la femme coupable sera-t-elle sauvée ou damnée? Cette question n'est pas posée dans le roman ni directement, ni indirectement. Elle est remplacée par cette autre question : Nelli retrouve-t-elle le chemin de retour dans la communauté humaine? Ou plus précisément : peut-elle choisir la voie sur laquelle elle aura la chance de déployer ses capacités et de réaliser son meilleur moi?

Curieusement Mauriac, chez qui, on le sait, les événements capitaux du monde représenté s'intègrent dans un système de coordonnées du péché, de la grâce, de l'amour et de la conversion, n'a pas empêché Németh de suivre le même chemin que lui pendant un certain temps. Dans *Thérèse Desqueyroux* on ne trouve pas de thèses simplifiées du catéchisme, les points de vue religieux ne sont pas mis à tout prix au premier plan au cours de la narration. Lorsque l'auteur distingue la pécheresse et le pharisien en opposant Thérèse à Bernard, et lorsqu'il donne plus de chances de rédemption à la pécheresse qu'au pharisien, alors Németh peut accepter purement et simplement ce dualisme. L'unique différence (certes fondamentale en soi) entre les deux positions est que l'auteur hongrois ne projette pas derrière Nelli et Sanyi l'exemple pris dans les Évangiles (pécheresse-pharisien), mais le modèle « païen » déjà évoqué ci-dessus, d'Artémis et d'Actéon. L'analogie et l'interférence entre l'écrivain hongrois protestant, vouant un culte à l'Antiquité grecque et l'auteur français néo-catholique, semble justifier la critique de Gide sur Mauriac : De même que Gide, Németh, l'auteur de *La Possédée* a pu s'appuyer lui aussi sur les résultats, non pas de Mauriac le catholique, mais plutôt de Mauriac l'esthète, sans pour autant que l'esprit néo-catholique de l'écrivain français ait pu faire obstacle à son travail créateur.

Notes

1. László Németh : *Une possédée* [traduit du Hongrois par P. E. Régnier, C. Nagy et L. Gara, Préface de Jules Illyés] Gallimard, Paris, 1963.
2. François Mauriac : *A méregkeverő* [Bevezette Strém Géza], Révai Testvérek Irodalmi Intézet, Budapest, 1927.
3. Sándor Olasz : Nyugat-európai minták Németh László regényszemléletében [Modèles occidentaux des romans de László Németh], in : *Az író rejtettebb birtokán, Írások Németh Lászlóról* [textes réunis par István Bakonyi], Németh László és Vörösmarty Társaság, Székesfehérvár, 1992, 195–201. [L'unique essai en hongrois, mettant en parallèle les deux romans].
4. Judit Karafiáth : Alexandre Eckhardt et la renaissance catholique française, *Cahiers d'Études Hongroises,* 3/1991, 111–115.
5. Judit Karafiáth : Eckhardt Sándor és a XX. századi francia katolikus irodalom [Sándor Eckhardt et la littérature catholique française au XX^{e} siècle] *Vigilia,* 1991, N° 3. 203–207. ; un bon nombre d'essais et d'articles, publiés en Hongrie, traitent la question du néo-catholicisme et plus particulièrement le problème de la culpabilité chez Mauriac. Il suffit de citer un livre qui contient des extraits pris dans les mémoires et les écrits confessionnels de l'écrivain : *Mauriac önmagáról* [Mauriac par soi-même], [textes choisis et préface par Ferenc Szabó], Rome, 1987, 181.
6. László Kósa : Németh László protestantizmusa [Le protestantisme de László Németh], in : *A mindentudás igézete (Tanulmányok Németh Lászlóról),* [textes réunis par Mihály Szegedy-Maszák], Magvető, Budapest, 1985, 119–141. ; Ferenc Szabó : Németh László hite [La foi de László Németh], in : *Az író rejtettebb birtokán, Írások Németh Lászlóról* [textes réunis par István Bakonyi], Németh László és Vörösmarty Társaság, Székesfehérvár, 1992, 20–35.
7. György Tverdota : Le rôle du roman français contemporain dans l'établissement des canons critiques de la littérature hongroise (1919—1940), in : *La réception du roman français contemporain dans l'Europe de l'entre-deux-guerres* [textes réunis par Anne-Rachel Hermetet], Université Charles-de-Gaulle – Lille 3, Lille, 2001, 55–67.
8. Quelques essais en français sur László Németh : Bertrand Boiron : Le personnage du « revenant » dans Miséricorde de László Németh (1901-1975), in : *Écrire le voyage* [textes réunis par György Tverdota], Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris, 1994, 247–252. ; Bertrand Boiron : László Németh (1901–1975) entre morale et littérature, *Cahiers d'Études Hongroises,* 10/2002, 195–202. ; György Tverdota : La « fraternité de lait » des peuples d'Europe Centrale dans le récit Voyage en Roumanie (1935) de László Németh [*Actes du colloque Voyage dans les confins,* publiés dans la revue *Cultures d'Europe Centrale* – en préparation].
9. László Németh : Le destin de Sophie Kurátor [traduit par Chantal Philippe, préface de Bertrand Boiron], in *Fine*, Paris, 1993.
10. La question du mythologisme dans la littérature hongroise des années trente et quarante est traitée dans la communication de György Tverdota : Il faut être absolument grec!, in : *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory* [edited by Raymond Vervliet and Annemarie Estor], Volume 6 of the *Proceedings of the XVth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, Literature as Cultural Memory,* Amsterdam – Atlanta, GA 2000, 369–376.

EMMA RITOÓK'S NOVEL "SPIRITUAL ADVENTURERS" [A SZELLEM KALANDORAI]

AN INTELLECTUAL DOCUMENT OF THE FIN DE SIÈCLE

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Emma Ritoók's novel "Spiritual Adventurers" (A szellem kalandorai, 1921) is a chronicle of fin-de-siècle intellectual history. It was inspired by the author's participation in the "Sunday Circle" (Vasárnapi Kör) and its members and friends: Ervin Donáth's character was most likely modelled after Ernst Bloch. Of all the ideologies represented in the novel, those associated with the women's movement and the conflicts that the "new woman" had to face seem to be the most actual for today's readers. Ritoók's novel represents the "new woman" as torn between multiple and often conflicting discourses regarding female creativity and sexuality and the world around her as not ready yet for her to enter the stage. Whereas the novel ends with a destructive act, the shooting of Ervin, which can be read as a metaphor for the collapse of the old world order for which the revolution offered no real alternative, the "new woman" portrayed through Héva Bártoldy's character becomes the carrier of a message of hope for future generations to further what the previous ones had painstakingly initiated.

Keywords: fin de siècle, Sunday Circle, new woman, narcissism, race, genius, intersubjectivity

The name of Dr. Emma Ritoók (1868–1945) may sound fairly unfamiliar to today's readers even though she was one of the finest Hungarian intellectual women and a recognized writer of her time. She studied at several European universities (Budapest, Leipzig, Berlin, Paris) and obtained a doctorate in philosophy, which was something still rather exceptional for a woman of her generation. She was a close friend of many outstanding thinkers of the *fin de siècle*, among them Ernst Bloch. Ritoók was a prolific author; she wrote essays, short stories, and articles for Hungarian newspapers and magazines as well as several novels; she translated from French and Norwegian (e.g., Knut Hamsun), and worked as a chief librarian in Budapest (cf. Bozzay 798). She was also one of the founding members, along with György Lukács and Béla Balázs, of the philosophical society "The Sunday Circle" *(Vasárnapi Kör)*, founded in 1915. Her novel "On a Straight Path Alone" (*Egyenes úton egyedül*, 1905) won the literary prize of the magazine "New Times" *(Új idők)* (cf. Fábri 183). Even though her writings were given appropriate con-

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sideration by literary critics in the first half of the 20th century (cf. Bánhegyi, Boross, Pintér), she has been virtually forgotten by post-war literary history – a fate she shares with many other women writers of her generation. Only in the past decade can we see some evidence of a renewed interest in her work; in 1993, in a series edited by György Bodnár, her novel "Spiritual Adventurers" *(A szellem kalandorai)*, originally published in 1921, was republished.

"Spiritual Adventurers" presents a fascinating reading for anyone interested in the intellectual history of the *fin de siècle*. It is a true document not only of the author's broad education and knowledge in matters of philosophy – Plato, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson are mentioned among several other philosophers and thinkers – but also a real chronicle of the turn of the century's intellectual and social currents. There is virtually no topic left uncovered in the numerous discussions in which Ritoók's characters engage: they range from social and political issues (revolution and anti-semitism), to Taoism, theosophy, the Bhagavad Ģita, music (Wagner, Gustav Mahler), literature. This is what, despite its apparent formal and compositional weaknesses, for which the novel has been repeatedly criticized, makes this text still worth reading today. Jób Bánhegyi reproaches Ritoók's novel its lack of coherence and finds the "many injected reflections tiresome and often uninteresting" (Bánhegyi 71). More recently, Anna Fábri has argued along similar lines: she comments that the novel loses itself in "descriptive, interpretative details and biased generalizations" (Fábri 184). However, István Boross is more positive; he acknowledges that the structure of the novel is complex, but that Ritoók is excellent in portraying her characters (Boross 29). Jenő Pintér also recognizes that she is a "deep observer and careful in her psychological depictions" (Pintér 128), an opinion diametrically opposed by Bodnár and Karádi/Vezér. The latter consider the novel "tendentious;" they both criticise Ritoók's "characters from a roman-a-clef" (Karádi/Vezér 15) who "lack any inner laws" (Bodnár 514). Karádi/Vezér even argue that the theoretical discussions go in the direction of a caricature.

For the longest time, the novel was thought to represent a distorted image of the avant-garde literary magazine, *Nyugat* ("West") where Ritoók also occasionally published. However, we know today that the author was inspired by the "Sunday Circle" and its members and friends: the model for Ervin Donáth's character was most likely Ernst Bloch (cf. Karádi/Vezér 15). However, Karádi/Vezér's argument that Bloch's portrayal in Donáth as a weakling could be justified by Ritoók's hurt femininity following the breakup with Bloch is from a literary point of view simply ridiculous; it only reaffirms stereotypes in judging women writers based on their personal, preferably love life rather than the quality of the text. Why not consider then Béla Balázs's reaction to the first draft of the novel which Ritoók presented to him in 1916 an expression of hurt vanity rather than valid literary criticism? Along with his devastating characterization of the novel's draft

as "talentless" and "bad," which has neither a vision nor an atmosphere (qt. in Karádi/Vezér 75), Balázs acknowledges that he was disappointed by Ritoók's disillusionment with their generation. I believe that the latter point offers a good ground from which to understand why Ritoók may have portrayed the "Sunday Circle," in spite of belonging to it, in a deeply critical if not caricatured way. The author's ideological position, as pointed out by Karádi/Vezér, could certainly have been one point of divergence between Ritoók and the other members of the circle: whereas most members of the "Sunday Circle" were strongly inspired by György Lukács and espoused a leftist and internationalist way of thinking, Ritoók's ideological position can be labelled neo-conservative with a nationalist and anti-semitic touch (cf. Karádi/Vezér 14). Unlike other members of the circle who went into exile following the collapse of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (Tanácsköztársaság), Ritoók remained in Hungary and active within the new regime. One could assume that her ideological distance from the "Sunday Circle" would have even increased in this period and led to her reworking the novel's final draft into a critical portrayal of a generation of thinkers of whose ideas she fundamentally disapproved.

For this critical portrayal of the turn of the century's ideological contents and intellectual and moral crisis, Ritoók's novel can be called a Hungarian *Zeitroman.* Although it may not be competing with other great novels in its genre about the last days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, such as Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities (Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften),* Ritoók's principal male character, Ervin Donáth, has a lot in common with Musil's Ulrich: he wants to become a "great man" in the domain of philosophy and uses the love (and the money) of several women to help him reach that goal. However, what makes Ritoók's novel different from Musil's or other *Zeitromans* of the same period is that it is told mainly from a woman's perspective, through Héva Bártoldy, the principal female character in the novel. Therefore it not only implies a criticism of the male character's selfish and self-centred behaviour and lifestyle but also offers an insight into some important issues the *fin-de-siècle* women's movement was concerned with: the "new woman's" struggles to find her way toward an expression of her creativity and her sexuality. It is this aspect of "The Intellectual Adventurers" that makes it unique in its genre.

From its very beginning, the novel testifies to Ritoók's familiarity with contemporary intellectual matters such as Freud's theories: the shaping of Ervin's character reveals a narcissistic disorder which can be traced in his rejection by both parents during childhood and their lack of understanding for the boy's rich fantasy. Ervin therefore evolves into a selfish dreamer who is unable to love another human being and whose only way of relating to others is by seeking their undivided attention and exploiting their affection. His only childhood friend becomes Gyula Wéber, a servile soul who admires Ervin and follows him into his

dreamland unconditionally. Already in this relationship, Ritoók brings in the topic of class and race which plays a very significant part in the novel: Gyula Wéber comes from a poorer, lower middle-class Jewish background, which becomes the reason for Ervin's initial rejection. The love-hatred aspect of this friendship keeps re-emerging later throughout the novel and becomes evident in the scene where little Gyula, after realizing that he has been rejected by his friend, picks up a stone and wants to throw it at Ervin. However, he does not have the strength to hurt his tormenter at this point: it will take him two additional attempts to go that far, much later in their adulthood: one where he attacks Ervin with a knife and the final one, when he shoots him at the end of the novel. The topic of class struggle clearly shows through the outcome of this "friendship:" whereas during their childhood, Gyula is still a typical representative of the subservient attitude of the lower classes, at the end of the novel he has acquired enough courage to take revenge on Ervin for his betrayal during the revolution.

The topic of race gains its full momentum when Ervin, after his mother's death, finds out about his own Jewish heritage as he discovers that his biological father was not the stern man whom he never loved and always feared but his mother's extra-marital affair, a Jewish musician. Thus his initial rejection of Gyula turns out to be a self-rejection, much at the model of Otto Weininger, that self-proclaimed Viennese genius who, in his ultimate rejection of his own Jewishness spilled his venom against Jews and women in his (in)famous book *Sex and Character* (*Geschlecht und Character*, 1903), whereupon he committed suicide. Ervin, given his narcissism, does not commit suicide but places this chore of self-destruction into the hand of his rejected alter-ego, Gyula.

The topic of the genius was a very popular one around the *fin-de-siècle*. In Weininger's theory, the genius "is simply itself universal comprehension [...] he is everything... he constructs from everything his ego that holds the universe [...] the universe and the ego have become one in him" (Le Rider 56). In Weininger's theory is reflected Georg Simmel's (whose student Ritoók was) "principle of modernity" which consists in the "law of the individual:" "The subject, reaching the peak of individuality, becomes endowed with the universal" (Le Rider 56). Based on these theories, Ervin Donáth seems rather a parody of a genius than a real one; for all he does, for years, is walking around with his conviction about his higher calling and acting like a big thinker whose grandiose work is still to be written – which is so attractive particularly to women whose careful listening and admiring glitter in the eye his narcissistic self enjoys as a reflection of his power. The only time Ervin appears to feel an emotion that reaches beyond his ego and to sense a deeper connection with another human being is during the brief period he spends in WWI. But even then, the reader is left wondering whether it is genuine connection or only one that is inspired by his utter loneliness and fear of dying. However, the war does have a profound influence on Ervin's intellectual develop-

ment: after he is dismissed from military service, he moves to a small town in Germany where he finally writes his first book about which he had fantasized so much. During the process of writing, Ervin does, for moments, seem to be connected to the universe. Yet Ritoók relates his huge success, which he enjoys following his return to Hungary, more to the young audience's need and thirst for a new rapture beyond the horrors of the war than to Ervin's originality:

> Everything was love, life in its eternal renewal and miracle, everything from chaos to God, brotherhood from the stones to thought – how could the community not have absorbed thirstily his philosophical credo, and the youth which had seen the terrible battles of hatred and the bloody wounds of separation the word promising new redemption. (Ritoók 2, 125)[1]

The only person who sees through Ervin's false prophethood is his once-upon-a-time friend Héva Bártoldy whom he had badly hurt in the past whereupon she broke up every contact with him. Her visit to his lecture is the first time she sees him after years and it will also be the last time before history separates them forever.

Héva Bártoldy's name is mentioned for the first time during one of those soirees where the young men are absorbed in their philosophical discussions and the women in their company "occasionally [...] threw in a comment into the debate" (Ritoók 1, 79). Knowing about the participation of several women in the "Sunday Circle" – most of them wives of the male members –, this may be read as a rather ironic remark. Héva, at this point already a published writer, seems to be the only woman whom the young philosophers respect for her intellectual abilities. Still, while recognizing her creative potential, Ervin paints the image this generation still carried about women with all the essentialist concepts involved: "But it must be a woman who would write about the aesthetics of tragedy – continued Ervin –, with that purest receptivity for thoughts which can only be the quality of a woman who is endowed with the creative gift of understanding everything" (78).[2] A woman was still expected to be the receptacle and unconditional listener for everything a man's mind would conceptualize. And she was also considered to be susceptible for tragedy, all of which we see illustrated through the stories of the female characters.

The picture of the "ideal woman" is given in the character of Judit Gábriel, the wife of a sculptor, for whom Ervin will develop one of those fancies he has for several women throughout his young life. She is all but an intellectual woman, quite the opposite of Héva. She is not in the least interested in philosophy but gives a meaning to her life by supporting her husband's work: "For now, she made herself her husband's talent; but unlike the women of old times whose every third sentence consisted of: my husband said, my husband did..., she organized

her personality in a way so that everybody would bow in front of the man who had chosen that woman"(82).[3] In Judit's character, Ritoók offers a parody of the "new woman:" she is only seemingly emancipated with the sole purpose in life not to obey her husband blindly any more but rather to melt into the work of that man and shine through his work – instead of realizing her own. Two other female characters stand as her opposite: Vera Martin and Héva.

Vera is the girlfriend and later common-law wife of László Szilveszter, a friend of Ervin's and also Héva's. Before she gives birth to their daughter and has to struggle to make ends meet while she tries to continue with her studies, she is full of intellectual ambition for herself and dreams of a "room of her own" (Virginia Woolf) where she could fully unfold her own creative potential: "A room that is completely – but completely mine... my books, my work – and to be alone! Not that I don't like my colleagues in the residence, but – to be independent, dispose freely of my time, freely... freely" (86).[4] Instead, Vera's life will become completely absorbed by her relationship with László and by motherhood which will eventually lead to her tragic death during her second pregnancy thus turning her, in a very traditional vein, into a "martyr of woman's destiny" (153).[5]

Héva, on the other hand, lives an independent life and is an accomplished writer: "She lived of her small fortune, travelled and studied; she knew her intellectual value, she was capable of working and her faith in her independent creative abilities was strong and sure" (127).[6] Héva was married once, but her husband had to be institutionalized and eventually died in the institution; the marriage was never consummated. This is the secret Héva eventually shares with one friend of hers who later betrays it. Interestingly, Héva's relatives fault *her* for her husband's madness, a situation comparable to a similar case from the life of Ritoók's contemporary, Rosa Mayreder, great Austrian feminist, artist, and prolific writer. During most of her marriage, Mayreder's husband was mentally ill and in therapy with Dr. Freud in Vienna who at some point during the therapy faulted Rosa and her intellectual superiority for the husband's mental condition. I am using this real-life case as an example of how frightening the intellectual woman still was, despite – or maybe because of – the strength of the women's movement at the time, both in Austria and in Hungary.

Ritoók puts these interiorized doubts and the double standard about women's authorship into Héva's words after she has completed the text of her drama:

> Often I believe that a woman cannot be a writer; music, colour, drawing is much more suited for her. Perhaps a man also feels how shameless the uttering of thoughts and feelings through words is in front of indifferent, unknown, foreign people. In a woman it conflicts with her womanly essence... every writing is poetry and woman's poetry, the music of her body and soul can only belong to one man. (220)[7]

German literary scholar Sigrid Weigel argues in much less essentialist terms and sees the fear of the intellectual woman deeply rooted in Western culture. She argues about the difficulty of linking womanhood and authorship and follows up on one of Walter Benjamin's "Denkbilder" which applies the metaphor of birthing to the genesis of a literary text and art in general, as the creation of art implies the myth of creation connotated to a male, omnipotent God. Consequently, throughout history, artistic production has necessarily led to the exclusion of women as authors since the concept of the author*ess* "would jeopardize or thwart the whole concept of men's self-creation as an overcoming of their own origins, which is but an expression of the fear of female omnipotence and the desire for its embankment respectively" (Weigel 238, transl. A.S.) On the other hand, women authors had themselves interiorized this "anxiety of authorship" as defined by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. Since women traditionally were not considered the creators of culture and literature but rather an "artifact within culture" (Gubar 77), the courage of taking up the male-defined pen created especially for 19th and early 20th century women writers a situation where they not only had to cope with society's prejudice against the intellectual woman as something unfeminine, not to say monstrous, but also overcome these barriers against their own writing within themselves, as Héva's case illustrates.

Ervin is attracted to Héva's personality and they become very close friends. Ervin is taken not only by Héva's ability to listen but also by her intellectual responsiveness to his ideas, something he had not encountered in any other woman before. However, when he wants their friendship to become an intimate relationship, Héva steps back. Ervin's masculinity and narcissism are hurt by this rejection which he cannot comprehend. All he knows is that he wants the woman in Héva to confirm his male desire: "Not that he hasn't had until now that average-male feeling to possess the woman in her, but now he wanted that she want it too. He wanted to receive from the woman that fearful, expecting, perhaps unconscious invitation which cannot be expressed in words and which, all at once, gives the man complete security" (Ritoók 1, 162).[8] Yet he is completely unaware of Héva's emotional needs and incapable of responding to her sensitivity. Héva senses Ervin's selfishness and does not get the feeling of oneness when he once kisses her. She attributes his insistence on making their love physical to their racial difference – Héva being the offspring of an old Hungarian family – thereby corroborating the old prejudice, very much alive at the turn of the century, regarding the greater sensuality in Jews.[9] I would also see here an ambiguity on Héva's part regarding sexuality, which can be explained by a split between the internalized moral double standard – whereby women but not men had to stay "pure" until they married – and the wish to be a modern woman, a "new woman" who freely disposes of her sexual desires, regardless whether they may be expressed within marriage or outside of it.

However, this is by far not the only reason for Héva's lack of responsiveness to Ervin's sexual advances. She feels in him the same forceful sexual desire that had estranged her from her half-mad husband during her wedding night: "But when she saw Ervin's face, which had completely changed from desire and forceful self-control, that pale forehead and those burning eyes with that male look waiting and wanting – she knew that it wasn't possible; as if she had already seen this expression which was unbearably foreign, forceful and self-assured"(228).[10] What Héva, despite their love and friendship, feels repulsed by is the raw, animal desire in the man who wants to possess the female. Héva yearns for a different kind of sexuality, one that would be based not on an subject-object relationship but on a relationship between two subjects where none of them has to play the role of the conqueror nor the conquered, a relationship based on *intersubjectivity* as defined by Jessica Benjamin: "the intersubjective mode, where two subjects meet, where both woman and man can be subject, may point to a locus for woman's independent desire, a relationship to desire that is not represented by the phallus" (Benjamin 93). Héva feels that this "heightened awareness of both self and other, the reciprocal recognition that intensifies the self's freedom of expression" (ibidem) would not be realized in an erotic encounter with Ervin who is interested in the conquest of the woman in her, a conquest which he could add as yet another chapter to his philosophy of Eros.

This conflict between the "new woman's" new values about sexuality and a still traditional view about gender relations both on the part of contemporary men as well as within the women themselves was expressed by several other women writers in turn-of-the-century Hungary and other countries as well.[11] Thus, in her novel, Ritoók has thematized, along with the problematic of women's authorship, one of the major difficulties *fin-de-siècle* women writers saw that women of their generation who aspired to a life as complete and fulfilled human beings had to face. Ritoók felt that everything in the "new woman's" life was of an equal importance and not replaceable by anything else, as it is expressed by Vera in one of her conversations with Héva: "you know that nothing can replace anything; love is everything, the child is everything, knowledge, work is everything, Paris is everything – and neither can replace the other" (128).[12] She thereby formulates the same ideal for the "new woman" that another great contemporary Hungarian writer, Margit Kaffka expressed in an article published in 1913:

> She must be able to leave – grow beyond, stand tall – and place her point of balance and value system in herself, not only in the appreciation by men. She must learn solidarity but not only with men and not only against other women. And above all, she must try to become herself more and dig out and unveil those great, buried values which have been lying dormant for a long time, which she owes the world and without which this world would certainly be poorer and uglier.

> More possibilities – toward professions, work, love, creation, fight, action and learning! (Kaffka, no page)[13]

Héva does find the strength to leave after Ervin badly insults her apparent lack of femininity, and, after a deep personal crisis and a suicide attempt, finds the way back to her own writing and leaves the country during the communist terror for Switzerland where she settles with her cousin.

Of all the ideologies[14] represented in the novel, those associated with the women's movement and the conflicts that the "new woman" had to face seem to be the most actual and interesting for today's readers. Ritoók's novel represents the "new woman" as torn between multiple and often conflicting discourses regarding female creativity and sexuality and the world around her as not ready yet for her to enter the stage. Whereas the novel ends with a destructive act (Gyula shooting Ervin), which can be read as a metaphor for the collapse of the old world order for which the revolution offered no real alternative, the "new woman" portrayed through Héva's character becomes the carrier of a message of hope for future generations to further what the previous ones had painstakingly initiated.

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Notes

1. "Szeretet, örök megújuló élet és csoda volt minden, a káosztól Istenig, testvériség a kövektől a gondolatig; – hogyne vette volna fel szomjasan a közösség filozófiai vallását, az új megváltást ígérő igét az a fiatalság, mely a gyűlöletnek rettenetes harcait, a különválás véres sebeit látta."
2. "De a tragikumnak ezt az esztétikáját asszonynak kellene megírni, – folytatta Ervin, – azzal a legtisztább elfogadó-képességgel a gondolatok iránt, mely csak asszony tulajdonsága lehet, akinek az az alkotó tehetsége, hogy minden megért."
3. "Egyelőre saját magát tette a férj tehetségévé; de nem úgy, mint a régi asszonyok, akiknek minden harmadik szava: az uram mondta, az uram tette... hanem a saját egyéniségét állította úgy be, hogy mindenki meghajoljon az előtt a férfi előtt, aki ezt az asszonyt választotta."
4. "Egy szoba, ami egészen – de egészen az enyém... A magam könyvei, a magam munkája – és egyedül lenni! Nem mintha nem szeretném a kollégiumi társaimat, de – függetlennek lenni, az időmmel szabadon rendelkezni, szabadon... szabadon."
5. "mártírja az asszonyi létnek."
6. "kis vagyonából élt, utazott és tanult; tudta, hogy szellemileg mit ért, tudott dolgozni és önálló alkotó képességében való hite erős és biztos volt."
7. "Sőt sokszor azt hiszem, asszonynak nem is szabadna írónak lenni; a zene, a szín, a rajz inkább neki való. Talán a férfi is érezheti mint ember, hogy milyen szemérmetlenség a gondolatatainak és érzelmeinek szavakban kimondása közönyös, ismeretlen, idegen emberek előtt. Asszonynál egyesenen asszonyi mivoltába ütközik... minden írás líra és az asszony lírája, teste és a lelke muzsikája csak egy emberé lehet."
8. "Nem mintha eddig is meg nem lett volna benne az az átlag-férfi-érzés, hogy a magáévá szerette volna tenni az asszonyt benne, de most azt kívánta volna, hogy a másik akarja, hogy az asszonytól kapja azt a félős, várakozó, talán öntudatlan, szóval ki nem fejezhető felhívást, ami egyszerre teljes biztonságot ad a férfinak."
9. See for instance Miklós Konrád, "A pesti zsidó nő mint allegória: A zsidó nő ábrázolása a századforduló magyar irodalmában." *Café Babel* 24 (1997.2): 81–92.
10. "De mikor az Ervin arcán meglátta, mely a vágytól és erőszakos önmagán uralkodástól teljesen megváltozott, azt az elsápadt homlokot és égő szemet, a várakozó, akaró férfi-tekintetet – egyszerre tudta, hogy nem lehet; mintha már látta volna valamikor ezt az elviselhetetlenül idegen, erőszakos, magabiztos kifejezést."
11. Another example in Hungarian literature would be Renée Erdős and her novel "The Big Scream" (A nagy sikoly, published in 1923).
12. "tudod, hogy semmi sem pótol semmit; a szerelem minden, a gyermek minden, a tudás, a munka minden, Páris minden – és egyik sem lehet a másik helyett."
13. "Tudjon elmenni – túlnőni, felegyenesedni – súlypontját és értékmérőjét önmagába helyezni, nemcsak a férfi tetszésébe. Tanuljon szolidáris lenni; de nemcsak férfiakkal és nemcsak a többi nők ellen. És mindenekfelett próbáljon közeledni önmagához és kibányászni, felhozni magából azokat a nagy, eltemetett, rég pihenő teremtő értékeket, amelyekkel adós a világnak, s amelyek nélkül bizonyosan hiányosabb és csúnyább ez a világ. Több lehetőséget – pályák, munkák, szerelem, alkotás, harc, cselekvés és tanulás irányában!"
14. I am using here "ideology" in Bakhtin's terms for whom it does not necessarily carry a political meaning, but stands for the speaker's point of view on any issue.

„VOM HOLOCAUST [...] LÄSST SICH NUR MIT HILFE DER ÄSTHETISCHEN IMAGINATION EINE REALE VORSTELLUNG GEWINNEN"

FREMDERFAHRUNG UND GEDÄCHTNIS BEI IMRE KERTÉSZ

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Ungarn

Der Beitrag verortet die aktuelle Debatte um das Verhältnis der Literatur zu deren Bildlichkeit als Rhetorizität und Materialität als Schrift historisch durch eine Lektüre von den Romanen *Kaddisch für ein nicht geborenes Kind*, *Fiasko* und *Ich – ein anderer* von Imre Kertész. Dabei wird von dem paradigmatischen Modernitätskonzept Walter Benjamins und der Mimesis- und Körperauffassung Adornos ausgegangen. Auf deren anthropologischer Basis werden mögliche Zugänge zum Holocaust als geschichtliches und ästhetisches Ereignis ermessen. In Kertész' Romanen wird das Verhältnis vom Gedächtnis und implizitem Mediendiskurs der Literatur im Zusammenspiel vom Gedächtnisbild, rhetorischem Bild und schriftlicher Materialität umrissen.

Schlüsselwörter: Bildlichkeit, Erzählung, Fremdheit, Gedächtnis, Holocaust, Materialität, Mimesis, Schrift, Spätmoderne, Textualität

Das Wesen des Epochenwandels von Moderne zur Postmoderne wäre aus der Sicht der Kulturwissenschaften als Destruktion des ästhetischen Bewusstseins im Dialog zwischen Sozialwissenschaften und Kunstphilosophie zu begreifen. Treten wir nicht gleich mit dem Anspruch auf, diese Wandlung zeitlich und räumlich genau abgesteckten literaturgeschichtlichen Epochen eins zu eins zu entsprechen, dann kann man nach Klaus R. Scherpe zwei Traditionsfäden entbergen, die seit Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts wirken und den postmodernen Diskurs bis zum heutigen Tag mitgestalten. Dem Kulturwissenschaftler bieten sich die Paradigmen der „Dramatisierung des Untergangs" und der „Entdramatisierung des Untergangs" an, um die historischen Komponenten in der Gestaltung von Literatur und bildenden Künsten zu erfassen.

Hinter dem Paradigma der „Dramatisierung des Untergangs" stecke nach Scherpe ein Versprechen des Ästhetischen, das in der ästhetischen Erfahrung für die Diskontinuität der sozio-geschichtlichen Entwicklung hafte. Dies setzt seinerseits eine identische Reproduktion des historischen – nicht im Heideggerschen

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Sinne genommenen – Ereignisses als transzendentales Bezeichnetes im Bereich des Ästhetischen, wodurch das Ästhetische – oder der auslegende philosophische Diskurs – an gesellschaftskritisches Potential gewinnt. Durch diese Wiederholung als eine postulierte Technik des kulturellen Gedächtnisses setzt sich das Ästhetische selbst über die selbst erzeugten Brüche hinweg und wird dem geschichtlichen Prozess inne. Bei diesem Verstehensprozess hebt das Ästhetische sich selbst auf und wird als solche zu einem atemporalen Konstrukt.

Die „Entdramatisierung" ist nach Scherpe eine Transformation von Gesellschaftstheorie und Gesellschaftskritik in ein neues ästhetisches Bewusstsein, in das (Baudrillardsche) Bewusstsein der Indifferenz, für das eine Wirklichkeitserfahrung nur im Bereich des Ästhetischen verifizierbar ist. Im Medium des Ästhetischen wird ein Verständnis einer Historie möglich, die sich gerade durch den Entzug dieser „Ereignishaftigkeit" in den medialen Techniken verflüchtigt und nur als Simulakrum zugänglich wird. Eine Herausforderung jedweder Hermeneutik heißt, einem Sich-Verstehen-in-der-Sache und zugleich den medialen (am Paradigma Sprache vorgestellten) Bedingtheiten des Weltzugangs Rechnung zu tragen.

Der repräsentative Vertreter dieses Paradigmas ist Walter Benjamin, der „auf einem Denkmodell des Umfunktionierens [besteht] (des Destruktiven, des Barbarischen, der Entindividualisierung), wo postmodernes Bewußtsein in der vollendeten Funktionalität und in der absoluten Herrschaft der Reproduktion nur noch den *permanenten* Stillstand und die Stillegung aller geschichtsbewegenden Momente konstatiert: keineswegs den ‚Ausnahmezustand' [...] Die Entdramatisierung des historischen Ereignisses im versteinernden Denkakt des ‚Es wird gewesen sein' provoziert allein einen Hedonismus des Vergessenkönnens, kaum noch die schmerzvolle Erinnerung an das Verlorene."[1] Eine solche Entdramatisierung des Untergangs umgeht nicht das Funktionieren eines (kulturellen) Gedächtnisses, versteht die historische Diskontinuität der ästhetischen Erfahrung jedoch nicht als die Leistung einer Erinnerung einer Sache oder eines Ereignisses, die sie wiederherstellen will und die die jeweilige Gegenwart immer im Sinne eines Bruchs nimmt. Vielmehr versteht sie das Gedächtnis als neue Herausforderung oder immanentes Moment einer Erfahrung, in der die Geschehnisse in ihren unumgehbaren medialen Bedingtheiten zugänglich werden. Gedächtnis wird zum Gedächtnis der Möglichkeiten von einem Gedächtnis, für das es eine Herausforderung bedeutet, eine Sache oder ein Ereignis in ihrer Geschichtlichkeit zu erhalten.

Hier war die Rede vom Gedächtnis schlechthin, das Gesagte gilt also auch für das Gedächtnis des Holocaust. Es steht außer Frage, dass dieses Gedächtnis in den verschiedenen künstlerischen wie philosophischen Diskursen am Leben erhalten werden muss. Dabei geht man einerseits einer moralischen Pflicht nach, andererseits – wenn auch immer bei der Gefahr der Enteignung – kann man nur dadurch den eigentlichen Ausmaß und Bedeutung erkennen, was für eine extreme Herausfor-

derung dieses polare Ereignis der Historie für unser Selbstverständnis darstellt. Das ist zugleich eine Herausforderung für das Denken selbst.

Adornos Ästhetik ist bei der Rede vom Holocaust unumgehbar und scheint eher zum Paradigma der Entdramatisierung des Untergangs zu gehören. Bei ihm wird das Ästhetische auch in der Aufhebung von sich selbst zum Ereignis, „einem Ereignis, das die Geschichte verändert oder abschließt",[2] so auch zum Ereignis, das das erwartete oder versprochene Ende der Geschichte vorwegnimmt, indem es einen Endpunkt anbietet, der über ständigen Präsenz verfügt und davon ausgehend das Ganze der Historie, d. h. die historische Entwicklung, auszulegen wird. Die Postmoderne setzt sich dagegen mit der unausschaltbaren Medialität durch Reproduzierbarkeit auseinander. „Die Illusion einer ‚Ereignishaftigkeit' im ‚Jenseits' der erlösenden Katastrophe wird verabschiedet, um Einkehr zu halten in das ‚Diesseits' der ‚katastrophischen Logik' des Systems."[3] Das ästhetische Bewusstsein bei Baudrillard, das die zu verstehende Sache zum Verschwinden bringt – aber auch das destruierte ästhetische Bewusstsein bei Gadamer, die versucht, der Sache weiterhin gerecht zu werden – lässt sich nach Scherpe – als Erbe des „apokalyptischen Tons" (Derrida) der Moderne – als eine Antwort auf die Spannung zwischen ästhetischem und geschichtlichem Selbstverständnis begreifen. Dies spiegelt sich in der Reflexion der Medialität von Erkennen und Verstehen, und wertet dabei die Rolle des vom Ästhetischen getragenen kulturellen Gedächtnisses um.

Adornos berühmter Satz, der ein hermeneutischer Extremwert des Denkens über Holocaust ist und besagt, dass nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben Barbarei oder gar unmöglich sei,[4] könnte im obigen Kontext ausgelegt werden. „Das Adornosche Konzept der Erfahrung war – rückblickend – wahrscheinlich auf die Artikulierung des ‚Erlebnismaterials' der KZ-Lagers ausgerichtet; auf deren Basis wollte die Begründung der ‚Logik des Zerfalls' vollzogen werden."[5] Jene Annäherung, die das kritische Potential des Kunstwerks wachruft, findet Adorno in der Gattung ‚Essay', der die Fähigkeit besitzt, das Moment des Zurückbleibens von „nichtidentischen" Elementen – d. h. die durch eine Methode nicht greifbaren Seienden – sich zum Objekt zu machen also zu repräsentieren.[6] Das Ästhetische als ein sich im Vollzug des philosophischen Denkens entfaltender Konstrukt repräsentiert nicht den Widerstand der Wirklichkeit selbst, sondern das Verhältnis zwischen der Philosophie als Kritik und seinen eigens hervorgebrachten Nichtidentitäten. Bei der Unauslegbarkeit des historischen Ereignisses postuliert diese Theorie in erster Reihe nicht seine sprachliche Bedingtheit, vielmehr ist sie ein Produkt des „unglücklichen Bewusstseins", das der Unmöglichkeit eines adäquaten Zugangs entspringt. Die ästhetische Theorie müsse zwischen „zwei Polen vermitteln: zwischen der ästhetischen Erfahrung und dem begrifflichen Gerüst des Auslegens", die anders auch als Gegensatzpaar von Mimesis und Rationalität zu verstehen sind. Die aus der Gesellschaftskritik ins Ästhetische

importierte Vorstellung, dass das historische Ereignis nicht in seiner Wirklichkeit, sondern nur in seinem kritischen Kontext zu fassen ist, birgt ein mimetisches Moment im Ästhetischen, wodurch sie jene „restliche" Sinnlichkeit des Kunstwerks zu erfassen sucht, die nicht begrifflich gemacht werden kann. „Mit der Konstruktion von Mimesis moderner Kunst als dissonante Form wird die Dimension des Protestes – oder allgemeiner: der Negativität ausgedrückt."[7] Die so aufgefasste mimetische Komponente setzt eine ästhetische Kommunikation voraus, in deren Grund die Möglichkeit einer Erfahrung von Vorsprachlichkeit steckt und die die geschichtliche Realität als eine begrifflich nicht erfassbare einstellt. „Die neue Kunst bemüht sich um die Verwandlung der kommunikativen Sprache in eine mimetische"[8], so Adorno. Das kritische Potential ist als eine Fremderfahrung zu verstehen, die das Fremde schlechthin in seiner Materialität erscheinen lässt. Denn es gilt immerfort: die Gegenständlichkeit von Kunst ist zugleich eine Abbildung der Entfremdung der warenproduzierenden Gesellschaft von sich selbst.[9] Dabei verdoppelt sich der mimetische Akt selbst: einerseits bezeichnet er eine vorsprachliche Erfahrung, andererseits vermittelt die grundlegende Unzugänglichkeit des auslegenden Diskurses zum Kunstwerk, das in der Materialität des Ausdrucks Authentizität erlangt. Die Partialität von Verstehen entsteht nicht durch den historischen Seinsmodus, der als sprachliche Interaktion erfahren wird, sondern durch eine Begegnung einer essentiellen Sinnlichkeit oder Körperlichkeit als einer anthropologischen Konstante des Weltverhältnisses vom Menschen. Diese wiederholt in seiner Fragmentalität das Verhältnis von Kunstwerk und Gesellschaft. Adorno und Horkheimer verstehen also das mimetische Vermögen als eine anthropologische Konstante, die den Menschen in den unverständlichen, also sein Ich bedrohenden Situationen mit dem Vermögen der Angleichung an die Natur ausstattet. Dies ist nicht eine Geste der Unterworfenheit, vielmehr der Akt der Selbstbehauptung durch Aufgabe des Selben.[10] Mimesis wird zur Figur, in der über Subjektivität hinweggegangen wird. Die Mimesis als anthropologische Konstante konfrontiert in der ästhetischen Erfahrung die verstehende Subjektivität mit einem Zustand vor ihrer Individualität. Dies vollzieht sich im Medium einer gemeinsamen Wahrnehmung.[11] Das Kunstwerk verweist auf seinen Inhalt, ohne ihn diskursiv zu machen. Im deiktischen Schema des Zeigens wird dies durch künstlerische Technik verwirklicht. „Die spontane Reaktion des Rezipierenden ist Mimesis an die Unmittelbarkeit dieses Gestus."[12] In der ästhetischen Erfahrung setzt sich also das Gedächtnis der anthropologischen Verfassung ins Werk, die den Ausdruck des Ichs zuerst in der Angleichung an die Natur erlebt hat. Das Sich-Zeigen von Individualität ist nicht an ein sprachliches Medium gebunden. Es ist hier die Rede von der Körpererfahrung des Menschen, die sich aus der Sicht der psychoanalytischen Kritik als der Akt des Gedächtnisses an das eigene Nichtsein des Menschen, als der Trieb nach Selbsterfahrung als Körpererfahrung erklären lässt.[13] „Aber Kunst, die zum Bewusstsein ihrer selbst getriebene Mimesis, ist

doch an die Regung, die Unmittelbarkeit von Erfahrung gebunden", schreibt Adorno und setzt in einer anderen Textstelle gerade die anthropologische Leistung der mimetischen Unmittelbarkeit ins Verhältnis von Kunst und Gesellschaft über, indem er die unmittelbar erfahrene Fremdheit für die Unmöglichkeit der Vermittlung zwischen Kunst und Gesellschaft verantwortlich macht.[14] Im obigen Sinne wird das Kunstwerk zum Ereignis, indem es in der Erfahrung der Unmittelbarkeit von Fremdheit – das von der anthropologischen Konstante der Selbsterfahrung des Ichs als bloßer Körper herrührt – die grundlegende Unzugänglichkeit von Geschichte artikuliert und diese Unzugänglichkeit als eine identische Wiederholung verdoppelt. Die Unmittelbarkeit des kritischen Potentials im Ästhetischen suspendiert also das auf die Sache gerichtete Gedächtnis dort, wo es im Trauma der Unübersetzbarkeit unmittelbarer Fremderfahrung stehen bleibt.[15] Dies ist als Möglichkeitsbedingung des kollektiven Gedächtnisses verstanden, die – im Verhältnis zum eigenen Körper des Menschen – anthropologisch begründet ist. (Die Verflüchtigung der Sache in den medialen Techniken bei Baudrillard ist auch als Übertragung eines mimetischen, nichtsprachlichen Aktes in den Diskurs der sprachlich konstituierten kulturellen Gedächtnisses zu verstehen.)

Die Unmittelbarkeit der Fremderfahrung rührt bei Adorno also von der Körpererfahrung des Menschen her: „Mimesis bildet einen mit dem Körperlichen verbundenen Widerstand gegen Verdinglichung und sichert den ‚Vorrang des Objekts' gegen die Herrschaftsansprüche des Subjekts."[16] Das Subjekt kämpft in der Bestrebung der Angleichung nicht gegen seine eigene Vergegenständlichung, sondern gegen die der Welt, die sich jeglichem Verfügbarmachen entzieht. In diesem Akt, im Akt der Bekämpfung des Mangels an sprachlichem Weltzugang, geht er über seine eigene Subjektivität hinweg. Die Begegnung mit dem Tod steckt dem Menschen die Grenze der Körpererfahrung ab: „Daran, dass er sie [die Subjekte] buchstäblich in Dinge verwandelt, werden sie ihres permanenten Todes, der Verdinglichung inne, der von ihnen mitverschuldeten Form ihrer Beziehungen." Die einzige Garantie für die Erhaltung der Subjektivität, den eigenen, sich jedoch nicht wandelnden Tod, haben die Vernichtungslager den Menschen geraubt. Damit ist dem Menschen die Möglichkeit geraubt worden, zu seiner Körperlichkeit, die als letzte Zuflucht seiner Individualität angesehen wurde, ein eigenes Verhältnis zu besitzen. Damit geht auch die metaphysische Dimension der Todeserfahrung verloren, so wird sie für den Menschen zu einem bloß äußerlich Seiendem.[17] Dies ergibt sich daraus, dass der Faschismus im Zeichen des „verdinglichten Bewusstseins" die Körperlichkeit aus der Dialektik von Körper und Geist heraushob: „Erst haben die Menschen die so geartet sind, sich selbst gewissermaßen den Dingen gleichgemacht. Dann machen sie, wenn es ihnen möglich ist, die anderen den Dingen gleich."[18] Im Wandel der Todeserfahrung verändert sich also das Verhältnis zum Körper, indem es dem Individuum die unmittelbare Erfahrung seines eigenen Körpers ermöglicht. Darauf zu reflektieren war aber bis dahin der ästhe-

tischen Erfahrung vorbehalten. Erst so lässt sich verstehen, dass das Ästhetische, das die sprachliche oder rationale Unzugänglichkeit von Ereignissen der Wirklichkeit in ihrer unmittelbaren Fremderfahrung zeigen sollte, in der Tat zur Affirmation eines kulturellen Zustands, der Barbarei wird, die es ermöglichte. Das Ästhetische, d. h. die Erfahrung, die vom – im Gegensatz zur Massenkultur stehenden – authentischen Kunstwerk getragen wird und die sich vom integrierten Gesellschaftssystem trennt, also einen Hinblick auf es gewährt, verwandelt sich gerade ins Entgegengesetzte, wodurch es die Individualität des Menschen auch nicht mehr repräsentieren kann. Es fällt zum Opfer der Verdinglichung und wird nur zu einem Moment im selbsterhaltenden, ökonomischen Mechanismus dieses unerwünschten kulturellen Zustands. So lässt sich auch Adornos Behauptung verstehen: „Was an Kultur Verfall dünkt, ist ihr reines zu sich selber Kommen." Das authentische Kunstwerk verliert dabei an kritischem Potenzial, das hier als die mögliche Selbstreflexion von Kultur als einem ökonomischen Gebilde zu verstehen ist.[19]

Es ist keine Überraschung, dass die Überlebenden durch das erlebte Grauen mit ähnlichen Erfahrungen konfrontiert worden sind. Jean Améry schreibt wie folgt über die neue Erfahrung vom Tod: „Was sich zunächst ereignete, war allemal der totale Zusammenbruch der *ästhetischen* Todesvorstellung. Man weiß, wovon ich spreche. Der geistige Mensch, und namentlich der Intellektuelle aus deutschem Bildungsboden, trägt diese ästhetische Todesvorstellung in sich. [...] Der Tod des Menschen, da er doch sozial ein Ereignis war, das man nur eben mit der Formel in der sogenannten politischen Abteilung des Lagers registrierte, verlor schließlich individuell so sehr an spezifischen Gehalt, dass seine ästhetische Einkleidung für den, der ihn erwartete, gewissermaßen zu einem frechen und den Kameraden gegenüber ungehörigen Anspruch wurde. [...] Nach dem Zusammenbruch der ästhetischen Todesvorstellung stand dann der intellektuelle Häftling dem Tod ungewappnet gegenüber. Versuchte er dennoch ein geistiges und metaphysisches Verhältnis zum Tode herzustellen, stieß er sich auch hier an der Lagerrealität, die einen solchen Versuch zur Aussichtslosigkeit verurteilte. Wie ging das in der Praxis zu? Um es knapp und trivial zu sagen: Auch der geistige Häftling befaßte sich, gleich seinem ungeistigen Kameraden, nicht mit dem Tode, sondern mit dem *Sterben*; damit aber wurde das ganze Problem reduziert auf eine Anzahl konkreter Überlegungen."[20] Der Massentod raubt den Menschen die ästhetische Einstellung, die vorausgehende Konstruiertheit[21] des ästhetischen Bewusstseins, in der man bis dahin die Möglichkeitsbedingung von der Interpretierbarkeit des Todes wie die der Herausbildung der Individualität sah. Literatur erscheint in diesem Konflikt als Fluchtweg. Zum Objekt des Denkens wird nun nicht mehr die Tatsache des als etwas verstandenen Todes, sondern das als Prozess verstandenes Sterben in all seinen Wandlungen. Dem *Was* – gesichert durch die Adäquatheit des Ästhetischen Mediums – gegenüber hat nun das *Wie* – die Berechtigung des Mediums

selbst, und somit die Infragestellung seiner Herausbildung als der Selbstpräsenz des Ästhetischen Bewusstseins – Vorrang im Verstehensprozess. Das Ereignis des individuellen Todes, das zugleich Identität schafft und für Individualität haftet, verliert durch die sinnlose Gewalt des Lagers seine Symbolhaftigkeit.[22] Das konfrontiert den sich Erinnernden mit der Unhaltbarkeit des als Symbol vorgestellten Ichs. Analog zur entfremdeten Erfahrung vom eigenen Körper und Tod wird dieser Symbolbegriff durch die ahistorische Konstante von Fremdheit als Persönlichkeitskonstruktion abgelöst: „Ich muß das Fremdsein als ein Wesenselement meiner Persönlichkeit auf mich nehmen",[23] so Améry.

Die Aktualität der Werke von Kertész steckt ebenfalls in den Konstruktionen der im Erzählen, in der Erinnerung oder im Schreiben artikulierten Fremdheit. Das betrifft nicht nur die Frage nach der Identität von Figuren und Erzählern, sondern es ist von grundlegender Bedeutung auch für das Verhältnis der erzählten Werke zu ihrer sprachlichen Geschaffenheit, für das Verhältnis vom Ästhetischen und geschichtlichen Selbstverständnis aber auch für die mediale Selbstreflexion der Texte. Nicht zuletzt spielen die Konstruktionen der Fremdheit aus literaturgeschichtlicher Perspektive eine äußerst wichtige Rolle, nämlich in der Frage nach dem Ort der Texte um die postmoderne Epochenschwelle. Zu seiner Beurteilung bietet sich die von Scherpe entworfene Konstruktion der Moderne an. Es scheint sogar auch verlockend zu sein, die ästhetischen Positionen von Kertész ins Visier zu nehmen, die er an manchen Stellen seiner Essays fast programmatisch verkündet, und sie mit den poetischen Leistungen seiner literarischen Texte zu vergleichen. Bereits der *Roman eines Schicksallosen* (1975, dt. 1996; aus dem Ungarischen von Christina Virágh) macht Gebrauch von der Problematisierung des Verhältnisses zwischen Ich und Erinnerung, aber auch von der der Erinnerung an die Erinnerung.[24] Bereits in diesem Roman wird die ästhetische Position umrissen, wo Kertész sich nicht für das Schweigen als Erhaltung von Werten ausspricht, sondern das Sprechen über Auschwitz vorzieht. Im Roman *Fiasko* (1988; dt. 1999) wird die Spiegelstruktur von der Unmöglichkeit sprachlicher Wiedergabe von Erlebnissen, Bildern, Erinnerungsbildern und der Unlesbarkeit der meistens markierten Zitate vorweggenommen. Diese Struktur erreicht einen hohen Grad an komplexer poetischer Gestaltung in den Bänden *Kaddisch für ein nicht geborenes Kind* (1989; dt. 1992) und *Ich – ein anderer* (1997, dt. 1998; aus dem Ungarischen von Ilma Rakusa). „Meine Arbeit – das Schreiben eines Romans – bestand im Grunde aus nichts anderem als dem konsequenten Auszehren meiner Erinnerungen im Interesse einer künstlichen – wenn man so will: künstlerischen – Formel, die ich auf dem Papier – und ausschließlich auf dem Papier – als Äquivalent meiner Erinnerungen akzeptieren konnte. Um ihn schreiben zu können, mußte ich meinen Roman als das betrachten, was im allgemeinen jeder Roman ist: als ein aus abstrakten Zeichen bestehendes Gebilde, als Kunstgegenstand." Die Schrift selbst, die Schriftlichkeit als Äußerlichkeit (Hegel) des sich langsam gestaltenden

Werks wird nur zu einem und nicht zu dem einzigen Ordnungsprinzip des Textes, der Erzähler sieht darin sogar ein Hindernis für die Erinnerungsarbeit: „Je lebendiger allerdings meine Erinnerungen waren, um so kläglicher sahen sie auf dem Papier aus. Solange ich meine Erinnerung betätigte, vermochte ich nicht, am Roman zu schreiben; und als ich anfing, den Roman zu schreiben, hörte ich auf, mich zu erinnern."[25] Péter Szirák nach erscheint „die nachmoderne Erfahrung, daß die Sprache dazwischengekommen ist, [...] in einem Horizont, in dem die Nichttransformierbarkeit von ‚vorsprachlicher', sinnlicher Erfahrung zum Hauptgrund des *Scheiterns* von Rede, Literatur und Kunst wird".[26]

Der Erzähler in *Fiasko* ist um die multiperspektivische Beobachtung der erzählten Geschichte und der mit auffälliger Ausführlichkeit beschriebenen Dinge bemüht: „Auf diesem grauen Ordner lag (oder ragte auf) (oder wölbte sich) (je nachdem, von welcher Seite man ihn betrachtete), gewissermaßen als Beschwerer, ein ebenfalls grauer – obzwar etwas dunklerer – unregelmäßig geformter Steinbrocken, über den wir nichts Befriedigendes aussagen können (etwas in der Art zum Beispiel, es sei ein vieleckiges Paralellepipedon) (also etwas, was den menschlichen Geist mit den Dingen – ohne daß er sie wirklich verstünde – versöhnlich seinen Frieden machen ließe, wenn sie schon nicht wenigstens einer geometrischen Körperkonstruktion entsprechen und insofern als erledigt angesehen werden können) [...] (verleitet uns doch letztlich jeder Stein sogleich zu urgeschichtlichen Überlegungen) (was nicht unser Ziel ist) (wenngleich es schwer ist, der Verlockung zu widerstehen) (vor allem, wenn wir es mit einem Steinbrocken zu tun haben, der unsere versagende Vorstellung auf endliche) (oder besser anfängliche) (Anfänge, Enden, Dichteverhältnisse und Ganzheiten lenkt, damit wir letztlich zu unserer ohnmächtigen Unwissenheit zurückzukehren, und wie bei so vielem anderen war es auch bei diesem Steinbrocken so, daß man nicht wissen konnte, ob es sich um ein abgebrochenes Stück von einem größeren Ganzen oder, im Gegenteil, den erhaltenen Überrest von einem größeren Ganzen handelte)" (24). Die Beschreibung bestreitet die Leistung des Verstehens vom Repräsentationspotential der beschreibenden Sprache, von dem Potential also, das die Dinge als etwas zeigen lässt, und es macht die Beschreibung selbst als eine Geste sichtbar, die eine unverstandene Sache in einen anderen Diskurs überträgt. So bleibt es unentschieden, ob der Steinbrocken Ursache oder Wirkung, Anfang oder Produkt der beschreibenden Verständigung des Erzählers ist. Weder der Anblick des Steinbrockens an sich noch dessen Beschreibung fixieren den Steinbrocken in der metaphorischen Bedeutung der Ganzheit und damit in der Wirkung und des Produkts. Die gegenseitige Bedeutungszuschreibung wird aber auch verunsichert: der Steinbrocken als Wirklichkeit kann nicht zur Metapher des Vorsprachlichen, des Anfangs, der Ursache werden. Die Fixierung der anfangs synekdochischen Bedeutung wird durch metaphorische Wechsel aufgehoben, indem dem Teil der Anfang oder die Ursache, dem Ganzen aber das Ende oder die Wirkung genauso gut ent-

spricht. Dem Erzähler – und auch dem Leser – entzieht sich das Wissen vom Steinbrocken, der zugleich als Metapher für das Verhältnis von Sprache und Wirklichkeit steht dadurch, dass der Steinbrocken gleichzeitig als Metapher der Kausalität und des Verhältnisses Teil und Ganzes fungiert. Man kann also keine gültige Aussage über den Steinbrocken machen, denn – wie schon erwähnt – tritt die Fremdheit des Steinbrockens als Metapher des Verhältnisses zwischen Sprache und Wirklichkeit auf. Seine Fremdheit rührt von jenen physischen, materiellen Eigenschaften her, denen der Erzähler eine große Aufmerksamkeit schenkt: „zumal dieser Steinbrocken durch die noch vorhandenen beziehungsweise schon abgeschlagenen Ecken, Kanten, Spitzen, Wölbungen, Riefen, Sprünge, Vorsprünge und Vertiefungen so unregelmäßig war, wie ein Steinbrocken nur sein kann" (25). Die nicht zu bewältigende Fremdheit des Steinbrockens liegt in jener unmittelbaren Sinneserfahrung, was sich ihrerseits mit der Identifizierung der Figur der Metapher gleichsetzten lässt. Mit der Figur jener Metapher, die die Verantwortung für die Nichtinterpretierbarkeit des Steinbrockens trägt, und durch die die Nichtinterpretierbarkeit des Steinbrockens, die von seiner Materialität herkommt, auf das Verhältnis von Sprache und Wirklichkeit übertragen wird. Die Metapher macht also Wiederholungen, genauer gesagt, die Übertragung wiederholt sich selber. Die Wiederholungen der metaphorischen Wechsel durch den Erzähler sind wahrscheinlich nicht von ungefähr. Aus diesem poetischen Verfahren kann man in Hinblick auf die Komposition der ganzen Erzählung einen wichtigen Schluss ziehen: die Metapher wird bei Kertész nicht zur Metapher ihrer selbst – wie etwa in Derridas Theorie –, sondern eine Wiederholung versteckt sich in ihr, nämlich die Wiederholung der unmittelbaren Fremderfahrung im Verhältnis von Sprache und Wirklichkeit. Die Metapher versucht die eigene Metaphorisierung zum Scheitern zu bringen. Die Metapher als Metapher wird dem Erzähler in der adäquaten Wiederholung einer reinen, vorsprachlichen Sinneserfahrung zugänglich. Die Metapher wird hier als der Ausdruck positiver Sinnlichkeit, genauer als deren Wiederholung erfassbar, anders als bei Derrida, in dessen Theorie die sich entziehende Metapher immer nur als Metapher von etwas zu verstehen ist, wobei sie sich immer schon in der Erfahrung einer vorrangigen Sprachlichkeit zeigt.[27] Warum die Wiederholung der Sinnlichkeit in der Metapher sich als Wiederholung nicht interpretierbar macht, wurde bereits anhand der Adornoschen Theorie umrissen, andererseits sind wir bemüht, in den beiden folgenden Interpretationen von *Fiasko* und *Kaddisch* unsere These zu untermauern. In den folgenden soll die textuelle Unvermittelbarkeit von Bild und Sprache und die metafigurative Aufhebung von Metaphorizität gezeigt werden.

Die Komposition des Romans muss auf jeden Fall hervorgehoben werden. Ein Erzähler berichtet über die Geschichte des Alten, während der Alte in seinen eigenen Notizen liest, wobei er einen Ich-Erzähler zum Sprechen bringt. Dann macht sich der Alte daran, seinen Roman zu schreiben und die Geschichte von Steinig zu

erzählen. Der ganze Roman erscheint als ein Zitat des Rahmenerzählers. Diese Komposition stellt zwei poetische Verfahren in den Vordergrund, denen auch in den späteren Romanen eine grundlegende Bedeutung zukommt: das Problem von Sprechen und Schreiben und das der Vermitteltheit der Geschichte. Die Grundsituation der Vermitteltheit von den geschriebenen und erzählten Passagen kann man aufgrund einer Notiz des Alten aufstellen: „Es ist letzten Endes eine Geschichte: verlänger-, verkürzbar und erklärt doch nichts, wie es mit Geschichten nun mal so ist. Aus meiner Geschichte erfahre ich nicht, was mit mir geschehen ist: doch das wäre nötig" (36). Dem Sprecher der Notizen nach verhilft einem das Aufschreiben oder Erzählen von Geschichten nicht zum Selbstverständnis. So entsprechen der allgemeinen Vermitteltheit die sich in den Wiederholungen exponierenden Strukturen der Komposition. Wortwörtlich wiederholen sich z.B. die Dialoge zwischen dem Alten und seiner Frau, jene thematischen Wiederholungen sind aber vielleicht von noch größerer Bedeutung, die uns alle annehmen lassen, dass der Alte in der Geschichte über Steinig eigentlich seine eigene Geschichte schreibt. Was aber nicht fraglich ist: Es ist eine für den Leser durch eine Erzählerfigur vermittelte Geschichte. Die noch zu schreibende Geschichte des Alten, die auffallend viele Ähnlichkeiten mit seiner eigenen Geschichte aufweist, lässt sich jedoch nicht von dem Anspruch des Alten auf Selbstverständnis lesen, von einem Anspruch auf ein Selbstverständnis her, das der Subjektivität entspringen würde. In den Notizen steht folgendes: „Nur eines hatte ich – vielleicht naturgemäß – nicht bedacht: dass man sich niemals sich selbst vermitteln kann. *Mich* hatte nicht der Zug aus dem Roman nach Auschwitz gebracht, sondern der wirkliche" (94). Das Schreiben, das Erzählen stand in *Fiasko* schon immer im Zeichen der unaufhebbaren Vermitteltheit. Auf der Ebene der Komposition manifestiert sich das Verhältnis von Leben und Literatur[28] in den Wiederholungen. Die Unvermittelbarkeit des Ichs für sich selbst, wie es die zitierte Stelle bezeugt, lässt die Epik als eine Gattung ansehen, die in den und durch die Strukturen der Vermittlung die Wirklichkeit, aber auch das Ich nur zu wiederholen vermag.

Wer das *Fiasko* bloß als autobiographischen Roman liest, rechnet damit nicht, dass der Name Steinig den Namen einer Figur aus einem früheren Roman zitiert, was seinerseits wiederum nur im Adornoschen Spiel der Wiederholungen lesbar wird. Die Vermitteltheiten, die als ein Spiel der Wiederholungen von Unverstehbarkeit aufgezeigt wurden, haben Auswirkungen auch auf den Namen Steinig. Der Name funktioniert mit den anderen intertextuellen Textpassagen völlig vergleichbar. Der Frage des Autobiographischen im Roman kann also auch von der entgegengesetzten Seite angenähert werden. Steinig, im Gegensatz zu der Sekretärin, liest die Geschichte seines Chefs nicht eindeutig referentiell: „‚Doch', anscheinend erinnerte sich Steinig jetzt wieder besser, ‚ich habe ihm gesagt, daß ich es für eine symbolische Geschichte halte, dennoch sei darin die Glaubwürdigkeit persönlichen Erlebens spürbar'" (352). Die Lesestrategie jener Figur unter-

gräbt die bloß referentielle Lesestrategie, die man meistens als das Wahrzeichen der zu erfüllenden Leseverfahren sehen möchte. Es spricht auch ein anderes Argument dafür, die den Namen Steinig tragende Figur in der Geschichte des Alten nicht sofort und eindeutig mit dem Alten des Rahmenerzählers zu identifizieren. Die Erkenntnis von Steinig, dass das einzige zu schreibende und schreibbare Buch, das ihm eine Identität verleihen könnte, nur eines von den vielen möglichen ist, repräsentiert in der Spiegelstruktur der epischen Komposition auch die Situation des Rahmenerzählers. Die vom Rahmenerzähler berichtete Geschichte des Alten, die davon handelt, wie der Alte seinen Roman schreibt, hat genauso wenig Wirkung auf die Stabilität der Identität vom Alten wie das Schreiben jenes Romans, den der Erzähler im Roman des Alten Steinig schreiben lässt: „Der für ihn einzig mögliche Roman würde zu einem Buch unter Büchern werden, welches das Massenschicksal der anderen Bücher teilt, darauf wartend, daß vielleicht der Blick des raren Käufers darauf fällt" (442). Die Komposition des Romans, die eine in sich schließende, kreisförmige Struktur aufweist, verleiht den Figuren durch die Schließung keine Identität, sie führt eher zu ihrer Verunsicherung. Der Kreis schließt sich: in einer Reihe von Vermittlungen als Wiederholung des Scheiterns vom identitätsbildenden Vermögen des Schreibens oder von der kunstschaffenden Tätigkeit. Die Struktur des in sich schließenden Kreises vergegenwärtigt in *Fiasko* den Anspruch auf die Vollkommenheit der Form: „Obwohl er noch lebte, hatte er ja sein Leben schon sein Leben nahezu ganz gelebt, und dieses Leben erblickte Steinig plötzlich in weiter Ferne, in Form einer abgeschlossenen, vollständigen Geschichte, über deren Fremdartigkeit er selbst erstaunt war" (436). Die Vollkommenheit der Form wird also als eine Reihe von Wiederholungen apostrophiert, wodurch Fremdheit nicht aufgehoben werden kann: sie wird vielmehr zur Wiederholung der Fremderfahrung selbst.[29] Die Unabschließbarkeit „– obwohl es kein Ende gibt, da ja – wir wissen schon – niemals etwas zu Ende geht [...]" (440) und die Zeitlichkeit des Kunstwerks resultiert in der Poetik von Kertész aus der festen, morpheartigen Form, die die unmittelbare Erfahrung der Fremdheit gewährt. Der letzte Abschnitt im Roman des Alten berichtet über das Scheitern der Schreibversuche von Steinig. Ihm gelingt es nicht, den Roman seines Lebens zu schreiben, in dem er sein Leben darstellen würde, wie es auch in der Wirklichkeit war. Der Schluss ist in dem Sinne als Schluss der ganzen Komposition zu verstehen, nämlich als das Scheitern des Rahmenerzählers, der demnach über die Geschichte von Steinig nicht so berichten kann, wie der Alte es geschrieben hat. In *Fiasko* tritt also ein Problem zutage, das sich im Hinblick auf das folgende äußerst wichtig zu sein scheint: Dem vom Rahmenerzähler zitierten Roman kommt durch seine verfestigte Schriftlichkeit derselbe Status zu, wie dem Steinbrocken am Anfang des Romans. Die Problematik seines Zur-Sprache-Bringens oder Vorlesens unterscheidet grundsätzlich nicht von der der Beschreibung des Steinbrockens. Der Text, obwohl unausgesprochen, wird genauso als Bild apostrophiert wie der

Steinbrocken oder als ein Erinnerungsbild. Die unmittelbare Erfahrung der Fremdheit, die im Falle des Steinbrockens seine sprachliche Wiedergabe untergrub, wird in der Sprache selbst lokalisierbar: Die Sprache wiederholt dieses Scheitern im Paradigma ihrer eigenen Fixiertheit. Es muss aber festgestellt werden, dass sich diese Problematik in *Fiasko* nicht als sprachliche Funktion, Spracherfahrung meldet, sondern sich nur als unwiedergebbare Wirklichkeit spiegelt.

Ein für den Roman *Kaddisch* charakteristischer Satz lässt sich als Angebot fürs Lesen von *Fiasko* interpretieren: „Aber – ja – wir müssen wenigstens den Willen zum Scheitern haben, wie der Wissenschaftler bei Thomas Bernhard sagt, denn das Scheitern, allein das Scheitern, ist das einzige erfüllbare Erlebnis geblieben, sage ich, und so strebe auch ich nach dem Scheitern, wenn ich schon streben muß, und ich muß sehr wohl streben, denn ich lebe und schreibe und beides ist Streben, das Leben ein eher blindes, das Schreiben ein sehendes Streben, und so ist es ein anderes Streben als das Leben, es strebt vielleicht danach, das zu sehen, wonach das Leben strebt, und daher, das es nichts anderes tun kann, spricht es dem Leben das Leben nach, es wiederholt das Leben, als sei es, das Schreiben, auch Leben, obwohl es das nicht ist, auf ganz grundlegende, unvergleichbare, mehr noch, unvergleichliche Weise nicht ist, somit ist das Scheitern, wenn wir zu schreiben beginnen und über das Leben zu schreiben beginnen, von vornherein gewährleistet".[30] Man sieht bereits auf den ersten Blick: Was hier scheitert, ist das Schreiben, das die identische Wiederholung des Lebens verspricht, der Erzähler argumentiert sogar für die Unvereinbarkeit der beiden Sachen. Es fragt sich nun, ob die Erkenntnis, dass die beiden unvereinbar sind, sie nicht sofort ähnlich macht? Der Mangel an Vergleichbarkeit, also das Medium ihrer wechselseitigen Vermittlung, scheint doch zu einem positiven Sein zu gelangen, nach dem aus dem *Fiasko* schon bekannten Muster. Ihre Unvergleichbarkeit verursacht die unmittelbar erfahrene Fremdheit des Schreibens, zumindest vom Leben her gesehen, oder die des Lebens, zumindest vom Schreiben her gesehen. Keines von den beiden kann also als Referenz für das andere funktionieren, indem es zugleich das Maß für den Vergleich gibt. Das eigene Sein des Erzählers ist für ihn aber nur in dieser Zwiespalt zu denken. Wenn man Derridas Einsicht vom stetigen Entzug der Metapher als Metapher akzeptiert, indem sie die Unentscheidbarkeit der Referenzpräferenzen aufrecht erhält, dann entdeckt man hier eine ähnliche Struktur mit ähnlichen Konsequenzen. Die Fremdheit als Fremdheit erfährt man nicht einmal in der Drehtür (Paul de Man) des Aufeinanderbeziehens von Leben und Schreiben. Die Metapher ist bei Derrida die Figur der Schaffung von Referenzen und ihrer notwendigen Verstellung, wodurch sie sich immer nur als Metapher von sich selbst erfassen lässt.[31] Aufgrund der Interpretation von *Fiasko* stellt sich jedoch die Frage, ob der Text von *Kaddisch* die Einsichten von Derrida spiegelt. Die Fremdheit würde sich metaphorisieren, wenn sie (im Zuge des unüberwindbaren Zwangs nach Referenz) nicht als Fremdheit, also etwas benennbares, zu erfahren wäre. Allein der

Erzähler stellt ihre Unvermittelbarkeit als „Wiederholung" ein. Im Prozess der Metaphorisierung wird die Verstellung der Referenzen als Mimesis apostrophiert. Wenn man die Reflexionen im Text auf die Medialität, die Schriftlichkeit vor Auge hält, dann scheitert die Metaphorik, die die Vermittelbarkeit von Leben und Schreiben – nicht zuletzt wegen ihrer ursprünglichen Bildlichkeit – ermöglicht, gerade an der Erfahrung der Materialität der Schrift. Die spätmoderne Erfahrung der Medialität zeigt sich gerade nicht als die Möglichkeit von Intermedialität, also von Vermittelbarkeit. Die sprachliche Metaphorik der Vermittlung wird durch die Erfahrung der Materialität der Medien verunmöglicht. Und dadurch schreiben sich die Texte von Kertész ins Adornosche Paradigma der Fremdheit und Mimesis.[32] Die Setzung der Unvergleichbarkeit durch den Erzähler findet ihren Maß in der Erfahrung der Materialität als in dem sich entziehenden Grund des Vergleichs.

Es scheint in der Tat zu sein, dass die Neuheiten, die im *Fiasko* auf der Ebene der Thematik und Komposition zu finden sind, erst in *Kaddisch* und *Ich – ein anderer* zu komplexen poetischen Verfahren, d.h. zum Zusammenspiel von Intertextualität, Bildlichkeit, Gedächtnis und Materialität des Zeichens werden.

Bei Adorno wiederholt also das Kunstwerk jene Eigenschaft der Wirklichkeit, dass sie im Grunde genommen jedwedem interpretatorischen Zugang verschlossen bleibt, wodurch sie dem Menschen den Akt eines anthropologisch fundierten Mimesis aufzwingt. Die vom Kunstwerk gewährte unmittelbare Erfahrung von Fremdheit und Materialität ermöglicht die identische Wiederholung der Uninterpretierbarkeit von Wirklichkeit. Die Wahrheit der Kunst ist auch in dieser Relation erfassbar. Die erzählerische Grundsituation von *Ich – ein anderer*, aber vielmehr die von *Kaddisch für ein nicht geborenes Kind* macht ein Kopierungsprozess aus, die markierte oder nicht markierte Einfügung von Selbstzitaten und übernommenen Textpassagen, der unablässigen Repetition von beiden, dem ständigen Neubeginn von Reden/Schreiben, d.h. den verschiedenen Figuren der Wiederholung.

Auch Kertész führt jene prosapoetische Tradition weiter, die die Praxis der Erzählung durch akzentuierte Formen des Erzählens zu erneuern trachtet. Die Eigenart seiner Werke ergibt sich aber daraus, dass er eine Möglichkeit für die Dominanz des Erzählaktes in der Reflexion auf den Akt des Schreibens oder Notierens selbst entdeckt. Wie es uns die erzählerische Reflexion mitteilt, die Grundsituation der Erinnerung in *Kaddisch* ist auch mit dem Akt des Kopierens früherer Notizen des Erzählers engstens verbunden: „notierte ich damals in mein Notizheft, von wo ich es nun, Jahrzehnte später, in dieses andere Notizheft hier übertrage" (82). „Ich notierte auch ein paar Zeilen in mein Notizheft über diesen Besuch, von denen ich wiederum ein paar Zeilen in dieses Notizheft hier übertrage" (126). Diese Situation evoziert zugleich zwei poetische Traditionen. Einerseits die Tradition des sich ständig gestaltenden, aber auch auf sein Nicht-Fertig-Sein-Können ständig reflektierenden Kunstwerkes, wie wir es bei Thomas Bernhard gewohnt sind, andererseits

die Tradition des Kunstwerks, das vollkommen und reflektiert aus Zitaten aufgebaut ist. In *Fiasko* wird die Unabschließbarkeit des Kunstwerks durch das In-Sich-Schließen wechselseitig spiegelnder Konstrukte des Erzählens, also durch Repetition ihrer Ungenügsamkeit gezeigt. In *Kaddisch* sieht Kertész aber unter Redezwang („und all dies von meinem nicht zu besiegenden Redezwang, als sei er ein Horror vacui, getrieben" 19) und dem damit parallelen Schreibzwang bzw. in den Reflexionen darauf eine Möglichkeit zur Verwirklichung der Idee des unabschließbaren Kunstwerks. Das Gebet, das auch im Titel steht und als Gattungsbestimmung zu lesen ist, wird auch in diesem Kontext verständlich: „Ich verstand kein einziges Wort, doch ich lernte es rasch und zugleich damit die beruhigende Monotonie des Betens, das Zwingende der Wiederholung, diese eigenartige Hygiene, die versäumt zu haben meiner Seele tiefere Wunden schlug als etwa ein versäumtes Zähneputzen ..." (129). Der Text ist also ein Produkt des Umschreibens von Notizen, die Erinnerungsbilder oder Bruchteile von Gesprächen wachrufen. Im Zuge der Arbeit wird der Erzähler immer mehr dem Akt des Schreibens ausgeliefert: „aber ich halte mit dieser Erörterung inne, weil ich spüre, daß mich die Buchstaben, die Worte mitreißen [...] aber in gewisser Hinsicht lahmer Feder, als stieße sie jemand immer zurück" (12; 14). Interessanterweise ist hier – ganz im Gegensatz zu den in *Fiasko* gesagten – gerade die zwingende Kraft des Notierens, was dem Erzähler die Erinnerung aufzwingt, eine Kraft, die den linearen Prozess der Übertragung mit der Zufälligkeit der Erinnerung unvereinbar macht. Die epische Struktur erweist sich dadurch als eine Reihe von Neuanfängen der Erinnerung, die immer wieder mit dem „Nein!" des Erzählers zum Anfang zurückkehrt: „‚Nein!' tobt, heult es in mir, ich will mich nicht erinnern, will nicht, sagen wir, anstelle das hier, in dieser unwirtlichen Gegend, nicht einmal als Mangelware bekannten Madeleines Babybiskuits in die ‚Garzon'-Beutelteemischung tauchen, wenngleich ich mich natürlich erinnern will, nun ja, ob ich will oder nicht, ich kann nicht anders; wenn ich schreibe, erinnere ich mich, muß ich mich erinnern, auch wenn ich nicht weiß, warum ich mich erinnern muß" (38).

„Wenn es richtig ist, daß diesseits der Metaphysik der Medien der Text der Ort des Gedächtnisses ist: die Vielzahl der Texte in unterschiedlichen Graden intertextuellen Verwobenheit, dann sind es die Modi solcher Intertextualität und die Aggregatzustände der Schriftlichkeit, die interessieren"[33], schreibt Anselm Haverkamp und veranlasst zur Beachtung des Verhältnisses von Zitieren, Erinnerung und Schreiben. Wie es bereits gezeigt wurde, verspricht das Schreiben eine Wiederholung der Wirklichkeit, wie wir aber erfahren müssen, besteht das Leben selbst zumeist aus einer Reihe von Zufällen: „Soweit die Geschichte, und wenn es auch wahr ist, daß ich mein Leben nicht nur als eine auf den willkürlichen Zufall meiner Geburt folgende Aneinanderreihung weiterer willkürlicher Zufälle sehen möchte, weil das wirklich eine ziemlich unwürdige Betrachtungsweise des Lebens wäre, so möchte ich es aber noch weniger so sehen, als sei alles nur gesche-

hen, damit ich am Leben bleibe" (58). Demnach ist das Verhältnis von Leben, das nur in Form von Erinnerungsbilder zugänglich ist, und Schreiben nur ein zufälliges. Diese Zufälligkeit haben wir in den kontingenten sprachlichen Fassungen von Erinnerungsbildern erkannt, die sprachlich nicht zu wiedergeben sind. Wenn der Erzähler behauptet, dass das Schreiben für ihn eigentlich das Graben seines eigenen Grabes bedeutet („unter anderem auch die Natur meiner Arbeit sehe, die eigentlich nichts anderes ist als ein Schaufeln, das Weiterschaufeln an jenem Grab, das andere für mich anfingen, in die Luft zu graben" 42), setzt die zitierte Passage von Paul Celan als textuelles Gedächtnis nicht nur das Bild der Metapher mit dem Bild der Erinnerung gleich, sondern dem geschriebenen Celan-Text selbst. Das Zitat erfüllt eine Doppelfunktion: Einerseits wird damit den vom Text hervorgebrachten Metaphernbildern als dem Gedächtnis des Textes der Status der – für den Erzähler in ihrer Unzugänglichkeit bloß wiederholbaren – Erinnerungsbilder zuerkannt, andererseits wird in der Folge die zitierte Textpassage selbst als Bild, als visueller, räumlicher Gegenstand vorgestellt. Die Zitate sind in einer anderen Textstelle ähnlich deutbar. Hier wird der Erzähler auf ein Bündel von Zitaten aufmerksam: „Zu dieser Zeit erstand auch meine bis heute ständig zunehmende Zitatsammlung, die als Zettelhaufen, von einer Heftklammer zusammengehalten, auch jetzt zwischen den Zetteln auf meinem Tisch herumliegt" (123). Die Kursivierung der Zitate verstärkt nur ihre visuelle Wahrnehmung. Darum kann man im weiteren den Text von *Kaddisch* als Zitatensammlung bezeichnen, die räumlich und zeitlich abgegrenzten Erinnerungsbilder aufblenden, zumal die Montage der zitierten Texte spiegeln. Ein solches Erinnerungsbild ist die Beschreibung eines Villenviertels: „Ich erinnere mich, daß ich an einem ebensolchen verregneten Montagmorgen plötzlich aufsprang, alles stehen- und liegenließ, meine Arbeit liegenließ und mich auf den Weg in dieser Villenviertel machte, genauer gesagt in das Viertel, das ehemals dieses Villenviertel war beziehungsweise das ich als ehemaliges Villenviertel in Erinnerung hatte" (125). Die Erinnerungstätigkeit der Gegenwart richtet sich eingestandenermaßen nicht auf die Sache selbst, sie kommt nicht weiter als bis zu einem Bild aus der Vergangenheit. Jetzt kann der sich erinnernde nur über seine einstige Erinnerung Aussagen machen. Und das resultiert nicht aus der sprachlichen Bedingtheit der Erinnerung, sondern aus der Unübersetzbarkeit des damaligen und neuen Erinnerungsbilds ins Sprachliche, d.h. – aus der verkehrten Perspektive – aus der bloß reproduktiven Wiederholbarkeit der Bilder untereinander. Das Bild, das durch Sprache nicht zu interpretieren ist und von der Sprache nur auf eine einzige Weise, nämlich im Medium der Schrift, wiedergegeben werden kann, tritt beim folgenden Erinnerungsversuch offen zutage: „Hier hatten sich die zweitrangigen *Junioren* und die beneideten *Senioren* in den Stunden nachmittäglichen *Silentiums* über ihre Bücher gebeugt" (127). In der typographischen Hervorhebung (Kursivierung), also in der Anspielung auf die Bildlichkeit der Schrift, macht der Erzähler den einzigen Versuch, der ihm übrig-

geblieben ist, die grundsätzlich nicht wiedergebbare Materialität des Erinnerungsbildes wiederzugeben: die Wiederholung des Bildes durch Bilder.

Die Fremderfahrung des Erzählers ist auch in diesem Paradigma, im Raum des Scheiterns von Vermittelbarkeit, zu platzieren. Der Erzähler sieht seine „Identität", die Aufhebung seines „„Fremdheitsgefühls'" (86; 87) in der Unmöglichkeit, dass er sich selbst erblicken kann. Sich selbst, also seine Fremdheit, seine „In-die-Fremde-Geworfenheit" (84) identifiziert er jedoch mit einem Erinnerungsbild, mit einem Bild, das im Text mehrmals zurückkehrt: „wie soll ich sagen, ein verblüffender, jedoch lebenslängliche Verblüffung erregender Anblick war, ein Anblick, mit dem ich mich später, wer weiß warum [...] mit diesem Anblick also identifizierte ich mich später manches Mal, so sehr, daß ich schon zu spüren meinte, wie ich, wenn auch nicht ganz *wirklich*, um dieses nichtsagende Wortbild zu gebrauchen, nun, aber doch vom Gefühl her, ich selbst zu dem Erblickten wurde, daß das Erblickte *ich* war" (30). Dieses Bild stellt eine kahlköpfige Frau vor dem Spiegel dar, die eine Verwandte des Erzählers ist, die aber von ihm ohne Perücke nicht sofort erkannt wird. Das Bild erscheint dem Erzähler, als er in einem Café das Gespräch zweier Fremden belauscht und auf das Wort „Jude" aufmerksam wird. Später wird auch das Judentum als Identitätslosigkeit mit dem Bild der Verwandten identifiziert: „denn mir bedeutet mein Judentum nichts, genauer gesagt, als Judentum bedeute es mir nichts, als Erfahrung alles; als Judentum: eine kahlköpfige Frau in einem roten Morgenrock vor dem Spiegel" (116). Die Fremderfahrung des Erzählers zeigt sich zuerst in der Kontingenz der Übertragung zwischen (Erinnerungs)Bild und Wort. Er kann genauso wenig das Ich mit einer bildlichen Instanz gleichsetzten, wie auch das Wort Jude für ihn notwendigerweise das Bild der kahlköpfigen Frau bedeutet. Die Gleichsetzung kann genauer angegeben werden: Das Bild der Frau wird mit dem Bild des Wortes Ich gleichgesetzt. Nur löst sich darin die Fremdheit nicht auf, denn in dieser Art der Funktionalisierung von Bildlichkeit spiegelt sich oder wiederholt sich nur die Kontingenz der Übertragung zwischen dem Wort Jude und dem Bild der Verwandten.

Paul de Man bewertet die Wiederholung als eine Suspendierung der rhetorischen Entscheidungen des Lesers,[34] was auch die grundlegende Figur des Lesens, die Figur der Allegorie, unerkennbar macht. Jene Allegorie, deren Identifizierung sowieso die Erfahrung der Unlesbarkeit verursacht, indem sie ihren eigenen allegorischen Code dekonstruiert. Die Wiederholung wird dadurch zur Wiederholung der Unlesbarkeit selbst und macht die Aufstellung eines Zeitbezugs zwischen den Unlesbarkeiten unmöglich. In der Wiederholung zeigt sich das Lesen als Allegorie seiner eigenen Allegorisierung. Während bei Adorno nach dem Muster des anthropologischen Begriffs der Mimesis – die als eine Sache verstanden wird, die sich die anderen nach eigenem Maß ähnlich macht – die Erinnerung durch die Unmittelbarkeit der Fremderfahrung bei der Konstatierung der eigenen Unmög-

lichkeit stehen bleibt, wird bei de Man nicht mehr die Körpererfahrung des Menschen, sondern die setzende Macht der Sprache als die Instanz genannt, die sich die zu erfassende Wirklichkeit nach eigenem Maß (Heidegger) ähnlich macht.[35] Darum kann de Man schreiben, dass „die Lektüre nicht ‚unsere' Lektüre ist, denn sie verwendet nur die sprachlichen Mittel des Textes".[36] Die Zugänglichkeit oder Unzugänglichkeit von Wirklichkeit betreffend lässt uns der Text in Unsicherheit, denn das Maß der Angleichung (die Möglichkeitsbedingung für Referentialisierbarkeit) wird auch als bloßes rhetorisches Mittel gezeigt. Der Text reproduziert damit nicht die unmittelbare Erfahrung der Fremdheit von Wirklichkeit, sondern die immer schon vermittelte Erfahrung der sprachlichen Fremdheit, die im Spiel von Referentialisierbarkeit und Entzug von Referenz, Phänomenalität und Materialität, Figuration und Defiguration zu ertappen ist. De Man spricht über die Geschichtlichkeit selbst als ein notwendiges Produkt von Figuren, die in der Lektüre reproduziert werden.[37]

Die Hermeneutik nimmt die Unlesbarkeit als eine grundlegende Kategorie der ästhetischen Erfahrung, als ein schon immer als etwas verstandenes, und meint das Moment der Temporalität, die im Konzept des unabschließbaren Kunstwerks erfassbar ist, in der Differenz der als etwas verstandenen Unlesbarkeiten greifbar zu machen. Die Hermeneutik – zumindest die von Gadamer – versteht Mimesis aufgrund des Gedankens von der „Vervielfältigung des Einen",[38] als die sich steigernde Entfaltung einer Sache (Figal), die die selbst in ihren Differenzen zu sich selbst zu begreifen ist. Mimesis wird dabei zur Figur des schon immer In-der-Vermittlung-Seins der Sache. Obwohl von völlig anderen Voraussetzungen ausgehend, überholen sowohl die Hermeneutik als auch die Dekonstruktion den Horizont von Adorno, indem sie Fremdheit als Figuren der Vermitteltheit nicht mehr nach dem Muster einer vorsprachlichen, anthropologischen Funktion – aus der die Angleichung an die tote Natur resultiert – denken, sondern die sprachliche Vermitteltheit der Körpererfahrung oder der Materialität – auch die des Menschen! – voraussetzen. Der Gedanke von der bildlichen Funktion der Zitate in *Kaddisch*, lässt sich von der Teilhabe von Bild und rhetorischer Sprache an das gemeinsame Medium der Bildlichkeit ausgehend verstehen.[39] Nicht darum kann eine Übersetzung des Bildlichen ins Sprachliche vollzogen werden, weil das Bildliche einen vorgegebenen sprachlichen Inhalt visualisieren würde, sondern weil das Verhältnis von Bild und Sprache – selbstverständlich im Sinne des Mimesisbegriffs der Hermeneutik – das Verhältnis von Name und rhetorischem Bild spiegelt. Dieses Verhältnis von Bild und Sprache wird in *Kaddisch* als das Verhältnis von ausdrücklich geschriebenen, übertragenen Zitaten und dem sie in sich schließenden Textkorpus reproduziert. Die durch Zitate evozierten Bilder erscheinen grundsätzlich in ihrer Unzugänglichkeit, Uninterpretierbarkeit für den Erzähler. Die Uninterpretierbarkeit der in den Texten der Zitate evozierten Bilder wird in die Uninterpretierbarkeit der zitierten Schrift selbst transformiert.

In Haverkamps Interpretation war es Hegel, der beim Funktionieren des Gedächtnisses ein ähnliches Verhältnis zwischen Schrift und Sprache entdeckte. Seit Hegel gilt die Bildlichkeit der traditionell im Medium des Bildlichen vorgestellten Erinnerung auch der Schrift selbst. Für Hegel drückt das Verhältnis von Hieroglyphenschrift und Buchstabenschrift das Verhältnis von Bild und Sprache im allgemeinen aus, denn er sieht die Äußerlichkeit des Zeichens im Verhältnis von Zeichen und Bezeichneten durch die Buchstabenschrift repräsentiert. Das hat eine Rückwirkung auf seinen Bildbegriff, es stattet das Bild für ihn mit Zeichenhaftigkeit aus. Darin, dass die Praxis des Buchstabenschreibens ihre eigene Zeichenhaftigkeit vergessen lässt und sich selbst als Hieroglyphenschrift (als symbolische Einheit von bezeichnetem Bild und geschriebenem Zeichen) versteht, enttarnt sich die visuelle Wahrnehmung als ein Verstehensprozeß, der in dem Sich-Aufeinanderbeziehen von Zeichen und Bezeichnetem seinen Platz hat. Beide, bildliche Wahrnehmung und sprachliches Verstehen, werden also im Paradigma der Schrift gedacht. Erst mit dem Finden dieses Mediums lässt sich eine Vermittlung zwischen den beiden Sphären denken. Dass die Erinnerung bildlich funktioniert, erscheint plötzlich als eine von der Sprache notwendig gemachte Metapher. „Es handelt sich um Merkbilder, deren Identifizierung im Raum des Gedächtnisses quasi bildlich, deren Markierung quasi schriftlich funktioniert, deren widersprüchliche Metaphorisierung aber jedenfalls in der Äußerlichkeit des Benennens verharrt."[40]

Während Kertész die Reflexion der Medialität von Literatur – wie wir versucht haben es zu zeigen – als poetisches Wirkungsmittel ausmünzt, bleibt er jedoch im Paradigma von Adorno, indem er das Ästhetische in der unmittelbaren Wahrnehmung des Sinnlichen begründet sieht. Bei ihm wird die Boehmsche Verkehrbarkeit/Übersetzbarkeit nicht mehr im Gegensatzpaar von Bildlichkeit der Zitate und interpretierender Sprache gedacht. Bei Kertész lässt sich die Reflexion von Bild und Sprache vielmehr in der Form – die im Zeichen der Idee des geschlossenen Kunstwerks gestaltet ist –, in dem bloß mimetischen Akt (Adorno) zwischen Buchstaben oder geschriebenen Texten vorstellen. Da ist eine Erfahrung der Medialität des Textes miteinbegriffen. Die Vermittlung scheitert irgendwo zwischen der Schriftlichkeit, die die unzugängliche Bildlichkeit der Zitate repräsentiert, und der Sprache, die dies zu deuten versucht und die sich stets in Aufzeichnungen im Notizbuch verwandelt.

Wie es bereits bei Adorno angesprochen wurde, wird die metaphysische Todeserfahrung und deren symbolische Deutung wegen der Beraubtheit des individuellen Todes unhaltbar. Der Gedanke von einer anthropologischen Körpererfahrung als die unmittelbare Erfahrung von Fremdheit wird maßgebend sein in der Theorie von Adorno auch hinsichtlich der Leistung des Ästhetischen. Hält man den Text des literarischen Kunstwerks für den Ort des Gedächtnisses, hebt es selbst – in unserem Falle – in der reproduktiven Wiederholung der Fremdheit seinen äs-

thetischen Charakter auf. Aus der Sicht der Kulturwissenschaften verlieren die Texte ihr Vermögen, als symbolische Orte des Gedächtnisses zu funktionieren, da kollektives und persönliches Gedächtnis in dem entworfenen Vermittlungsvorgang einander nicht decken würden, sie können höchstens ihre gegenseitige Ungenügsamkeit repetieren.[41] Diese Art von Fremderfahrung bringt die Reflexion auf die Medialität der Texte mit. Möchte man die Texte von Kertész in einem literaturhistorischen Kontext deuten, so könnte für sie ein Platz – nach den von Scherpe vorgeschlagenen Kategorien – in der Zwiespalt von unmittelbar dargestellter Fremdheit und Reflexion der Medialität von Literatur gefunden werden. Einerseits nimmt Kertész in Fragen Ästhetik und Historie wie Folgt Stellung: „Hier steckt nämlich die große Paradoxie, das contradictio in adiecto; da vom Holocaust, dieser unbegreifbaren und unübersehbaren Realität, läßt sich nur mit Hilfe der ästhetischen Imagination eine reale Vorstellung gewinnen", andererseits argumentiert für die Unmöglichkeit von Vermittlung: „Es tritt auch aus seinen Berichten hervor, daß das größte Entsetzen, das gewaltigste Grauen wiedersteht letztendlich jeder literarischen Vermittlung".[42]

Wenn man weiterhin bei diesen Kategorien bleibt, dann erreicht der Prozess der Herausbildung des postmodernen „ästhetischen Bewusstseins" – dem eher die Destruktion des ästhetischen Bewusstseins entspricht – seinen Höhepunkt, wo die Reflexion der Medialität, und aus der Sicht der Literaturwissenschaft: die Reflexion der Bildlichkeit und Sprachlichkeit, das Adornosche Konzept der Fremdheit hinter sich lässt. Diese Reflexion – die Fremdheit immer nur in Vermittlungsstrukturen denkt – hat eine Auswirkung auf den Körperbegriff der philosophischen Anthropologie, die die sprachlich vermittelte Verfassung des Verhältnisses zu unserem Körper behauptet. Diese Reflexion bestimmt aber weitgehend das Denken über die visuelle Wahrnehmung und denkt das Kunstwerk als ein Phänomen, das sich die Dinge nach eigenem Maß angleicht, innerhalb des Paradigmas vom Sprachlichen.

Anmerkungen

1. Klaus R. Scherpe: Dramatisierung und Entdramatisierung des Untergangs. In: Andreas Huyssen – Klaus R. Scherpe (Hg.): *Postmoderne. Zeichen eines kulturellen Wandelns*. Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1997. S. 270–301. Hier: S. 280. Die Frage stellt sich, ob es zu einem wirklichen Dialog zwischen Sozialwissenschaften und Ästhetik gekommen ist. Wahrscheinlich kann keine Rede davon sein, denn das Ästhetische behält im Versprechen seiner eigenen Erfüllung seine Geschichtlichkeit nicht bei. Gadamer stellt dagegen die Erfahrung des historischen Selbstverständnisses im Paradigma der ästhetischen Erfahrung, wodurch die phänomenologische Struktur selbst ein Garant der Geschichtlichkeit des Ästhetischen wird. Was das neue, ästhetische Bewusstsein bei Scherpe anbelangt: Gadamer kündigt mit der Einführung des Begriffs der ästhetischen Nichtunterscheidung das Programm der Destruktion des ästheti-

schen Bewusstseins an, das sogar als ein neuer, geschichtlicher Konstrukt vom Ästhetischen zu verstanden ist, der sich den neuen – postmodernen – Bedingungen unseres historischen Selbstverständnisses anpasst.

2. Scherpe: Dramatisierung und Entdramatisierung... S. 291.
3. Scherpe: Dramatisierung und Entdramatisierung... S. 296. Scherpe zitiert aus einem Interview mit Baudrillard: Die Fatalität der Moderne. Interview mit Jean Baudrillard. In: Gerd Bergfleth (Hg.): *Zur Kritik der palavernden Aufklärung.* München, Matthes & Seitz, 1984. S. 11.
4. Th. W. Adorno: Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft. In: Ders.: *Prismen. Gesammelte Schriften* 10/1. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1977. S. 11–30. Hier: S. 30. Adorno berichtigt später seine eigene These: „Das perennierende Leiden hat soviel Recht auf Ausdruck wie der Gemarterte zu brüllen; darum mag falsch gewesen sein, nach Auschwitz ließe kein Gedicht mehr schreiben." In: *Negative Dialektik. Gesammelte Schriften* 10/2. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1977. S. 355.
5. János Weiss: *Az esztétikum konstrukciója Adornonál.* Budapest, Akadémiai, 1995. S. 179.
6. Vgl. dazu Th. W. Adorno: Der Essay als Form. In: Ders.: *Noten zur Literatur. Gesammelte Schriften* 11. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1974, S. 9–33.
7. Weiss: *Az esztétikum...* S. 182 u. 184.
8. Th. W. Adorno: *Ästhetische Theorie.* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1995. S. 171.
9. „Moderne ist Kunst durch Mimesis ans Verhärtete und Entfremdete". Adorno: *Ästhetische Theorie.* S. 39.
10. Th. W. Adorno–M. Horkheimer: *Dialektik der Aufklärung.* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1971. S. 31 u. 161.
11. Vgl. dazu Adorno: *Ästhetische Theorie.* S. 69.
12. Adorno: *Ästhetische Theorie.* S. 363.
13. Vgl. dazu Gunter Gebauer–Christoph Wulf: *Mimesis. Kultur-Kunst-Gesellschaft.* Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1992. S. 389–404. Hier: S. 391 ff.
14. Adorno: *Ästhetische Theorie.* S. 384 u. 366; „Schlecht ist Kunst im technischen Zeitalter, wo sie über es als gesellschaftliches Verhältnis, die universelle Vermittlung täuscht" (430).
15. „Die Erinnerungsspur der Mimesis, die jedes Kunstwerk sucht, ist stets auch Antezipation eines Zustands jenseits der Spaltung zwischen dem einzelnen und den anderen. Solches kollektive Eingedenken in den Kunstwerken ist aber nicht khoris vom Subjekt, sondern durch es hindurch; in seiner idiosynkratischen Regung zeigt die kollektive Reaktionsform sich an." Adorno: *Ästhetische Theorie.* S. 198.
16. Gebauer–Wulf: *Mimesis.* S. 394.
17. Adorno: *Negative Dialektik.* S. 363 u. S. 355–365. Nach Adorno stammt die Unverstehbarkeit von Auschwitz daraus. Auschwitz als der unmittelbare Ausdruck des Bösen im Menschen erscheint jenseits der Grenze jedweder Interpretierbarkeit. (Vgl. dazu Hans Robert Jauß: Das Verstehen von Geschichte und seine Grenzen. In: Ders.: *Probleme des Verstehens.* Stuttgart, Reclam, 1999. S. 188–210. Hier: S. 210.) Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó beruft sich auch auf Jauß, wo er in der Todeserfahrung, die nur als die Erfahrung des Todes von einem Anderen verstehbar ist, die anthropologische Grenze der Mitteilbarkeit oder Austauschbarkeit dessen sieht, was der Wechselseitigkeit des Verstehens zugrunde liegt. (Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó: Esztétikai identifikáció, szublimáció, katarzis. In: *Jelenkor* 18 (2000) Dezember, S. 1234–1247. Hier: S. 1243.)
18. Th. W. Adorno: Erziehung nach Auschwitz. In: Ders.: *Stichworte. Gesammelte Schriften* 10/2. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1977. S. 674–690. Hier: S. 684.
19. Adorno: *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft.* S. 17. Vgl. dazu Michel Foucaults Gedanken über die Selbsterhaltungsmechanismen der Diskurse. Michel Foucault: *Die Ordnung des Diskurses.* Frankfurt am Main, Fischer, 1997.

20. Jean Améry: *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne. Bewältigungsversuche eines Überwältigten.* Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1977. S. 39 ff. (Hervorh. im Original.)
21. Vgl. dazu Primo Levi: *Die Untergegangenen und die Geretteten.* München, Hanser, 1990. S. 129–151.
22. Vgl. dazu Primo Levi: *Die Untergegangenen...* S. 106–128.
23. Jean Améry: *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne. Bewältigungsversuche eines Überwältigten.* S. 149.
24. Vgl. dazu Péter Szirák: *Folytonosság és változás.* Debrecen, Csokonai, 1998. S. 83. Szirák zitiert aus: Tamás Molnár Gábor: Fikcióalkotás és történelemszemlélet. *Alföld* 1996/8. S. 57–71. Hier: S. 66.
25. Imre Kertész: *Fiasko.* Berlin, Rowohlt. 1999. S. 92. f. (Aus dem Ungarischen von György Buda u. Agnes Relle) Die im Folgenden in Klammern angegebenen Seitenzahlen beziehen sich auf diese Ausgabe.
26. Péter Szirák: *Folytonosság és változás.* S. 86. (Hervorh. im Original.)
27. Vgl. dazu Jaques Derrida: Der Entzug der Metapher. In: Anselm Haverkamp (Hg.): *Die Paradoxe Metapher.* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1998. S. 197–234.
28. Vgl. dazu Imre Kertész – Péter Esterházy: *Jegyzőkönyv – Élet és irodalom.* Budapest, Magvető – Századvég, 1993.
29. „Doch was soll der Künstler tun, der, schon aufgrund des besonderen Wesens der Kunst, mit einem bleibenden Stoff arbeiten muß? Wenn nichts anderes, so wird gewiß diese Forderung ihn früher oder später dazu bringen, sich der Wirklichkeit der ihn umgebenden Welt zu stellen. Er muß diese Wirklichkeit, aus der er ein der Vergänglichkeit trotzendes Werk schaffen will, notwendigerweise aus peinigender Nähe in Augenschein nehmen." Imre Kertész: *Eine Gedankenlänge Stille, während das Erschießungskommando neu lädt.* Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1999. S. 76.
30. Imre Kertész: *Kaddisch für ein nicht geborenes Kind.* Berlin, Rowohlt, 1992. 61. (Aus dem Ungarischen von György Buda.) Die im Folgenden in Klammern angegebenen Seitenzahlen beziehen sich auf diese Ausgabe.
31. Derrida: *Der Entzug der Metapher.* S. 227–232.
32. „Die Mimesis der Kunstwerke ist Ähnlichkeit mit sich selbst." (159). „Ahmt das mimetische Verhalten nicht etwas nach, sondern macht sich selbst gleich, so nehmen die Kunstwerke es auf sich, eben das zu vollziehen" (169). „wie Kirkegaard es ausdrückte: was ich erbeute, sind Bilder. Kunstwerke sind deren Objektivationen, die von Mimesis, Schemata von Erfahrung, die den Erfahrenden sich gleichmachen" (427).
33. Anselm Haverkamp/Renate Lachmann: Text als Mnemotechnik – Panorama einer Diskussion. In: A. Haverkamp – R. Lachmann: *Gedächtniskunst. Raum-Bild-Schrift.* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1991. S. 9–21. Hier: S. 13. Haverkamp sieht in einem anderen Aufsatz in der Anagramme als der primitivsten Form von Intertextualität das Paradigma der Medialität der Schrift, eine Gesetzmäßigkeit also, die das eigene Gedächtnis der Texte bestimmt, die nicht mehr als bloße Repräsentation von Rede verstanden ist. Er sieht gerade in den medialen Bedingungen jene Leistung der Kunst, in der Freisetzung der Frage nach der in der Wahrheit notwendig verborgenen Methode ans Tageslicht zu fördern. Die Anagramme als das „ursprünglichste Paradigma des Gedächtnisses der Texte" erinnert an die mediale Zugänglichkeit der Sache und daran, dass die Übersetzbarkeit von Bild und Sprache nicht eindeutig ist. Dadurch können die willkürlichen Übertragungen von der Tropologie in die Anthropologie gezeigt werden. Vgl. dazu Anselm Haverkamp: Die Gerechtigkeit der Texte. In: A. Haverkamp – R. Lachmann: *Memoria. Vergessen und Erinnern.* München, Fink, 1993. S. 17–27. Hier: S. 19 ff.
34. Vgl. dazu Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó: Intertextualitás és a szöveg identitása. In: Ders.: *Az olvasás lehetőségei.* Budapest, JAK-Kijárat, 1997. S. 5–13. Hier: S. 9.

35. Über die Unumgehbarkeit dieser Gleichmachung schreibt auch schon Nietzsche. Vgl. dazu Friedrich Nietzsche: Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne. In: Ders.: *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe.* (Hg. v. G. Colli u. M. Montinari.) 1. Bd. Berlin/New York, dtv – de Gruyter, 1980. S. 873–890.
36. Paul de Man: Semiologie und Rhetorik. In: Ders.: *Allegorien des Lesens.* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1988. S. 31–51.
37. Vgl. dazu Paul de Man: Epistemologie der Metapher. In: Anselm Haverkamp (Hg.): *Theorie der Metapher.* Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996. S. 414–437.
38. Béla Bacsó: *Írni és felejteni.* Budapest, Kijárat, 2001. S. 92–110.
39. Vgl. dazu Gottfried Boehm: Zu einer Hermeneutik des Bildes. In: Gottfried Boem–H.-G. Gadamer (Hg.): *Seminar: Die Hermeneutik und die Wissenschaften.* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1978. S. 444–471.
40. Anselm Haverkamp: Auswendigkeit. Das Gedächtnis der Rhetorik. In: A. Haverkamp–R. Lachmann: *Gedächtniskunst.* S. 25–52. Hier: S. 37–42 u. 40.
41. Vgl. dazu Aleida Assmann: *Das Gedächtnis der Orte.* DVjS 68 (1994) Sonderheft: *Figur und Bild.* S. 17–35.
42. Imre Kertész: Az Auschwitzban rejlő kegyelem. In: *A pillanatnyi csend, amíg a kivégzőosztag újratölt.* Budapest, Magvető, 1998. S. 210 f. und Köszönet egy díjért. In: Ders.: *A pillanatnyi csend...* S. 166. (Meine Übersetzungen – P. K.)

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David H. Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 225.

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Mary H. Beech, "The Domestic Realm in the Lives of Hindu Women in Calcutta," in *Separate Worlds: Studies of Purdah in South Asia,* ed. Hanna Papanek and Gail Minault (Delhi: Chanakya, 1982), 115.

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