

## FIFTY YEARS IN HAYDN RESEARCH: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT\*

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The following article offers a short chronicle of the scholarship on Haydn in Hungary since the late 1950s, identifying some of the major contributions, he raises questions concerning possible further interconnections between the scholarly work of the researcher and the creative work of the performer.

**Keywords:** Haydn, Hungary, manuscript, score, urtext, original instruments, reception theory, folk music

There was little significant scholarly work on Haydn in Hungary until roughly the 1950s. Certainly the time he spent in Hungary in the service of the Esterházy family, the contacts he had with Bratislava (or rather Pozsony or Pressburg, as it was more commonly known at the time), and his journey to Buda to conduct *Die Schöpfung* awoke some interest and led to some serious scholarly endeavors. Between the two wars Ervin Major, an independent scholar, pursued some work on the Hungarian tunes and dances that influenced Haydn's music, and Endre Csatai examined local documents of interest in Sopron (or Ödenburg, as it was more commonly known). But for a young professional from the West real partners in Haydn research seemed to be missing. In his search for Haydn's ancestors, Ernst Fritz Schmid could find no professional assistance, and young Jens Peter Larsen, who in the 1930s came to work on primary sources in the Esterházy family archive in Budapest, had to content himself with János Hárich, the archivist, as his sole collaborator. One can only wonder whether at the time they knew that there were Hungarian musicologists who held doctorates from Germany, including Hermann Abert's pupil Bence Szabolcsi and Dénes Bartha, who had studied in Berlin. The best specialized study was perhaps the survey of the baritone works by Béla Csuka, a cellist.

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\* The article is a slightly modified version of the opening address held by László Somfai at the "Haydn 2009: A Bicentenary Conference" in Budapest.

This changed following World War II. A previously well-guarded private archive including the world's largest Haydn autograph collection, which essentially had remained closed even to scholars, became public in Budapest. Indeed the long isolation of this private collection may very well have been the primary hindrance to earlier scholarly work on Haydn and may furthermore explain the fact that well into the 19th century he was less established as a great composer, and neither an appropriate biography nor a complete edition of his works had been published, because in spite of the limited access granted to Carl Ferdinand Pohl and a few others this central source was not publicly available. The isolation of the Esterházy archive became even more severe when after World War I the new border between Austria and Hungary split the Esterházy realm, and all of a sudden it had to be decided which part of the collection should be moved to Hungary and what would remain in Eisenstadt.

The nationalization of the collections of the Esterházy family (partly damaged during the bombing of Budapest) and their distribution among different institutions (including the Museum of Applied Arts, the State Archive, and several departments of the National Library) took place in the late 1940s. The process of distribution was inconsistent from several points of view. "Acta Musicalia" documents were given both to the Theatre History Collection of the National Library and to the State Archive. On the other hand, however, appropriate personnel cared for the documents in their new locations, primarily in the Széchényi National Library. These special collections served as a refuge for well-trained scholars who were politically suspicious and therefore not allowed to work as teachers. The first major study, Mátyás Horányi's work, was based on intensive research of the material in the Theatre History Collection; his well illustrated book of 1959, *The Magnificence of Eszterháza*, unfortunately came out without appropriate musicological assistance. More problematic was the three-part publication of documents related to Haydn by Arisztid, because Valkó was unable to read the contemporary German texts without making some errors. Hárich, who was released from prison thanks to the revolution in 1956 and relocated to Eisenstadt, reedited documents in H.C. Robbins Landon's series *Haydn Yearbook* and elsewhere; a scholarly presentation of the Esterházy documents had to wait until a young German, Ulrich Tank appropriately edited them.

The concentration of manpower on the one hand, urged work for the coming Haydn year, 1959, on the other, and in many ways inadequate research conditions (in terms of reference books, communication with collections abroad, availability of microfilms, etc.) equally characterized the beginning research on Haydn in Hungary in those years. According to Jenő Vécsey's introduction to the handsome catalogue volume *Haydn Compositions in the National Széchényi Library Budapest* (Hungarian edition 1959, German and English 1960), the *musicalia* arrived in the Music Collection of the library in 1949. Vécsey, the head of the music de-

partment (primarily a composer, not a musicologist or trained librarian), wisely kept the call numbers given by Hárích. As a personal undertaking motivated by his own interests, Vécsey soon prepared unpublished works for premiere (including *L'infedeltà delusa* in the Hungarian Radio in 1952). He edited aria volumes, became the editor of a series entitled "Musica Rinata," which brought out first editions from other autograph sources in the Esterházy material, including works by Michael Haydn (Vécsey's favorite), Werner, Albrechtsberger, Gassmann, and others.

After surveying the voluminous Esterházy material, Vécsey discussed the situation with the rising Hungarian Haydn expert of the time, Dénes Bartha, the first chairman of the newly founded musicology department, a man of practical ideas and energy, and somebody who already had contacts with Haydn scholars abroad. Bartha published several opera volumes for the *Joseph Haydn Werke*. He alone signed the edition of *La canterina* (1959, still during Larsen's era in the Joseph Haydn Institut in Köln), but Vécsey assisted him with *L'infedeltà delusa* (1964) and *Le pescatrici* (1972). In the case of the latter, Mária Eckhardt helped Bartha, since Vécsey suddenly died in 1966. Looking back on those early years, these basically one-work-one-source cases were properly prepared for the *Joseph Haydn Werke*, but for works for which the question of sources was more complex a specialized young team was trained in Köln. This took place during Georg Feder's era, without the participation of any Hungarians. I myself was in fact invited by Dr. Feder to edit *La fedeltà premiata*. He sent the microfilm of the additional sources, but I was warned not to do anything until he marked Haydn's autograph additions in a copied score for me. Working on the opera material at the time, I was sure of recognizing Haydn's handwriting in ink and pencil and red pencil, so I suggested that he did not need to mark the autograph spots. He was stubborn though, and so I declined the job.

Bartha sought to bring additional manpower to the music collection. In 1958 he offered me a position in Jenő Vécsey's team with the unconcealed purpose of having me work, in addition to my daily responsibilities as a librarian, on the Esterházy operatic material (parallel to completing my thesis on the string quartets). I confess with some nostalgia that the book *Haydn als Opernkapellmeister* was completed in two years on the basis of minute examination of the complete manuscript material. Bartha regularly brought new data on the chronicle of the opera performances and took with him for translation what I freshly typed in Hungarian from my part of the book. It was obvious to me that instead of rushing the publication of such an important study we should have taken a bit more time. I should have reorganized and renumbered the anonymous copyists and we should have condensed the descriptions. We also should have foregone the use of italics to emphasize things that were not always of primary importance. However, Bartha very much wanted to bring the edition out as soon as possible.

On the occasion of the Budapest Haydn conference from September 17–22, 1959, in front of an audience including distinguished participants (including Larsen, Geiringer, Landon, Fellerer, Mies, E. F. Schmid, Bessler, Lesure, but also Christa Landon, Croll and others), Professor Bartha announced the discovery of unknown Haydn arias inserted in Italian operas. In Larsen's view, this was a minor sensation, as were other Hungarian contributions, including Bence Szabolcsi's seminal study *Joseph Haydn und die ungarische Musik*, with a visit to the partly restored Esterházy palace in Fertőd/Eszterháza, and additional presents (among others a facsimile edition of the autograph score of the "Farewell" Symphony). For the international community of Haydn research it was a relief that most of the Esterházy had survived intact and would be available for research and for the assembly of a complete critical edition. The occasionally unprofessional steps that we had taken were generously overlooked. For instance our "Farewell" facsimile volume, printed on thick paper with glue-fixed spine binding, a novelty at that time, soon fell apart, and today I am not proud of the text of the commentary. We also accepted the fact that some of the celebrities perhaps abused the hospitality of the library.<sup>1</sup>

Follow-up Hungarian scholarly publications in 1960 included *Haydn emlékére*, the compendious eighth volume in the series *Zenatudományi Tanulmányok* (Studies in Musicology), which included studies by Bartha (on the oratorio version of the Seven Last Words), Szabolcsi (Haydn, the musician of the future: the last minuets), Ujfalussy (on a special form in the keyboard sonatas), and Benjamin Rajeczky (on the six late masses). It also included my study on the evolution of string quartet idiom in Haydn's quartets, unfortunately all in a language inaccessible to the broader reading public. Around that time Bärenreiter Verlag asked Bartha to assemble a scholarly (original-language) edition of Haydn's *Gesammelte Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* on the basis of H. C. R. Landon's 1959 English edition, which came out in 1965 and remains in use, in spite of the considerable amount of data subsequently discovered. As a forerunner, in 1961 Bartha and Révész published a Hungarian volume, *Haydn's Life in Documents*. Bartha, who participated in the 1961 IMS congress in New York, has been recognized as the ambassador of Hungarian musicology abroad. He was invited to write in periodicals and contribute to *Festschriften*, so he became the messenger of Haydn research in Hungary. From 1964 to 1981, with short intermissions, he taught in the United States. In a way it was disappointing for us that during this long period his output narrowed to the discussion of themes inspired by folk-music and *Liedform* problems in the music of Haydn, Beethoven, and Mozart.

As for further projects of the Haydn Year in Hungary, the research of the Haydn pioneers inspired source studies in broader and narrower fields alike. Marianne Pándi's collection of music news from the *Preßburger Zeitung* and a few similar studies uncovered useful data for the biography; Kornél Bárdos's six

documentary volumes on the musical life of Transdanubian cities and residences in the 17th–18th centuries (1976–1993) outlined the reception of church music and some other genres by Haydn and his contemporaries. His work has been being continued by Ágnes Sas. From the mid-1960s to the early 1980s I did much of the research on works based primarily on the Esterházy sources. In addition to various shorter studies of different kinds, the picture book *Joseph Haydn: Sein Leben in zeitgenössischen Bildern* was my next project (first in German 1966, English 1969, Hungarian 1977), with Otto Erich Deutsch's volumes in mind as a model, but combining letters and documents, as well as a chronicle of the works with a rich facsimile selection from the Budapest sources and beyond (this was before the publication of Landon's voluminous five-volume work). Given the mix of sources it was no longer a scholarly work, strictly speaking, but the critical survey of Haydn's portraits nonetheless belongs to the standard iconographic literature. I brought out three of the Haydn autographs of the Széchényi National Library in facsimile in 1972 at EMB with English commentaries: Symphony no. 7 "Le midi" (not a very well-reproduced facsimile, and Sonja Gerlach's documentary studies later threw into question some of my comments) and the two quartets of the "Lobkowitz" set op. 77 (these were used for three decades, not only in scholarly discourse but also by string quartet ensembles, until the *Joseph Haydn Werke* volume finally appeared in 2003). Because of the language, however, these publications belong to the standard Haydn literature. Even my Hungarian book on Haydn's keyboard sonatas (1979) came out in English (*The Keyboard Sonatas of Joseph Haydn: Instruments and Performance Practice, Genres and Styles*), although with some sixteen years' delay. I mention my keyboard book because it compelled me to realize that our most ambitious Haydn studies seldom fit into the German or American standards of a regular scholarly book. One should write either for the musicologist or for the performer, but not for both. To do so is a quixotic endeavor, even if details of the notation, ornamentation, style, and concept in context may put the matter in different new light.

I began teaching musicologists in Budapest in 1969, and Haydn became a central vehicle with which to introduce students to studies with original sources, handwritings and watermarks, but also the compositional process, style analysis, and interpretation. In this field I could give them an insight into research standards. From a certain point of view, we exhausted Haydn. This had the negative consequence that few of our students dared to join pursue research on Haydn in the 1970s–80s.

A new chapter began with the work of Katalin Komlós, from the school of Szabolcsi and Bartha. A successful lecturer in Budapest, she studied musicology again, as well as piano, at Cornell University between 1980 and 1983. Her dissertation (written under the supervision of James Webster), her subsequent studies on Haydn (written primarily in English), and the book *Fortepianos and Their Mu-*

*sic* (1995) obviously extend beyond the provenance of Hungarian research on Haydn. Her role in Haydn performance was also significant. Like fortepianist Malcolm Bilson, she introduced new standards in solo and chamber music but also in coaching singers in Haydn songs and part-songs in historically informed performance in this country.

In the meantime the Széchényi Library also changed. In an imposing new building Vécsey's successors had to face increasingly less favorable conditions for research. Microfilms of the Haydn sources were already in Köln anyway, and the music department lost its interest in the study of Haydn. Source studies connected with the forthcoming 18th-century volume of the *History of Music in Hungary*, which was in the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, revitalized research in the 1990s, first on Haydn's Kleinmeister contemporaries in Hungary (several volumes of their music appeared in the "Musicalia Danubiana" series published by our host institute) and later on Haydn too. The best representatives of this younger generation included Katalin Szacsvai-Kim, Péter Halász, Zoltán Farkas, and Balázs Mikusi, another doctoral candidate who joined the Cornell University graduate program and is now the new head of the music department of the Széchényi National Library. The research of Mikós Dolinszky constitutes a significant individual scholarly contribution. In 1995 Dolinszky edited Haydn's complete piano sonatas in three volumes in the otherwise not always praised (but for its bargain price often preferred) Könemann Urtext series. It is one of the three reliable complete editions of the Haydn sonatas. In 1997 he edited Haydn's piano pieces in two volumes.

Finally, in Hungary motivated performers traditionally maintain relations with scholars. Bartha was the first advisor of the Tátrai Quartet in Haydn matters. Later significant recordings were released that had been done in consultation with musicologists (one could mention several Haydn operas conducted by Frigyes Sándor and the complete quartet oeuvre played on period instruments). Since 1998 the yearly Haydn in Eszterháza Festival has been an inspiring meeting point of performance oriented scholarship and ambitious interpreters from Hungary and abroad. Naturally a recent European phenomenon has also had some presence in Hungary. Young musicians who chisel their performance practice in the best workshops all over in Europe and do not need assistance come to perform. The charismatic figure here is György Vashegyi, with his choir and period instrument orchestra, who planned large-scale series and conducted fascinating performances in several genres by Haydn.

As a short coda I would add a few personal remarks on Haydn studies outside Hungary. Today I very much miss the sensation of large-scale scholarly gatherings, such as the one in which I had the privilege of participating in 1975 at the famous International Haydn Conference in Washington, D.C., organized by Jens Peter Larsen and young James Webster. Scholars from a variety of fields and sev-



eral countries were present, as were performers and music critics, and in general round table discussions were held instead of presentations. I also miss the standards, openness, and inspiration of exclusive meetings with the neighboring camps, such as the colloquium on the string quartet autographs of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven in the Isham Library at Harvard University in 1979, where Haydn specialists for the first time felt that Haydn studies were perhaps no more the last among the Viennese Classics in quality and scope. At the same time I am disappointed that even today serious research on Haydn is undertaken in only a handful of countries (in contrast to the work on Mozart, for instance). The dominance of German and US musicology in characteristically different research areas (perhaps with the exception of James Webster, who is equally influential in both) cannot be questioned. Recently Great Britain has become the third country to play a significant role in publication. But several great European countries with extensive university networks produced very little research on Haydn.

The *Joseph Haydn Werke* edition, prepared for the bicentenary, is nearing completion. One could perhaps criticize the timing of the appearance of the individual volumes. It was extremely favorable for some work groups, yet confusing for other crucial genres (on the one hand one might think of the sudden discovery of Haydn's keyboard sonatas as early as the late 1960s, by the way as a result of the competing Wiener Urtext and JHW volumes; on the other hand string quartets had to wait until this year for the last important volume or conductors had to produce ambitious symphony recordings partly without the JHW text). Thanks to the professionalism of the Joseph Haydn Institut, due primarily to Dr. Feder, it is a perfect "library edition", and I am convinced that the JHW series is a considerably more durable intellectual product than, e.g., the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*. But the omnipotent role of critical editions, which began in the 1950s, is rightly questioned today, in part because in making an impeccable text of a scholarly edition a certain kind of self-defensive attitude on the part of the editors has priority over the interest of the intelligent user. One could hazard the contention that leading musicologists and conscientious editors, especially in continental Europe, may occasionally be mediocre musicians with old-fashioned tastes. As a result, among the best musicians the respect for scholarly editions sometimes varies. Some are happy to re-study their repertoire, others only trust an original source, while others are content with any contemporary source. I would argue for the use of the scholarly edition as a starting point, but only with the proviso that we must remain open and willing to revise our conclusions.

With the completion of the critical edition, Joseph Haydn's music may very well undergo reevaluation. Younger scholars will probably put aside the basic books and studies written by our generation. In the next decade performers may play an inspiring role in assigning important topics for main-stream scholarship on Haydn. One can hope that, with the creation of the canonized text of the whole

oeuvre, musicology as a discipline will devote more energy to complex research on questions of performance practice, including the study of the basics of Haydn's notation, the proper reading in its genre-oriented variant forms, and chronological changes, including the possibly different meanings of common signs and the yet unanswered questions of the perspicuous performers of his music.

#### Note

- <sup>1</sup> H. C. R. Landon quickly published Haydn's newly discovered inserted arias. He accepted my study 'Zur Echtheitsfrage des Haydn'schen »Op. 3«' for the *Haydn Yearbook*, however, first he looked into the matter and thanks to a lucky find by Alan Tyson, he printed the probable answer to my query first (Tyson, Landon (1964) 'Who composed Haydn's Op. 3?', *Musical Times*, CV/1457, July, 506–507) and two years later brought out my study (*Haydn Yearbook 1965*, Wien: Universal Edition, 1966, 153–165).



## **MEDIZIN UND MEDIZINER IM ZEITALTER VON FERENC KAZINCZY**

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Das Zeitalter von Ferenc Kazinczy war eine entscheidende Phase in der spektakulären Durchsetzung ärztlicher Deutungsmacht. Die gelehrte Medizin der promovierten Ärzte wurde von England über Frankreich bis hin zum Habsburgerreich, so auch in Ungarn, von immer größeren Bevölkerungsgruppen nachgefragt. Die im vorliegenden Aufsatz behandelten sechs Ärzte (József Szentgyörgyi, József Viczay, Sámuel Nagy, József Cseh-Szombati, Mihály Kováts und János Dercsényi) repräsentieren das anspruchsvolle Interesse an kulturellen Erfahrungen, das enzyklopädische Wissen, den in der Gesellschaft eingenommenen Status und den gesellschaftlichen Rang, somit all das, was für eine kleinere Elitegruppe der akademischen Ärzteschaft im Zeitalter der Aufklärung kennzeichnend war.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Aufklärung, Ferenc Kazinczy, Medizin, medizinische Aufklärungsliteratur, Gesundheitsmarkt, akademische Ärzteschaft, vitalistische Heilungskonzepte / Vitalismus, medizinisches Laienwissen

Das Zeitalter von Ferenc Kazinczy war eine entscheidende Phase in der spektakulären Durchsetzung ärztlicher Deutungsmacht. Die gelehrte Medizin der promovierten Ärzte wurde von immer größeren Bevölkerungsgruppen angenommen.<sup>1</sup> Von England über Frankreich bis hin zum Habsburgerreich vervielfachte sich die Zahl der akademischen Ärzte. Ihre Erklärungsmodelle und Praktiken fanden weithin Anerkennung, aber gleichzeitig mussten sie den Wert und die Gültigkeit ihrer besonderen Expertise wiederholt unter Beweis stellen. Sie mussten einerseits eine anhaltend skeptische Öffentlichkeit, andererseits eine Vielzahl von konkurrierenden Heilkundigen auf dem Markt der Gesundheitsversorgung bekämpfen.<sup>2</sup>

Die Quellen verschiedener Gattung – amtliche Akten, ärztliche Sanitätsberichte, kaiserliche und königliche Erlässe, private Korrespondenzen/Patientenbriefe – verraten gleichzeitig viel über die Offenheit der verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen Schichten gegenüber den modernen Sanitätsrichtlinien, Krankheitskonzepten und Therapieformen. Diese Epoche war im Sanitätswesen vom Rasonieren zwischen den akademischen Ärzten und den empirischen Heilkundigen, den fachgerecht in

Punkte gefassten Normativen und den fachlich nur schwer oder gar nicht erfassbaren Heilmethoden, also von einem fruchtbaren Dialog, einem Zusammenwirken zwischen *scientia medica* und *ars medica* geprägt.<sup>3</sup>

### Vielfältige Heilkundige – vielfältige Heilungskonzepte

Um die Tätigkeit der um die 18–19. Jahrhundertwende wirkenden Ärzte sowie ihre steigende gesellschaftliche Position nachzuvollziehen, werfen wir einen Blick auf den vielfältigen und stark besetzten *Gesundheitsmarkt* (Tabelle 1.) dem die Ärzte ebenso wie die anderen Akteure angehörten. Die Arbeitsteilung, die seit dem Mittelalter Europaweit die gelehrten Ärzte von den anderen Schichten der Heilkundigen unterschied, blieb in der von uns behandelten Epoche bestehen.

Neben den offiziell tätigen studierten Ärzten, die diagnostizierten, Behandlungen

**Tabelle 1.**

Protagonisten des frühneuzeitlichen Gesundheitsmarktes in Ungarn

UNGEBILDETE/INOFFIZIELLE HEILKUNDIGEN	AKADEMISCHE HEILKUNDIGEN
WANDERSPEZIALISTEN Bruchschneider ( <i>Herniotomus</i> ) Steinmetzer ( <i>Lithotomus</i> ) Okulisten Zahnzieher ( <i>Dentrifrangibuli</i> ) wandernde Arznehändler, Orlitätenhändler ( <i>olearii</i> ), Materialisten, Drogisten	diplomierte Ärzte ( <i>Doctor medicinae</i> ) diplomierte Chirurgen ( <i>Doctor chirurgiae</i> )
ANSÄSSIGE HEILKUNDIGEN	GEBILDETE/OFFIZIELLE HEILKUNDIGEN
Kräuterfrauen/-männer Bauerhebammen Kurpfuscher, Quacksalber Henker	Wundärzte, Barbieri, Bader in Zünften diplomierter Apotheker diplomierter Hebammen

gen verschrieben und Rezepte ausstellten, finden wir die *Operateure*, die manuell die blutigen Eingriffe vornahmen, also die geprüften Chirurgen und die Barbieri. Diese schlossen sich mehrheitlich in Zünften zusammen, vom letzten Drittel des 18. Jahrhunderts an arbeiteten sie meistens unabhängig. Ebenfalls in Zünften organisiert waren die auf die Krankenversorgung der anspruchsvollen Mittelschicht spezialisierten Bader, die das Schröpfen und die Balneotherapien vornahmen. Zu den offiziellen Heilkundigen gehörten auch die geprüften Apotheker und diplomierten Hebammen. Diese Schichten der Heilkundigen – von den akademischen Ärzten bis zu den diplomierten Hebammen – ließen sich beinahe ausschließlich

in den freien königlichen Städten oder den größeren Marktflecken nieder. Ihre Dienste konnten von Familien der Aristokratie, des mittleren Adels und vom städtischen Mittelstand (Intellektuellen, wohlhabenden Handwerkern und Händlern) in Anspruch genommen werden. Der Großteil der Bevölkerung Ungarns, der *gemeine Mann* in den Marktflecken, Dörfern oder auf Gütern wandte sich mit seinen Krankheiten an einen Spezialisten im weiten Kreis der inoffiziellen, im ganzen Land tätigen Wanderpfuscher oder lokalen Heilkundigen.<sup>4</sup> Für die gelehrten Fachmänner der Zeit, die akademischen Ärzte, die Chirurgen und die Apotheker, sowie die diplomierten Hebammen bedeuteten die zahlreichen inoffiziellen Spezialisten eine große Herausforderung und nicht zuletzt einen starken Wettbewerb. Eine wichtige, auch zahlenmäßig bedeutende Schicht der nicht ausgebildeten, inoffiziellen, überall auftauchenden Heilkundigen waren die Wanderpfuscher. Sie zogen von Stadt zu Stadt und erhöhten durch ihre Anwesenheit die bunte Vielfalt der zahlreich besuchten Märkte. Die Bruch- und Steinschneider (*Herniotomus, Lithotomus*), die Zahnzieher (*Dentifrangibuli*) und die Augenoperationen durchführenden Okulisten waren die gefragtesten Spezialisten auf den Jahres- oder Wochenmärkten. Unter den Wanderspezialisten hoch geschätzt und überall bekannt waren die mehrheitlich aus Oberungarn stammenden slowakischen Olitätenhändler (*Olearii*) und andere fahrende Arzneimittelhändler. Sie boten teils selbst hergestellte, teils angekaufte ätherische Öle und Destillate feil. Als ihre *exklusivste* Ware galt der vom Pinus Cembra destillierte Balsam der Karpaten (*Balsamum Carpathicum*). Sie handelten nicht nur mit ihren Arzneien, deren Zusammensetzung äußerst fragwürdig war, sondern wandten diese zur Heilung von Krankheiten an, die keine Eingriffe benötigten.<sup>5</sup> Ein ebenso vielfältiges Bild bieten die Heilkundigen mit festem Wohnsitz – die männlichen und weiblichen medizinischen Spezialisten –, die auf dem Gesundheitsmarkt des 18. Jahrhunderts eine gleichfalls wichtige Rolle spielten. Sie eigneten sich ihr Wissen beinahe seit ihrer Geburt an, lernten die Griffe ihres Handwerks von ihren Verwandten, Nachbarn oder von bereits erfolgreichen und anerkannten Heilkundigen in der alltäglichen Praxis. Erfahrung, geschickte Hände und Bekanntheit in der jeweiligen Gemeinde sowie der überlieferte gute Ruf konnte ihnen Anerkennung und nicht zuletzt das Einkommen sichern. Die Palette war auch hier breit: Kräuterfrauen, weise Frauen, Knochenbrecher, narkotisierende und chirurgische Eingriffe vornehmende Henker, Bauernhebammen – um nur die wichtigsten Tätigkeitsgruppen zu nennen. Diese Heilkundigen waren wie die anderen Mitglieder ihrer Gemeinde Bäuerinnen, Witwen städtischer Barbieri oder Chirurgen, dörfliche Geistliche, Priester oder gar Mönche, Scharfrichter, Hufschmiede, die die *ars medica*, das Handwerk des Heilens nebenberuflich ausübten – manche aus finanzieller Notwendigkeit, andere aus Menschenliebe oder aus bloßem Interesse an der Heilung.

Ein grundsätzlicher Unterschied zwischen dem Fachwissen und den Behandlungsmethoden der akademischen und nichtakademischen Heilkundigen oder medizinischen Laien lässt sich in der alltäglichen Praxis rückblickend nicht erkennen. Die Grundlage physiologischer und pathologischer Überlegungen war immer noch die *hippokratisch-galenische Vier-Säfte-Lehre* (Tabelle 2.), nach der die meisten Krankheiten durch überschüssige oder verdorbene Säfte hervorgerufen wurden. Die dementsprechende Behandlung mit Aderlässen, Schröpfen, Abführ- und Brechmitteln, Zugpflastern, schweißtreibenden Arzneien und ähnlich entleerenden Verfahren blieb das gesamte 18. Jahrhundert hindurch auch in der ärztlichen Praxis bestimmend. In der Deutung konkreter Körperfunktionen und Krankheitserscheinungen zeichnete sich die akademische Medizin im Allgemeinen durch große Vielfalt und Widersprüchlichkeit aus. Die ärztlichen Sanitätsberichte aus den 1780er Jahren belegen, dass es kaum eindeutige Standardregeln gab, wie bestimmte Krankheiten verstanden und behandelt werden mussten, ob es um Schwindsucht, Scharbock oder Wassersucht ging.

Tabelle 2.

Vier-Säfte-Lehre (Humoralpathologie)

4 ELEMENTE	Luft	Feuer	Wasser	Erde
4 QUALITÄTEN	warm, feucht	warm, trocken	kalt, feucht	kalt, trocken
4 SÄFTE (HUMORES)	Blut	gelbe Galle	Schleim	schwarze Galle
4 ORGANE	Herz	Galle	Gehirn	Verdauungssystem
4 TEMPERAMENTE	sanguinisch	kolerisch	flegmatisch	melankolisch

Die akademische Medizin hatte einen aktiven Anteil am Trend zur Empirie, persönlichen Beobachtung und Forschung. Der Raum, wo sich die staatlich legitimierte Medizin neu formierte, allgemein gültige wissenschaftliche Standards und ein neues Verhältnis von Theorie und Praxis eingerichtet wurden, war die Universität. Es waren die medizinischen Fakultäten, die infolge des Aufstiegs der Anatomie und Pathologie zur Basiswissenschaft der Medizin die Empirie regulierten, Aufschreibetechniken wie Fallberichte und statistische Tabellen weiterentwickelten und die klinische Praxis in den Unterricht einführten. Im Allgemeinen erlangte das Experiment durch den Import von Leitkonzepten aus Physik und Chemie eine zunehmende Bedeutung. Die praktische Umsetzung einer auf Anatomie und Pathologie sowie von dem Leidener Professor Hermann Boerhaave (1668–1738) propagierter klinischer Erfahrung basierender Medizin war ein langwieriger Prozess, dessen Modalitäten mehrere Generationen von Ärzten immer wieder neu aushandeln mussten.<sup>6</sup>

Die medizinischen Gelehrten in Ungarn orientierten sich in erster Linie an den deutschen protestantischen Universitäten – vor allem an den medizinischen Fa-

kultäten in Halle, Jena und Göttingen – wo die neuesten sog. *vitalistischen Gesundheits- und Krankheitskonzepte* (Tabelle 3.) allmählich eine systembildende Bedeutung gewannen. Die besondere Bewertung der Aufregungen aller Art (physikalischer/psychischer) in ihrer Rolle für Gesundheit und Krankheit durchzieht seit der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts die gesamte medizinische Literatur. Die philosophische Grundlage der vitalistischen Krankheitskonzepte bildete die Überzeugung, dass die Affekte, Leidenschaften die Widersacher der Vernunft seien, die aber wohl beherrscht werden sollten. Nur mit ausgeglichenem Gemüt kann der Mensch zu wahrer Erkenntnis, zum Vorherrschen der Vernunft, zu seinem Glück und zur wahren Glückseligkeit gelangen. Vernunft und Besonnenheit gelten als

**Tabelle 3.**

Vitalistische Krankheitskonzepte im 18. Jahrhundert

G. E. Stahl	„ <i>Theoria medica vera</i> “ (1707)	animistische-vitalistische Lehre	anregende und beruhigende Mittel, Chinarinde, Opium
Fr. Hoffmann	„ <i>Medicina rationalis systematica</i> “ (1718–1740)	mechanische und physiologische Tonusstörung	Reinigungsmittel, anregende und beruhigende Mittel
H. Boerhaave	„ <i>Aphorismi</i> “ (1709)	vermehrte/verminderte Herzkreislaufaktion	Abführ- oder Brechmittel, anregende und beruhigende Mittel
A. von Haller	„ <i>Elementa physiologiae</i> “ (1757–1766)	Irritabilitäts- und Sensibilitätslehre	Abführ- oder Brechmittel, anregende und beruhigende Mittel
J. Brown	„ <i>Elementa medicinae</i> “ (1780)	Reaktionsfähigkeit auf äußere und innere Reize	Abführ- oder Brechmittel, anregende und beruhigende Mittel
Ch. W. Hufeland	„ <i>Makrobiotik</i> “ (1797)	Verstärkung der Selbstheilungsfähigkeit der Organismen	Körperbewegung, Diätikuren, Abführ- oder Brechmittel, anregende und beruhigende Mittel
F. A. Mesmer	„ <i>Mémoires sur magnétisme animal</i> “ (1779)	Mesmerismus („tierischer Magnetismus“)	suggestive Magnetisierung
S. Hahnemann	„ <i>Organon</i> “ (1810)	„ <i>Simila similibus curantur</i> “	Chinarinde, Verdünnung

höchstes Gut des aufgeklärten Menschen, sie verbürgen die Gesundheit. „Vernünftige Gedanken“ und vernünftiges Verhalten alleine können die Welt verbessern.<sup>7</sup>

In der Medizinwissenschaft des 18. Jahrhunderts galt Friedrich Hoffmann (1660–1742) als der große „Systematiker“. Als Universitätsprofessor in Halle entwickelte er ein neues Konzept von Krankheit, überdies ein systematisch aufgebautes, logisch gegliedertes Konzept der gesamten Medizin, welches seine innere Geschlossenheit, Schlüssigkeit und Lehrbarkeit durch die enge Verbindung mit der Natur- und Menschenlehre Descartes' erhielt. Aus zwei Wurzeln, aus *ratio* und *experientia* ist nach Hoffmann das Gebäude der Medizin zu entwickeln. Ratio liefert die Grundsätze, die principia, Anatomie, Physiologie, Chemie und die Krankenbeobachtung (*historia morborum*) liefern die Erfahrungsmaterialien für den Aufbau der Pathologie.<sup>8</sup> Seine physiologische Hauptlehre bestand darin, dass alle Körper aus tonusbegabten Fasern bestünden, die kontraktile und erschlaffbar seien und die durch einen „Nervenaether“, dessen Sitz im Gehirn sei, angeregt würden. Er behandelte mit Diät, beruhigenden oder aber anregenden Mitteln und erfand auch mehrere Arzneien.<sup>9</sup> Den von Hoffmann geführten „Systematiker“ standen die „Animisten“ gegenüber, deren geistiger Vater Georg Ernst Stahl (1660–1734), Hoffmanns Fakultätsgenosse in Halle war. Seine Schule lehrte, dass die Seele, die Anima, der Mittelpunkt allen Geschehens sei. Der Körper sei nur ihr Werkzeug und alle Krankheiten des Körpers gingen auf Erkrankungen der Seele zurück. Die Arbeiten des Göttinger Polyhistor-Physiologen Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777) über Reizphänomene (Differenzierung in Irritabilität und Sensibilität) brachten zunächst keine allgemeine Abkehr von den gewohnten, weitgehend spekulativen und der naturwissenschaftlichen Methode abgekehrten Lehren der verschiedenen medizinischen Schulen. Erst durch des Schotten John Brown wurde der Begriff der Irritabilität zum Zentralbegriff des allgemeinen Krankheitslehre erhoben. Er besagte, dass sich die lebenden Organismen von der unbelebten Materie nur durch ihre Reizbarkeit unterscheiden. Die Möglichkeit, auf äußere und innere Reize zu reagieren, hat nach Brown ihren Sitz im gesamten Nervensystem und erklärt alle physiologischen und pathologischen Reaktionen. Seine Lehren fanden im deutschen Sprachgebiet – wie an den Jenaer oder Wiener medizinischen Fakultäten – begeisterte Anhänger. Noch ohne sonderlichen Einfluss von Brown fasste 1795 der Jenaer Universitätsprofessor Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland die Vorstellungen seiner Zeit über Lebenskräfte, Reiz, Reizbarkeit und Reaktion in ein neues Konzept der Medizin zusammen, welches seine Stärke durch seine Nähe zur medizinischen Praxis besaß und viel Anerkennung fand. Seiner speziellen Krankheitslehre: der Einhaltung der Regeln für eine angemessene Lebensweise etwa durch ausreichende Bewegung oder Anwendung verschiedener Diäten wurde große Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Um die gleiche Zeit, in der Hufeland seine Vorstellungen von der rechten Medizin entwickelte und Brown in



Deutschland bekannt wurde, betrat ein anderer Systemdenker mit einem neuartigen Konzept auf. Das war Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843) mit seinem System der Homöopathie. In der Heilung wird der von natürlichen Krankheit verstimmten Lebenskraft durch Eingabe einer genau nach Symptomähnlichkeit gewählten Arzneipotenz eine etwas stärkere, ähnliche, künstliche Krankheitsaffektion beigebracht, gegen welche die instinktartige Lebenskraft eine erhöhte Energie zu richten gezwungen ist. Hahnemanns Lehre trat in Konkurrenz zu den zahllosen, grundsätzlich allopathischen (*contraria contrariis curantur*) Strömungen, die damals in der Medizin ihre Stimme erheben konnten, nachdem die für zwei Jahrtausende fast kanonische Humoralpathologie weitgehend ausgehöhlt schien. Zu dieser vielfältigen Palette der Krankheitskonzepte kam die spekulative aber in einem breiten Patientenkreis sehr populäre Lehre von Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) über den tierischen Magnetismus, der in der nächsten Zeit durch einige Um- und Irrwege im 20. Jahrhundert zur Methode der planmäßigen Suggestion und Hypnose führte.<sup>10</sup>

### Medizinische Popularisierung

Die zahlreichen ärztlichen Fallbeschreibungen, ärztliche und nichtärztliche Korrespondenzen, Tagebücher sowie nicht zuletzt die medizinische Aufklärungsliteratur belegen, wie groß und intensiv das damalige Interesse an Gesundheits- und Krankheitsfragen war. Im dörflichen und städtischen Miteinander redete man viel über Krankheiten. Individuelle Krankheit war viel mehr als heute ein öffentliches, allseits diskutiertes Ereignis. Unter diesen Umständen waren die medizinischen Aufklärungsschriften aus ärztlicher Feder in der breiten Bevölkerungsschicht sehr populär. Die gelehrten Ärzte übernahmen mit der Behandlung eines populären Themas die Aufgabe, die lesekundigen und nicht lesekundigen Bevölkerungsschichten anzusprechen und so zur Verbreitung der aufklärerisch-medizinischen Gedanken beizutragen. Belegt wird dies durch die ab der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts stark gestiegene medizinische Buchproduktion. Das Repertoire der dazu genutzten Gattungen ist reichhaltig. Es wurden alle bekannten Medien verwendet, vom Kalender bis zu Zeitschriften, vom Buch bis zu Einblattgedrucken, Flugblättern, Broschüren, Katechismen oder Lehrbüchern. Ein Teil dieser Arbeiten waren eigene Werke, andere Übersetzungen. Wichtig war dabei, die Lesenden in der Volkssprache anzusprechen. Thematisch propagiert wurden vor allem die vorbeugende Gesundheitspflege und der Kampf gegen Aberglauben. Ein wesentliches Ziel war, ein höheres Maß an Selbstbestimmung und Entscheidungskompetenz in Gesundheitsfragen zu erreichen. Die Adressaten waren ärztliche Kollegen, Heilkundige wie Hebammen oder Wundärzte, städtische und ländliche Unterschichten, also die Gesamtheit der Bevölkerung.<sup>11</sup> In die medizinische

Aufklärungsarbeit wurden auch Landpfarrer, städtische und dörfliche Priester, Schulmeister und Lehrer einbezogen. Die sog. pastoralmedizinischen Schriften aus ärztlicher Feder waren an sie adressiert.<sup>12</sup> Pfarrer und Lehrer spielten bei der Popularisierung ab Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts gleichfalls eine wichtige Rolle, besonders in der Popularisierung der Pockenimpfung.<sup>13</sup>

Für eine neue und wichtige, eher wissenschaftliche Gattung der medizinischen Aufklärungsliteratur standen die ab Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts erscheinenden medizinischen Topographien. Sie beschrieben die sanitären Verhältnisse einer Stadt oder eines Komitats und boten gleichzeitig eine Schilderung der örtlichen geographischen, wirtschaftlichen, gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Gegebenheiten.<sup>14</sup>

Die von den Ärzten verfassten aufklärenden Werke wurden sehr oft mit finanzieller Unterstützung eines Adligen veröffentlicht (Antal Károlyi, György Festicics, Ferenc Széchényi). Mit Hinsicht auf die Herausgebertätigkeit ungarischsprachiger medizinischer Aufklärungsliteratur stand an erster Stelle, sogar vor Pest-Ofen, das Zentrum der Familie Károlyi in Nagykároly, welches zugleich der geistige und wirtschaftliche Hauptsitz des Komitats Szatmár war. Hier erschien 1771 das von József Csapó verfasste Werk über Kinderheilkunde,<sup>15</sup> 1772 die Übersetzung des Europaweit bekannten Buches von Simon André Tissot,<sup>16</sup> sowie 1783 die Übersetzung des ursprünglich auf Latein geschriebenen Werkes des aus Luxemburg stammenden Varasdiner Komitatsarztes Johannes La Langue über die Heilwasser Ungarns.<sup>17</sup>

Die Stadt Debrecen war in Verbindung mit der Herausgebertätigkeit ungarischsprachiger medizinischer Literatur ein ebenso bedeutendes Zentrum.<sup>18</sup> Nach 1790 trafen sich die Mitglieder des berühmten botanischen Kreises – Mihály Csonkai Vitéz, Mihály Fazekas, Sámuel Diószegi, Samuel Glosius, József Csapó – unter der Leitung von János Földi im Hause des bekannten, England bereisten Arztes, István Weszprémi.

Die Beschäftigung mit dem Genre medizinischer Aufklärungsliteratur lässt mannigfaltige Schlüsse über die Vorstellungen der ärztlichen Verfasser über die erhofften Leser und über das Bild von der Qualität und Bedeutung medizinischer Wissenschaft und Praxis zu, das man ihnen vermitteln wollten. Solche Schriften bildeten zudem eine der beliebtesten literarischen Gattungen überhaupt. Die erfolgreicherer unter ihnen erlebten zahlreiche Auflagen und Übersetzungen, deren Autoren in ganz Europa berühmt waren. Das lässt ein breiteres Lesepublikum vermuten. Aber der bloße Blick auf die einschlägigen Texte gibt nur wenig Aufschluss über deren tatsächliche Wirkkraft und Bedeutung im Vergleich zu anderen Quellen medizinischen Laienwissens.<sup>19</sup> Medizinisches Laienwissen wurde auf vielfältigen Wegen weitergegeben und im alltäglichen Umgang mit Krankheit immer wieder erneut angewandt und bestätigt. Medizinische Popularisierung in der spezifischen Form von populären, gesundheitsaufklärerischen Texten spielte

dabei allem Anschein nach keine erstrangige Rolle im Vergleich zu den anderen, vorwiegend oralen und nonverbalen Vermittlungswegen.<sup>20</sup>

### **Kazinczys Mediziner-Freundeskreis als Repräsentant der medizinischen Elite des Königreichs Ungarn**

Die Ärzte aus dem Freundeskreis des in Széphalom lebenden Literaten repräsentieren das anspruchsvolle Interesse an kulturellen Erfahrungen, das enzyklopädische Wissen, den in der Gesellschaft eingenommenen Status und den gesellschaftlichen Rang, somit all das, was für eine kleinere Elitegruppe der akademischen Ärzteschaft im Zeitalter von Kazinczy kennzeichnend war. Es handelte sich dabei um Persönlichkeiten, die für ihre Weitsichtigkeit, ihr Studium an ausländischen Universitäten und das erlangte Wissen, ihre ausgedehnten Sprachkenntnisse, ihre beachtenswerten fachliterarischen Leistungen und für ihre aktive Präsenz im öffentlichen Leben bekannt waren. Einige von ihnen waren korrespondierende Mitglieder ausländischer Gelehrtenvereinigungen und galten, da sie häufig Freimaurer waren, als Mitgestalter der öffentlichen Meinung der Zeit. Unter ihnen gab es Anhänger sowie Gegner von verschiedenen medizinischen Theorien und sich manchmal gegenseitig ausschließenden therapeutischen Anweisungen, d.h. sie waren Stahlianus, Befürworter oder Leugner des Brownianismus, des tierischen Magnetismus, der Boerhaavschen Iatrichemie, der Hufelandschen Makrobiotik.

Zweifellos war József Szentgyörgyi (1755–1832) der treueste Freund von Kazinczy. Die beiden verband eine intensive Briefkorrespondenz. Ihr Briefwechsel begann 1802 durch die Vermittlung einer gemeinsamen Bekannten, der Ehefrau von Gábor Spáh. Obwohl die beiden im Zusammenhang mit Fragen der Spracherneuerung grundlegend unterschiedliche Standpunkte vertraten, verband sie eine tiefe, nahezu leidenschaftliche Freundschaft.

Szentgyörgyi besuchte zwischen 1772 und 1787 die unteren und mittleren Schulklassen in Komorn, Pressburg, Nagykőrös und Debreczin. Nach dem Abschluss der Schuljahre im Debrecziner Reformierten Kollegium, verbrachte er hier noch einige weitere Jahre als Erzieher. Später zog er nach Cegléd, wo er drei Jahre lang im Dienste der örtlichen reformierten Kirche stand. Von hier aus reiste er 1790 nach Jena, wo er 7 Semester an der medizinischen Fakultät studierte. Er besuchte unter anderen die Lehrveranstaltungen der Professoren Lenz und Hufeland. Szentgyörgyi schloss Freundschaften mit mehreren seiner ungarischen Landsleute, so auch mit dem später berühmt gewordenen Frauenarzt János Zsoldos, aber auch Schiller kannte er gut. Im Laufe seiner Studienjahre besuchte er viele deutsche Städte, unter anderen Halle, Erlangen, Leipzig, Weimar. Neben der Beherrschung der lateinischen, deutschen und französischen Sprache lernte er

hier Italienisch und Englisch. 1794 verließ er Jena und reiste nach Wien, wo er als Praktikant im Bürgerspital und im Gebärdhaus die nötigen klinischen Erfahrungen sammelte, und schließlich erhielt er den Dokortitel an der medizinischen Fakultät der Universität Wien. 1795 kehrte er nach Ungarn zurück und ließ sich in Győr nieder, wo er mit Hilfe seines Jugendfreundes, des späteren evangelischen Pastors János Kis, für das Wohlergehen eines vornehmen Klientenkreises sorgte. Er heiratete die Tochter des örtlichen Notars, Katalin Sólyom. Nach dem Tod von István Weszprémi 1799 wurde in Debreczin die Stelle des Mediziners frei. Szentgyörgyi nahm die Einladung an und versah bis zu seinem Lebensende die Aufgaben des Stadtarztes. Er erhielt eine Bezahlung in Höhe von 400 Forint, 1803 konnte er bereits einen Weingarten und ein eigenes Haus kaufen. Er war korrespondierendes Mitglied der ansehnlichen und von Goethe geleiteten Jenaer Mineralogischen Gesellschaft.<sup>21</sup> Während der Ausübung seiner erfolgreichen medizinischen Praxis, verfasste er im Auftrag des Debrecziner Reformierten Kollegiums sein einziges Buch. Dieses reich illustrierte Werk erschien 1803 in Form eines Lehrbuches des Kollegiums, und auch Kazinczy schrieb in seinem an János Kis gerichteten Brief vom April 1803 anerkennend über das Werk.<sup>22</sup> Auf Grund der Korrespondenz von Szentgyörgyi können wir uns ein genaues Bild über den alltäglichen Tagesablauf eines zeitgenössischen Arztes machen. Aus einem an seinen jüngeren Bruder gerichteten Brief aus dem Jahr 1800 erfahren wir, dass er sich bereits am frühen Morgen auf den Weg machte, um seine Patienten aufzusuchen, und bis zur Mittagszeit unterwegs war. Nach dem Mittagessen gönnte er sich eine kurze Pause, um dann mit seiner Arbeit fortzufahren und die medizinischen Gutachten, Berichte, Patientenbriefe zu verfassen. Nach 4 Uhr nachmittags begann er seine Abendvisite, die oft bis 6 Uhr andauerte, die Abendstunden widmete er anschließend seinen Studien. Auf Grund seiner ausgedehnten Korrespondenz können wir feststellen, dass er bis zu seinem Lebensende intensive Beziehungen zu seinen ungarischen und ausländischen Freunden pflegte.<sup>23</sup>

Ein weiterer treuer Freund Kazinczys aus seiner näheren Umgebung war der Kaschauer Stadtarzt, József Viczay (1746–1810). Er heilte oftmals erfolgreich die Krankheiten, an denen Kazinczy litt. Auch die aktive Freimaurertätigkeit, die sowohl für Kazinczy als auch für Viczay kennzeichnend war, vertiefte ihre Freundschaft noch mehr. Viczay war Gründungsmitglied der Intrepida Virtutis Loge, die unter der Leitung des Grafen Lajos Török 1793 in Kaschau gegründet wurde. 1794 wurde er zum stellvertretenden Großmeister gewählt. Unter den Mitgliedern der Loge finden wir Grafen, Barone (der General Baron Gábor Splényi, der kaiserlich königliche Kämmerer und späterer Obergespan des Komitats Zips, Graf Antal Csáky) sowie Lehrer, Ingenieure, Kaufleute und Handwerksmeister.<sup>24</sup>

Viczay war bis zu seinem Tod praktizierender Arzt in Kaschau und Umgebung. Es lässt sich keine wirklich nennenswerte fachliterarische Publikation mit seinem Namen verbinden. Nach 1795 trafen sich die einstigen Mitglieder der

Loge im Gartenhaus seines Kauschauer Hauses. Es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, dass er selbst nach der Auflösung der Loge mit der Aufbewahrung deren Dokumente betraut wurde. Als Anerkennung der Verdienste von Viczay und nicht zuletzt als Ausdruck des Respekts und tiefer Freundschaft beauftragten die einstigen Logenmitglieder 1803 Sámuel Czetter damit, einen Stich über Viczay anzufertigen, den der Künstler auf Grund eines von einem unbekanntem Künstler namens Szekeres gemalten Porträts auch fertig stellte. Im Juli 1803 schrieb Kazinczy in einem an Lajos Schedius gerichteten Brief wie folgt über dieses Vorhaben:

Bei meiner Durchreise in Debreczin theilte ich einen Abdruck der Viczayschen Kupferplatte auch H. Doktor Szentgyörgyi mit, und erzählte ihm zum Lobe meines Freundes unter anderen auch, dass im Senate der Stadt Kaschau durch einen Mann, den Viczay eben vom Tode gerettet, die Motion gemacht wurde, diesem würdigen Manne einen Beweis der öffentl. Dankbarkeit, auf die er so gerechte Ansprüche hat, zu geben (...) es wurde beschlossen, ihn durch einen geschickten Mahler mahlen zu lassen, und das Bild in dem Saale des Senats aufzustellen.<sup>25</sup>

Nachdem Viczay 1810 in Kaschau gestorben war, ließen seine Freimaurerbrüder eine Kapelle über seine Grabstätte errichten. Und an der Stelle, wo die brüderlichen Zusammenkünfte stattfanden, also im Garten seines Kaschauer Hauses, stellten sie seine Büstenstatue auf, deren Aufschrift von József Dessewffy auf Ungarisch, Deutsch, Latein verfasst wurde. Die Überlieferung seines Lebenslaufes verdanken wir seinem treuen Freund Kazinczy, der diesen niederschrieb.<sup>26</sup>

Eine ähnliche freundschaftliche Beziehung pflegte Kazinczy mit dem in Komorn tätigen Sámuel Nagy (?–1810). Nagy besuchte ebenfalls das Debrecziner Reformierte Kollegium. Er erhielt später in Wien sein medizinisches Diplom und machte auch hier im Bürgerspital sein Praktikum. Er verbrachte mehrere Semester an der Universität. Er wurde zuerst Sekretär, später korrespondierendes Mitglied der Jenaer Mineralogischen Gesellschaft in Jena. Er wurde ebenfalls in die „Gelehrten Gesellschaft von Komorn“ aufgenommen, einem von József Péczeli um die Zeitschrift „Mindenes Gyűjtemény“ (Sammlung von Allerlei Dingen) organisierten literarischen Kreis. Als Arzt leistete Sámuel Nagy Bedeutendes auf dem Gebiet der medizinischen Aufklärung des „Volkes von Komorn“. Er war unter den ersten, die Menschen über die Vorteile der Pockenimpfung zu überzeugen versuchten, somit die Impfung zu popularisieren. Um mit gutem Beispiel voranzugehen und die Bedeutung sowie die Gefahrlosigkeit dieses Verfahrens zu verdeutlichen, impfte er sein eigenes Kind. Ein vorzügliches Beispiel für die Philanthropie der Zeit ist, dass er sein medizinisches Aufklärungsschrift über die Pockenimpfung auf eigene Kosten veröffentlichen ließ.<sup>27</sup> Im Vorwort dieser kleinen Publikation in Heftformat sagte er eindeutig aus, dass die Pocken in nur wenigen Jahren aus Europa verbannt werden könnten, wenn die Regierung die Impfung

obligatorisch machen würde und der „gemeine Mann“ davon überzeugt werden könnte, das die Impfung nötig wäre. Seiner Meinung nach sollten die Gutsherren und die Geistlichen diese Aufgabe übernehmen und zwar dadurch, dass sie mit gutem Beispiel vorangingen und eine aufklärende Tätigkeit ausübten, um so die Menschen zu belehren. Sein auf Ungarisch verfasstes Werk sollte hierzu eine bedeutende Hilfe geben.

Kazinczy schreibt in seinen Briefen des Öfteren mit großer Anerkennung über József Cseh-Szombati (1748–1815). Obwohl Kazinczy und Cseh-Szombati nicht miteinander korrespondierten, verfolgte der Meister aus Széphalom aus der Ferne die erfolgreiche Heiltätigkeit des Pester Komitatsphysicus. Cseh-Szombati besuchte nach dem Abschluss seiner Schuljahre in Pressburg und Debreczin zwischen 1777 und 1782 verschiedene renommierte ausländische Universitäten, um Medizin zu studieren. Er hielt sich längere Zeit in der niederländischen Stadt Franeker auf, wo er Camper, den berühmten Gelehrten-Arzt der Zeit, kennen lernte und sich mit ihm anfreundete. Danach verbrachte er zwei Jahre in Göttingen, an der fortschrittlichsten Lehr- und Forschungsuniversität der Zeit. 1780 kehrte er wieder nach Franeker zurück, von hier aus führte ihn sein Weg über verschiedene deutsche, französische und niederländische Städte, bis er schließlich in Wien ankam. Seinem deutschsprachigen Reisebericht, der in der Manuskriptensammlung des Reformierten Kollegiums in Debrecen aufbewahrt wird, können wir entnehmen, dass seine Aufenthalte in diesen Städten in erster Linie dazu dienten, seine fachwissenschaftlichen Kenntnisse zu erweitern. Demnach suchte er Hospitale auf und sah sich die naturwissenschaftlichen Sammlungen und die botanischen Gärten an. 1782 wurde ihm der Dokortitel an der medizinischen Fakultät der Universität Wien verliehen, und noch im gleichen Jahr kehrte er nach Ungarn zurück. Er ließ sich in Pest nieder, wo er vom Jahre 1784 bis 1788 als Komitatsphysicus, dann als ein städtischer praktizierender Arzt tätig war. Cseh-Szombati setzte sich mit aller Kraft daran, im Komitat Pest die Menschen mit den Vorteilen und der Bedeutung der Pockenimpfung bekannt zu machen, genauso wie Sámuel Nagy dies in Komorn tat. Den Erfolg seiner Tätigkeit können wir daran ermessen, dass er ab 1801 jährlich 400 Personen impfte. Ab 1782 war er Mitglied in mehreren Pester und später Ofner Freimaurerlogen. In seinem Testament hinterließ er dem Debrecziner Reformierten Kollegium eine Stiftung in Höhe von 25.000 Forint, die für die Modernisierung des Unterrichts in den Fächern Chemie, Botanik und Mineralogie verwendet werden sollte. Diese Stiftung ermöglichte, dass in Debreczin ein botanischer Garten angelegt werden konnte.<sup>28</sup>

Aus dem Kreise der jüngeren Generation ist die Person von Mihály Kováts (1768–1851) hervorzuheben, der ebenfalls zum Freundeskreis von Kazinczy zählte. Mihály Kováts verfügte über das enzyklopädische Wissen seiner Zeit, beherrschte 5 Sprachen (Latein, Griechisch, Deutsch, Französisch, Englisch), und war als Gelehrter-Arzt bekannt für seine ausgedehnte fachwissenschaftliche Tä-



tigkeit. Die in der Manuskriptensammlung der Ungarischen Akademie aufbewahrten Memoirenschriften von Kováts erlauben uns einen Einblick in seine Jugendjahre und seine Studien. Er kam 1768 in einem kleinen Dorf im Komitat Abaúj zur Welt. Er besuchte die Mittelschule im Kollegium von Sárospatak und später in Leutschau. Er lernte Latein, Griechisch, Deutsch, Französisch und war auch musikalisch talentiert – er spielte Klavier und Geige. Sein medizinisches Diplom erhielt er an der Pester Fakultät und verbrachte anschließend zwei Jahre in Wien, wo er anfangs im Bürgerspital, dann im Josephinum klinische Erfahrungen sammelte. Er war ebenfalls Praktikant – was zu der Zeit ungewöhnlich war – im Gebärhaus, im Fidelhaus und auch im Narrenturm. Er wandte sich mit großem Eifer der Aneignung von Kenntnissen im Bereich der praktischen Geburtshilfe zu. Später besuchte er auch die deutschen Universitätsstädte (Halle, Leipzig, Göttingen, Jena usw.). In dieser Zeit lernte er Englisch. Seine praktischen Studien beendete er damit, dass er ein Semester wiederum im Josephinum verbrachte, wo er den Versuch unternahm, die zeitgenössischen Techniken der chirurgischen Eingriffe zu erlernen. Die Mitglieder der Generation, der auch Kováts angehörte, betrachteten es bereits als eine wichtige Voraussetzung, dass sie neben der Aneignung von theoretischem Wissen auch praktisch-technische Kenntnisse besitzen. 1795 kehrte er nach Ungarn zurück und war bis zu seinem Lebensende in Pest als praktizierender Arzt und als gelehrter Fachschriftsteller tätig. Er unternahm lediglich kürzere wissenschaftliche Reisen durch das zeitgenössische Ungarn. Er betrachtete – laut seiner persönlichen Bekenntnisse – das Heilen der Menschen und die Veröffentlichung und Verbreitung der Wissenschaften in ungarischer Sprache als sein Lebensziel. Als praktizierender Arzt genoss er bedeutendes Ansehen und erhielt aus allen Teilen des Landes Anfragen, in denen er gebeten wurde, die Kranken aufzusuchen. Er übersetzte 1798 das von Hufeland verfasste Werk mit dem Titel „Über die Kunst das Leben zu verlängern“ und ergänzte es mit seinen eigenen, während seiner medizinischen Tätigkeit in Ungarn angesammelten Erfahrungen, um so zur erfolgreichen Heilung der Krankheiten, die er während seiner medizinischen Tätigkeit begegnete, beizutragen.<sup>29</sup> Dieses Werk erlebte in deutschen Ländern zahlreiche Ausgaben. Kováts übersetzte dieses Buch insgesamt dreimal, wobei er jeweils die neueste deutsche Ausgabe als Vorlage benutzte. Er galt als ein aktiver Propagator der Pockenimpfung und zog mit allen Mitteln gegen die üblen Gewohnheiten der überall im Land herumziehenden Heilkundigen aller Art.<sup>30</sup>

Neben seiner Tätigkeit auf dem Gebiet der Heilkunde wurden in erster Linie seine bedeutenden Verdienste in den Wissenschaftsbereichen Chemie und Mineralogie anerkannt. 1808 erschien sein vierbändiges Chemiewerk, das in Hinblick auf die Herausbildung der ungarischen Fachsprache der Chemie Bedeutendes leistete.<sup>31</sup> Seine Übersetzung des Buches von Professor Gren aus Halle mit dem Titel „Grundriss der Chemie“ war kein selbstständiges Werk. Als er 1808 mit der

Übersetzung fertig wurde, sandte er diese als erstes Kazinczy zu, damit Kazinczy den Text „mit Hinsicht auf die Übertragung in ungarische Sprache“ durchstudiert.<sup>32</sup> Kováts war der Verfasser des ersten ungarischsprachigen Grundwerkes zur Gerichtsmedizin. Für die Zusammenstellung seines mineralogischen Lexikons<sup>33</sup> durfte er die Würdigung der Jenaer Mineralogischen Gesellschaft entgegennehmen.

Im Laufe seiner aufklärenden medizinischen Tätigkeit trat er entschieden gegen jede Art der pseudomedizinischen Strömungen auf. Gegen den Magnetismus von Mesmer zog er reglerecht zu Felde.<sup>34</sup> Er wies auch die Lehren von Hahnemann zurück. 1826 verfasste er sein Werk mit dem Titel „Antiorganon“,<sup>35</sup> welches die Gegenschrift zu dem Grundwerk der Lehren von Hahnemann, „Organon“ war.

Wir müssen hier ebenfalls auf János Dercsényi, alias Johannes Weisz (1755–1837) verweisen, der nach seiner Heirat mit Júlia Kazinczy, die für ihre diffizile Persönlichkeit bekannt war, der Schwager von Kazinczy wurde. Die Beziehung zwischen Kazinczy und Weisz war die Jahre hindurch oft stark belastet.

Im Taufregister ist der Name Johannes Weisz aufgezeichnet. Er stammte aus einer lutherischen Pfarrerfamilie aus dem Komitat Zips und besuchte das Lyzeum in Leutschau und Pressburg. 1780 erhielt er sein medizinisches Diplom in Wien. Nach seiner Rückkehr nach Ungarn wurde er Zisper Komitatsarzt. In dieser Zeit wurde er Mitglied des von Lajos Török, später von József Viczay geleiteten „Kaschauer Loge“. 1785 heiratete er die Schwester Kazinczys. Neben seiner medizinischen Tätigkeit wandte er sich der Erforschung der Natur, der Chemie und der Mineralogie zu. In den 1790er Jahren nahm er des öfteren an den von Tamás Mauksch, dem der Botanik zugewandten lutherischen Pfarrer aus Käßmark, organisierten Wanderungen im Gebirge Tatra teil.<sup>36</sup> Als Anerkennung seiner medizinischen Verdienste und seiner Werke zur Mineralogie und Weinbau<sup>37</sup> wurde ihm 1793 der Adelstitel verliehen und er erhielt das im Komitat Bereg befindliche Gut namens Debreczen sowie den Titel des königlichen Rates. Wir wissen, dass er 1802 nicht mehr praktizierte und sich mit der Zeit immer mehr den wirtschaftlichen Angelegenheiten seines Unternehmens zuwandte, das ihm bedeutenden Wohlstand sicherte. Seine Beziehung zu Kazinczy wurde mit der Zeit immer problematischer: zu einem gab es eine bedeutende Diskrepanz zwischen der finanziellen Lage Kazinczys und Weisz', wobei Letzterer auf Grund seines erfolgreichen Unternehmens immer wohlhabender wurde. Zum anderen war es die schwierige menschliche Natur von Júlia Kazinczy, die das Verhältnis zwischen ihrem Ehemann und ihrem Bruder immer weiter belastete. Seine Beziehung zu Kazinczy konsolidierte sich erst nach dem Tod der Frau.<sup>38</sup>

### Fazit

Die akademischen Ärzte unterschieden sich durch den Status als Vertreter einer akademischen Profession von den nichtakademischen Heilkundigen. Ihr Dokortitel verlieh ihnen eine mit hohem Symbolwert verbundene gesellschaftliche Position. Die Wertschätzung für die studierten Ärzte und ihre gelehrte Medizin beschränkte sich nicht auf die individuelle Suche der Patienten. Die Ärzte gewannen zunehmend auch kollektives, gesellschaftliches und politisches Gewicht. Sie hatten das Recht, die Ausübung der Medizin durch ungeprüfte Heilkundige zu untersagen. Ein Teil von ihnen bekleidete Komitats- oder Stadtarztämter und bildete die Schicht der Bürokratenärzte. Andere ließen sich als praktizierende Stadtärzte nieder oder waren als Leibärzte an gräflichen oder fürstlichen Höfen tätig. Der Komitatsphysiker hatte seinen Platz nicht im Amtsapparat des Komitats, sondern bei den *conventionatus*,<sup>39</sup> die neben den gewöhnlichen, gewählten Komitatsbeamten (wie z.B. Notar) für ein Spezialgebiet verantwortlich waren. Zu dieser Gruppe „conventionatus“ gehörten die Komitatsärzte, Tierärzte, Landmesser. Sie mussten über ihre Ausbildung schriftliche Dokumente (Diplom oder Attest) Vorlegen und durften ihr Amt nur für eine bestimmte Zeit bekleiden – hier aber befanden sie sich in herausragender Position, da ihre Bezahlung jener des Oberstuhlrichters entsprach und der Rang auf den des Komitatsingenieurs folgte.

Die Ärzte verstanden es vorzüglich, sich systematisch und öffentlichkeitswirksam in Szene zu setzen. Schon ihr äußeres Erscheinungsbild zielte auf Selbstdarstellung ab: Vornehme Kleidung, ein gutes Pferd oder gar eine Kutsche als Transportmittel, ein üppiges Hauswesen belegten ihren wirtschaftlichen Wohlstand. Sie hatten nicht nur Einfluss auf den Ausbau des städtischen und territorialen Medizinwesens, sondern gehörten – besonders in Oberungarn – zu den prägenden Gestalten der wissenschaftlichen und bürgerlichen Öffentlichkeit. Damit waren sie Autoren und zugleich Objekte von bevölkerungspolitischen Diskursen.

### Anmerkungen

<sup>1</sup> In diesem Zusammenhang wird gern von *Medikalisierung* als einem Teil der umfassenden Modernisierung der Gesellschaft gesprochen. Der Begriff zielt zum einen darauf ab, dass allmählich immer mehr Menschen in die medizinische Versorgung einbezogen wurden. Zum anderen bezeichnet er die Professionalisierung des Heilpersonals. Zur Geschichte und Problematik des Begriffs: Franziska Loetz (1994) 'Medikalisierung in Frankreich, Großbritannien und Deutschland, 1750–1850. Ansätze, Ergebnisse und Perspektiven der Forschung' in Wolfgang U. Eckart und Robert Jütte (ed.) *Das europäische Gesundheitssystem. Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede in historischer Perspektive*. (Stuttgart) 123–161; Jürgen Schlumbohm (1996) 'Vom Wandel der Geburtshilfe in der Neuzeit. Wie eine Frauensache zur Wissenschaft wurde', *MPG (Max-Planck-Gesellschaft) Spiegel* No. 5, 39–44; Michael Stolberg (1998) 'Heilkundige. Professionalisierung und Medikalisierung' in Norbert Paul und

- Thomas Schlich (ed.) *Medizingeschichte. Aufgaben, Probleme, Perspektiven* (Frankfurt am Main) 69–85.
- <sup>2</sup> Zur Problematik der Durchsetzung ärztlicher Deutungsmacht im Zeitalter der Aufklärung: Michael Stolberg (2004) 'Frühneuzeitliche Heilkunst und ärztliche Autorität' in Richard van Dülmen und Sina Rauschenbach (ed.) *Macht des Wissens. Die Entstehung der modernen Wissensgesellschaft*. (Köln, Weimar, Wien) 111–130; Bettina Wahrig (2004) 'Globale Strategien und lokale Taktiken. Ärzte zwischen Macht und Wissenschaft 1750–1850' in Richard van Dülmen und Sina Rauschenbach (ed.) *Macht des Wissens. Die Entstehung der modernen Wissensgesellschaft*. (Köln, Weimar, Wien) 655–680. – In Ungarn wurden in den 1970–1990er Jahren Kurzbiographien über berühmte Ärzte und lokalhistorische Werke über den Sanitätszustand der einen oder anderen Stadt beziehungsweise Siedlung verfasst. Eine umfassende Untersuchung der ungarländischen akademischen und nicht akademischen Heilkundigen sowie der Patienten des Sanitätspersonals ist aber noch ein Desiderat der ungarischen sozial- sowie medizinhistorischen Forschung. Zur Problematik der Medikalisierung der Gesellschaft Ungarns: Zita Deáky (2002) '*A hivatalos és a hagyományos gyógyítás a magyar történelmi forrásokban*' (Budapest). Speziell zur Medikalisierung der Geburt: Lilla Krász (2003) '*A bába történelmi szerepváltozása a 18. századi Magyarországon*' (Budapest); Zita Deáky und Lilla Krász (2005) '*Minden dolgok kezdete. A születés kultúrtörténete Magyarországon, XVI–XX. század*' (Budapest).
- <sup>3</sup> Zur Problematik des Zusammenlebens der alten medizinischen Praktiken und neuen Methoden Lilla Krász (2007) 'Von den Normen zur Praxis – von der Praxis zu den Normen. Medizinisches Wissen in Ungarn im Zeitalter der Aufklärung' in K. Lengyel Zsolt (ed.) *Ungarn-Jahrbuch 28. Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Hungarologie* (München) 437–458.
- <sup>4</sup> Die erste staatlich erlassene allgemeine Regelung der Tätigkeit der ungarländischen Heilkundigen wurde von der Ungarischen Statthalterei 1745 herausgegeben. Der Text des Erlasses wurde vom Pressburger Stadtarzt Johann Torkos Justus formuliert. Diese „Taxa Pharmaceutica Poseniensis“ regelte die Preise der verschiedenen medizinischen Dienstleistungen sowie die Pflichten der Heilkundigen Franciscus Xaverio Linzbauer (1852–1861) '*Codex Sanitario-Medicinalis Hungariae*' (Buda) Vol. II. 214–220. Die nächste Regelung – „Planum regulationis in re Sanitatis“ – erließ 1755 ebenfalls die Ungarische Statthalterei. Mit ihr wurde für die Behörden der königlichen Freistädte und Komitate die Pflicht der Zusammenschreibung der offiziell oder inoffiziell tätigen Heilkundigen angeordnet. Den Wanderpfuschern sowie den inoffiziellen, also ungeprüften Spezialisten wurde die Durchführung von inneren Behandlungen untersagt. Die Stadt- und Komitatsverwaltungen mussten jede Operation bei der Sanitätskommission der Ungarischen Statthalterei anmelden: Franciscus Xaverio Linzbauer (1852–1861) '*Codex Sanitario-Medicinalis Hungariae*' (Buda) Vol. II. 214–220. Vol. II. 303. 1770 wurde die Sanitätsnorm erlassen, die für das ganze Habsburgerreich eine einheitliche Regelung in Bezug auf die Prüfungsverpflichtungen jedes heilkundigen Berufes verfügte. Die Verordnung kriminalisierte die Anstellung nicht geprüfter oder nicht unterrichteter Heilkundiger und diskriminierte zugleich die empirischen Heilpersonen als illegale „Kurpfuscher“. Ihr ursprünglich lateinischsprachiger Text wurde in die Sprache aller ungarländischen Nationalitäten übersetzt, also ins Ungarische, Deutsche, Slowakische, Kroatische, Serbische, Russische: Franciscus Xaverio Linzbauer (1852–1861) '*Codex Sanitario-Medicinalis Hungariae*' (Buda) Vol. II. 535–571.
- <sup>5</sup> Die Olitätenhändler wurden in den Quellen bereits im 16. Jahrhundert erwähnt, ihre Bedeutsamkeit zeigte sich aber noch später in ihren Wanderungen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Sie reisten in bunten Husarenuniformen durch ganz Europa, von Schweden bis zum Osmanischen Reich, von der atlantischen Küste bis zum Ural. Gyula Magyary-Kossa (1929–1940) '*Magyar orvosi emlékek*' (Budapest) Vol. I. 77., Vol. II. 162–167.

- <sup>6</sup> Bettina Wahrig (2004) 'Globale Strategien und lokale Taktiken. Ärzte zwischen Macht und Wissenschaft 1750–1850' in Richard van Dülmen und Sina Rauschenbach (ed.) *Macht des Wissens. Die Entstehung der modernen Wissensgesellschaft*. (Köln, Weimar, Wien) 670–672.
- <sup>7</sup> Von den Verfassern der vitalistischen Leitkonzepten wurde der Philosoph der Frühaufklärung Christian Wolff (1679–1754) aufgenommen und zitiert. Seine Schriften tragen vielfach den charakteristischen Titel „Vernünftige Gedanken von ...“: *Vernünftige Gedanken von den Kräften des menschlichen Verstandes und ihrem richtigen Gebrauche in der Erkenntnis der Wahrheit*. Halle, 1712. *Vernünftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*. Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1719. *Vernünftige Gedanken von der menschen Thun und Lassen, zur Beförderung der Glückseligkeit*. Halle, 1720. *Vernünftige Gedanken von dem gesellschaftlichen Leben der Menschen, und insonderheit dem gemeinen Wesen*. Halle, 1721. *Vernünftige Gedanken von den Absichten der natürlichen Dinge*. Frankfurt, 1723. *Vernünftige Gedanken von den Wirkungen der Natur*. Halle, 1723.
- <sup>8</sup> Karl Ed. Rotschuh (1978) 'Konzepte der Medizin in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart' (Stuttgart) 240.
- <sup>9</sup> Von den Arzneien haben sich bis heute nur die Hoffmannstropfen erhalten, ein gemisch von 1 teil Aether mit 3 teilen Alkohol. Klaus Pfeifer (2000) 'Medizin der Goethezeit. Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland und die Heilkunst des 18. Jahrhunderts' (Köln, Weimar, Wien) 3–5.
- <sup>10</sup> Nach der Theorie von Mesmer beeinflussen die gegenseitigen Anziehungskräfte der Planeten das menschliche Nervensystem. Magnete sollten durch ihre natürlichen Strahlen ebenfalls eine heilsame Wirkung auf tierische und menschliche Organismen haben. Diese These legte er in seinem „Sendschreiben an einen auswärtigen Arzt über die Magnetkur“ (Wien, 1775) nieder. Karl Ed. Rotschuh (1978) 'Konzepte der Medizin in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart' (Stuttgart) 318, 483.
- <sup>11</sup> Repräsentativ sind in Ungarn für die an die Laien beziehungsweise den *gemeinen Mann* adressierte medizinische Aufklärungsliteratur die Werke des schon erwähnten Nógráder Komitatsphysikers János Dániel Perliczy (1740) *Medicina pauperum* (Buda) und des Hofarztes des Grafen Ferenc Széchényi, József Kiss (1794) 'Egészséget tárgyazó Katechismus' (Sopron). Eine systematisch-encyklopädische Darstellung der zeitgenössischen naturwissenschaftlichen Kenntnisse ist István Mátyus (1787–1793) 'Ó és Új Diaetetica' (Pozsony). Vol. I–VI.
- <sup>12</sup> Der erfolgreichste Arzt im Bereich der Pastoralmedizin war der Physiker des Komitats Komorn (Komárom), Sámuel Zay (1810) 'Falusi orvos pap' (Pozsony).
- <sup>13</sup> Das Thema der Pockenimpfung behandelte der Komorner Stadtarzt Sámuel Nagy (1801) 'Az oltalmazó himlőről' (Komárom). Selbst Pfarrer schrieb illustrierte „Noth- und Hilfsbüchlein“, so der Landpfarrer im ostungarischen Debrecen, dann in Munkács, János Kömlei (1790) 'Szükségben segítő könyvetske' (Pest).
- <sup>14</sup> Die frühesten medizinischen Topographien entstanden in Oberungarn. Die erste Topographie in deutscher Sprache stammt vom Preßburger Stadtarzt Johannes Torkos Justus (1764) 'Bericht von der königlichen des Königreichs Hungarn Freys-Stadt Preßburg. Lage, Wässern und Luft' (Preßburg); Johann Georg Hoffinger (1791) 'Vermischte medicinische Schriften. Medicinische Topographie der königl. Freien Bergstadt Schemnitz in Niederhungarn' (Wien); Sámuel Benkő (1794) 'Medizinische Ephemeriden von den Jahren 1780–1790. Aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt und mit Topographie Miskoltz vermehrt' (Wien).
- <sup>15</sup> József Csapó (1771) 'Kisgyermek isputálja' (Nagykároly).
- <sup>16</sup> Die ungarische Übersetzung von Tissot: Márton Marikowski (1772) 'A néphez való tudósítás, miképen kelljen a maga egészségére vigyázni' (Nagykároly). Das Originalwerk: Samuel August Tissot (1761) 'Avis au peuple sur la santé' (Lausanne).
- <sup>17</sup> János La Langue (1783) 'A magyarországi orvos vizekről, és a betegségekben azokkal való élésnek szabott módjairól a szegények kedvéért' (Nagykároly).



- <sup>18</sup> In Debreczin erschien zum Beispiel István Weszprémi (1766) *'Bába mesterségre tanító könyv'* (Debrecen).
- <sup>19</sup> Zum Programm einer komparativen historischen Analyse von Popularisationsprozessen aus der Laienperspektive vgl. Michael Stolberg (2003) *'Homo patiens. Krakheits- und Körpererfahrung in der frühen Neuzeit'* (Köln, Weimar, Wien) 108–112.
- <sup>20</sup> In unserer Forschung eröffnen zeitgenössische Selbstzeugnisse und allem voran die Patientenbriefe einen wertvollen Zugang von Wissensquellen jener gebildeten und wohlhabenderen Schichten, auf die die medizinische Aufklärungsschriften ohnehin in erster Linie abzielten.
- <sup>21</sup> Aus den Jahrbüchern der Gesellschaft erfahren wir, dass in 1801 von den 595 registrierten Mitgliedern 73 ungarischer Abstammung waren, und unter diesen befanden sich zahlreiche Ärzte. Klára Benedek (1942) *'A jénai Ásványtani Társaság magyar tagjai. Levelek a magyar felújulás szellemi életének történetéhez'* (Budapest); Dezső Gurka (2009) *'Az ásványtani tájékozódás szerepe a jénai konstellációban'* in Dezső Gurka (ed.) *A romantika terei. Az irodalom, a művészetek és a tudományok intézményei a romantika korában* (Budapest) 107–118.
- <sup>22</sup> János Váczy (ed.) (1890–1911) *'Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése'* (Budapest) Vol. III. 456.
- <sup>23</sup> Márta Halmy (1991) *'Szentgyörgyi József orvosi levelei Kazinczy Ferenchez'* in *A debreceni Déri Múzeum évkönyve*, No. 69, 335–336. Weiteres zu seiner Person: *'Kazinczy Ferenc levelei Szentgyörgyi Józsefhez'* (1857) József Najza (ed.) (Pest); György Diósadi Elekes *'Szentgyörgyi József debreceni orvos (1765–1832) élete és orvosi levelei'* in *Orvostörténelem*, 1937. 95–96, 119–120, 141–144, 166–168, 190–192, 215–216, 239, 262–263, 287.
- <sup>24</sup> Lajos Abafi (1900) *'A szabadkőművesség története Magyarországon'* (Budapest) 343–349.
- <sup>25</sup> János Váczy (ed.) (1890–1911) *'Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése'* (Budapest) Vol. III. 478.
- <sup>26</sup> Lajos Abafi (1900) *'A szabadkőművesség története Magyarországon'* (Budapest) 349.
- <sup>27</sup> Sámuel Nagy (1801) *'Az oltalmazó himlőről'* (Komárom).
- <sup>28</sup> Reisejournal von József Cseh-Szombati in Manuskript unter dem Titel *Bemerkungen über meine Reise von Wien aus, vom 26-ten Dezember 1790'*. Archiv des Debrecziner Reformierten Kollegiums, Cs. 3472. Gábor Báthori (1821) *'Emlékeket kövekkel megrakott temető kert: vagy olly halotti prédikatzok melleket külömb 'külömb' helyeken s ' időben elmondott'* (Pest) 35–69; Abafi Lajos (1900) *'A szabadkőművesség története Magyarországon'* (Budapest) 190, 214, 275, 281, 286, 295, 339, 364, 366, 367, 388, 389, 396, 404, 408.
- <sup>29</sup> Das Werk von Hufeland wurde mit finanzieller Unterstützung des Grafen Georg Festetics herausgegeben. Die allererste Ausgabe: Mihály Kováts (1798) *'Az ember élete meg-hosszszabításának mestersége'* (Pest).
- <sup>30</sup> Zur Person von Mihály Kováts seine eigenhändige kurze Biographie in der Handschriften-sammlung der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Briefwechsel, 85/1833.
- <sup>31</sup> Mihály Kováts (1808) *'Chémia vagy a természet titka'* (Pest).
- <sup>32</sup> János Váczy (ed.) (1890–1911) *'Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése'* (Budapest) Vol. V. 332.
- <sup>33</sup> Mihály Kováts (1822) *'Lexikon mineralogicum'* (Pest).
- <sup>34</sup> Mihály Kováts (1802) *'A mágnesség mérőserpenyűje'* (Pest).
- <sup>35</sup> Mihály Kováts (1830) *'Antiorganon'* (Pest).
- <sup>36</sup> Tagebuch von Thomas Mauksch. Handschriftensammlung des Evangelischen Lyceums in Kásmark, MS 1773 MS-25.
- <sup>37</sup> Johann Dercseny von Derzen (1796) *'Ueber Tokay's' Weinbau!* (Wien).
- <sup>38</sup> Die neueste biographische Arbeit zur Person János Dercsényi: László Kiss (2009) *'Kazinczy sógora, Zemplén főorvosa: Dercsényi János'* (Budapest, Debrecen).
- <sup>39</sup> *Conventionatus* ist ein zeitgenössischer Begriff für die befristeten fachgebildeten Amtsträger.



## **EIN BEITRAG ZUR KLÄRUNG DER FRAGE: WER WAR GOTTFRIED VON ROTTENSTEIN?**

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Der Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit der Klärung der Identität des Pressburger Reiseschriftstellers Gottfried von Rottenstein, die in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jh. mehrere Beschreibungen seiner Reisen durch Europa herausgab und große Popularität erlangte. Die Historikerin Éva H. Balázs sah in ihm einen Abkömmling der Pálffy'schen Familie. Aus handschriftlichen Quellen konnte nun geklärt werden, dass es sich bei der Person um einen geadelten Bürgerlichen aus Pressburg handelt.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Aufklärung, Reisebeschreibung, Quellenforschung, Karl Gottlieb Windisch, Gottfried von Rottenstein, Geschichte Preßburgs

Die Identität Gottfried von Rottensteins (auch Rotenstein), eines Reiseschriftstellers, der in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts eine Reihe von Reisen durch deutsche Provinzen, durch Österreich und das Königreich Ungarn unternahm, beschäftigte nicht nur seine Zeitgenossen sondern auch Literaturwissenschaftler und Historiker.<sup>1</sup> Eine Zusammenfassung seiner Reiseeindrücke erschien 1783 und 1792 in Leipzig in vier Teilen.<sup>2</sup> Rottensteins Werke zeichneten sich nicht unbedingt durch rhetorische Spannung aus. Er beschrieb sämtliche bereisten Orte mit äußerster Präzision, gab detaillierteste Angaben zur Größe der Städte, der gesamten baulichen Anlage, der Einwohnerzahl sowie der Anzahl der Häuser. Die Darlegungen konzentrieren sich generell auf die Bewunderung von Wohlstand und Prunk, auf statistische und demografische Angaben – die Lektüre ist trocken, der ästhetische Anspruch fehlt gänzlich.

Über Wien fasste er beispielsweise zusammen:

Die Stadt Wien hat im Umfang 5 viertel Stunden, aber mit den Vorstädten, deren 32 sind, 4 gute Stunden. Es beträgt in der Länge 2 Stunden, in der Breite anderthalb Stunden. Sie hat ferner 6 Thore, 12 Bastionen, 68 Kirchen und Kapellen und vor jetzo in der Stadt 1344 von Stein gebaute Häuser, darunter 58 Paläste; mit den Vorstädten sind in allen 5500 Häuser...<sup>3</sup>

Die Einwohnerzahl gab Rottenstein mit 268.000 an, worunter 7000 Bürger gewesen sein sollen. Er wusste über die Finanzierung des Hauses der Verlegerfamilie Trattner ebenso Bescheid,<sup>4</sup> wie über die Geschenke, die der marokkanische Gesandte Said Muhamad Ben Abdulmelek Pasa, vom 28. Februar 1783 bis 22. April 1783 marokkanischer Spezialgesandter in Wien, anlässlich seines Aufenthaltes vom Kaiser erhielt.<sup>5</sup> Auffallend ist seine genaue Kenntnis der Hofburg, die er bis in die Einrichtung der Schlafzimmer des Kaiserpaares beschrieb:

Das Schlafzimmer, wo beyde Hoheiten schliefen, hat Tapeten von rothem Sammt einer Hand breit mit Gold gestickt. Das große Baldachinbett auf 2 Personen ist auch von rothem Sammt, aber 4 Hände breit mit Gold gestickt. Der innwendige Theil der Gardinen ist mit purem Goldstoff gefüttert. Das Bett soll 80000 Gulden gekostet haben.<sup>6</sup>

Seine Reise führte Rottenstein nach Pressburg. Auch von der ungarischen Hauptstadt gibt er dem Leser genaue Beschreibungen hinsichtlich der Größe, der Einwohner, der Anzahl der Häuser und mehr:

Pressburg, die schönste Stadt in Ungern, eine mittelmäßig große Stadt, mit einem Schloß; wenn man aber die Vorstädte dazuzählt, ein großer Orth,<sup>7</sup>

zeigt er sich begeistert.

Innerhalb oben gedachter Linie sind über 100 Gassen und 1390 Häuser, in der inneren Stadt sind nur 200 Häuser. Unter den gesammten Häusern sind 14 Paläste und sehr viel recht moderne Gebäude, schöne Häuser; sie hat 8 Plätze welche mit Springbrunnen, und 5 schönen Statuen geziehet sind; dann außer den 2 protestantischen Kirchen 9 Katholische Kirchen, 3 Manns, und 2 Frauen Klöster.<sup>8</sup>

Die Einwohnerzahl gibt der Reisende mit 28.000 Personen, mit Vororten 36.109 an, davon seien 542 Edelleute, 1699 Bürger, 790 Geistlich und 200 Juden.<sup>9</sup> Er trug zweifelsohne einiges an wertvollen Informationen über seine Heimat zusammen.

Rottenstein muss auch den Privatgelehrten und Kommunalpolitiker Karl Gottlieb Windisch gekannt haben. Windisch war der Verfasser mehrerer historischer und geographischer Werke über das Königreich Ungarn und zeichnete für eine große Zahl von Zeitungs- und Zeitschriftengründungen in Pressburg verantwortlich. Um jene Zeit war er bereits über die Grenzen Ungarns bekannt und auch von der bedeutenden Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung wahrgenommen und positiv rezensiert worden. Der Text legt den Schluss nahe, dass Rottenstein sich im

Windisch'schen Haus aufgehalten hat, denn auch hier beweist er wiederum genaue Kenntnis über die Bibliothek und die Ausstattung der Räume:

In dem von Windischen Haus befinden sich einige sehr schöne Gemälde, und 2 sehr schöne Vasen von Volteranischem Alabaster. Sie sind mit erhabenen Weinranken unvergleichlich gezieret. Die Bibliothek ist zahlreich, und auserlesen; auch ist der Besitzer davon ein sehr gelehrter belesener Mann, welcher 5 Sprachen versteht, und auch sehr viele nützliche Bücher fürs Vaterland geschrieben hat. Besonders eine vollständige Geographie von Ungern und Siebenbürgen.<sup>10</sup>

Er bewundert diesen Mann, der in der Folge nichts Gutes über ihn berichten wird! Rottenstein muss diese Beschreibung übrigens nach 1790 verfasst oder zumindest ergänzt haben, denn Windischs *Geographie von Siebenbürgen* erschien erst in nämlichem Jahr.

Die Reise führte ihn schließlich nach Pest, aber auch nach *Esterházy*, zum prächtigen, erst in den 60er Jahren des 18. Jahrhunderts aufgebauten Schloss der fürstlichen Familie Esterházy. Auch hier fällt – wie schon zuvor – seine genaue Ortskenntnis vor allem in Bezug auf die Einrichtungen der Schlösser und Paläste sowie der in ihnen stattfindenden Festivitäten auf. Dieses genaue Wissen führte nicht nur zu seinen Lebzeiten zu Spekulationen hinsichtlich seiner Identität. Historiker beschäftigten sich gleichermaßen mit der Frage nach der Herkunft eines Mannes, der ihnen so ausführliche und wertvolle Beschreibungen dessen, was hinter verschlossenen Türen der Adeligen zu finden war, bot. Bernouilli, der Rottensteins Texte in die Sammlung von Reisebeschreibungen aufnahm, fühlte sich von diesen ausschließlich auf die Schilderung von Pomp und Reichtum ausgerichteten Aufzeichnungen irritiert und versuchte dem Leser die Arbeit dennoch schmackhaft zu machen. Er machte das Beste daraus und definierte den Wert des Textes über Informationen zum Wohlstand des Adels in einem unbekanntem Land am östlichen Rand von Europa:

Wer kann's in einer Sammlung allen Recht machen? Außerdem so ist Ungarn in Ansehung der Reichthümer und des Geschmacks seines Adels noch wenig bekannt ...<sup>11</sup>

schrrieb er in einer Vorrede zu der Publikation.

Auch die vor kurzem verstorbene Historikerin Éva H. Balázs versuchte in einer Abhandlung über Rottenstein dessen Identität zu erkunden.<sup>12</sup> Sie stützte sich dabei auf diejenigen Textteile seiner Beschreibung, die sich mit Pressburg und der Umgebung der Stadt beschäftigen. Éva H. Balázs hält den Namen in der ausgeschriebenen Form, wie sie Bernouilli benutzte, nämlich Edler von Rottenstein, für ein Pseudonym, umso mehr, als sie in einschlägigen Lexika und Handbüchern keinerlei Hinweise auf dessen Identität festmachen konnte. Über die inhaltliche

Analyse der Beschreibungen des Pálffyschen Schlosses in Königsaden (ung. Királyfa) und der Güter der Familie sowie die Ausführlichkeit in der Betrachtung der Feste auf dem Schloss Esterházy in *Esterhaß* (heute Fertőd) kommt sie zu dem Schluss, es handle sich bei Gottfried von Rottenstein um ein Mitglied der Familie Pálffy, genau gesagt um den Gardekapitän Johann Pálffy, 1744–1794:

Somit haben wir in „Rottenstein“ einen Abkommen des „Vize-Königs“, dem Neffen des Kanzlers, dem Schwager des János Fekete, Haupt der ungarischen Opposition, dem Herrn von Biedersburg, der selbst Mitglied der Opposition war, eine für diese Epoche charakteristische widerspruchsvolle Persönlichkeit kennengelernt.<sup>13</sup>

Zunächst lässt sich die Argumentationskette gut nachvollziehen, die Éva H. Balázs zu ihrem Schluss führte: die allzu genaue Kenntnis der Schlösser und Paläste und die Hinweise auf Aufenthalte des Reiseschriftstellers auf den beschriebenen Gütern um Pressburg machen den Leser hellhörig und man vermutet, dass sich hinter dem Namen ein ortskundiger Adelige verbergen muss. Auch der Heraldiker und Historiker Daniel Cornides, ein enger Mitarbeiter von K.G. Windisch, der die Reisebeschreibungen offensichtlich kannte, stellte sich die Frage nach der Identität Rottensteins und fragte bei Windisch als ebenfalls ortskundigen Pressburger an, der schließlich persönlich in Rottensteins Beschreibung verewigt worden war. Die Antwort Windischs war folgende:

Rottenstein ist ein bürgerl[icher] Apotheker, hat seinen Schild zum roten Krebs, und seine Offizin auf dem Krautmarkte. Ein Erznarr, der unter allen Neununddreißigern in allen Kaiserlichen Erbländern, gewiß nicht seines Gleichen hat. – Vor ein par Jahren kaufte er sich den Oesterreichischen Adel, und heißt sonst Gottfried Stegmüller. Sein Vater war ein Bestandmüller in Pösching; und starb in der größten Dürftigkeit. Sein Sohn, unser geadelte Apotheker lernte sein Metier hier in Preßburg, dann als Geselle in Oedenburg, und Kaschau, heiratete die Tochter des Oedenburger Pfar[err] Eitelhuber und kaufte mit seines Weibes, eines dummen Thiers, Golde, die Apotheke seines Lehrherren. – Da er als Gesell nicht reisen konnte, so that er es als Meister, und gab seine Reisen in Leipzig heraus, die in der Allgem[einen] Litt[eratur] Zeitung verdient gestrigelt wurden und deren auch die Ofner Blätter erwähnten. – Er ist das Gelächter der ganzen Stadt, träumt nur von Reisen, und seinem Adel, und ist zu dumm es zu merken, daß ihn jedermann zum Beßten hat.<sup>14</sup>

Durch die Kenntnis dieses Briefes drängt sich die Vermutung auf, dass Rottenstein tatsächlich mit dem geadelten Gottfried Stegmüller identisch sein könnte, der – zu Geld und Adel gekommen – Zugang zu den Adelshöfen oder zumindest zu ausführlichen Informationen darüber gehabt haben mag. Dies dürfte aufgrund der Öffnung der Prachtschlösser und das Einbeziehen des Publikums in die Schau

der Reichen nicht schwer gewesen sein. Rottenstein schreibt beispielsweise über den Fürsten Nikolaus I. Esterházy und dessen Gastfreundschaft folgendes:

Der Fürst, ist ein Herr von mittelmäßiger Statur, hat ein schönes, männliches Gesicht und besitzt ein gutes Herz; er ist ein Kenner der Wissenschaften, und liebt die Künste und Musik; seine Lieblingsunterhaltungen sind die Musik und Opern... Das Bauen, die Lektür, sind auch Sache, die dieser Herr liebt; überhaupt hat er einen herrlichen Geschmack. [...] Seine Uniform, welche roth und mit Silber stark besetzt, ist mit Perlen gestickt; die Knöpfe mit Brillanten, die Gürtel mit Perlen, und der Reigerbusch auf der ungarischen Haube mit Smaragden und Diamanten besetzt. Des Pferdes Schabracke ist auch mit Perlen und das ganze Reitzeug mit Edelsteinen besetzt; dieser Schmuck wird über eine Million Gulden geschätzt. Ausser dem besitzt er einen schönen brillantenen Ring, wo der Hauptstein 30000 Fl. gekostet hat, [...] Sonst gehet dieser Herr Ganz simpel, deutsch aber gustos gekleidet, ist freundlich zu jedermann, lässt auch einen jeden hönnet-homme (welches auch mir einige Male wiederfahren) mit seinem Wagen in Esterhaz herumführen, und alle Merkwürdigkeiten zeigen. Die Opern und Comödien sind frey, so oft fremde kommen, und niemand gehet von Esterhaz weg, der nicht von der Freundlichkeit des Fürsten bezaubert ist.<sup>15</sup>

Jeden hönnet-homme also: und dazu zählt auch ein geadelter von Rottenstein, es muss nicht unbedingt ein Graf Pálffy sein.

Windisch weist in seinem Brief auf die Rezension einer Reisebeschreibung Rottensteins hin: verdient *gestrigelt*, also kritisiert habe man ihn in Deutschland. Diese Bemerkung bezieht sich vermutlich auf einen Beitrag in der *Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* von dem März 1785, in dem der Rezensent gerade den oben dargelegten, langatmigen Stil des Verfassers als irritierend und überflüssig kritisiert.

Der Verfasser beschreibt hier umständlich die kaiserlichen Lustschlösser, Belvedere, Schönbrunn, Entzersdorf, Laxenburg, Hetzendorf, St. Veit, mit ihren Gärten, Gemälden, Statuen und anderen vorzüglichen Merkwürdigkeiten, [...] Was der Verfasser [...] vom Schlafzimmer des Kaisers erzählt, dass dieses africanisch mit Blumen gemahlt ist, könnte billig in einer Anmerkung erklärt werden.<sup>16</sup>

Wer verbirgt sich nun hinter Rottenstein? Pálffy oder Stegmüller?

Die Annahme Éva H. Balázs', dass es sich dabei um einen Grafen aus dem Pálffyschen Haus handelt, ist auf jeden Fall unrichtig. Windisch kannte die Schriftstellerszene seiner Heimatstadt sehr gut, er kannte Rottenstein persönlich und auch seinen familiären Hintergrund. Seine Informationen zu der Identität des Reiseschriftstellers sind richtig: das Adelslexikon verzeichnet nämlich zudem be-

reits im Jahre 1822 die 1779 erfolgte Verleihung eines Adelstitels an den Pressburger Apotheker Stegmüller, der fortan den Namen von Rottenstein tragen sollte.<sup>17</sup>

In Kenntnis all dieser Quellen kann als gesichert gelten, dass die Identität Gottfried von Rottensteins geklärt ist und es sich bei seiner Person um den geadelten Apotheker Gottfried Stegmüller aus Pressburg handelt.

Windisch selbst besaß übrigens ein Exemplar der Reisebeschreibung Rottensteins. Jozef Tancer hat sie in seiner Bestandsaufnahme der Bibliothek des Privatgelehrten unter der Nummer 1093 verzeichnet.<sup>18</sup>

### Anmerkungen

- <sup>1</sup> Gottfried von Rottenstein: *Lust-Reise durch Bayern, Württemberg, Pfalz, Sachsen, Brandenburg, Österreich, Mähren, Böhmen und Ungarn in den Jahren 1784–1791*. Leipzig: Schneider 1792–1793. 1782 und 1783 waren in Berlin bereits Werke Rottensteins erschienen: H.G.E.v.R. *Lustreise durch Österreich und Mähren nach Brünn im September*. Berlin, 1782 sowie ders. *Reise von Wien nach Böhmen und Sachsen im May 1783*. Berlin, 1783. ders. *Beschreibung der Insel Schütt in Ungarn*. Berlin, 1784. Diese Texte erschienen in der Sammlung: Bernouilli, Johann: *Johann Bernouilli's Sammlung kurzer Reisebeschreibung und andere zur Erweiterung der Länder- und Menschenkenntniß dienender Nachrichten*. Berlin: G. F. Richter und Buchhandlung der Gelehrten, 1781–1787, 17 Bde.
- <sup>2</sup> Vorliegende Arbeit stützt sich auf die Ausgabe 1792, die eine Zusammenfassung der Reiseeindrücke Rottensteins in den vorhergehenden acht Jahren bot.
- <sup>3</sup> Rottenstein, S. 82.
- <sup>4</sup> „Das edle von Trattnersche Haus, des berühmten Buchhändlers und Buchdruckers, ist 5 Stock hoch und hat 14 Fenster in einer Reihe und 2 große Thore mit Balkons. Die Ballustrade des Daches ist mit dreizehn Statuen besetzt, in deren Mitte ein doppelter Adler, unter welchem folgende Inschrift Labore et Favore. Dieses Haus trägt 30000 Gulden an Miethen ein, es soll 300 000 Gulden zu erbauen gekostet haben.“ Rottenstein, S. 138.
- <sup>5</sup> „Der maroccanische Gesandte bekam 1783 für sich zum Präsent an porcellainenem Geräthen allein 6000 Fl. Werth, und für den maroccanischen Kaiser selbst folgendes Gegengeschenk: als eine grüne mit Gold gestickte Pferdeequipage; 2 schwarz sammtene mit Gold gestickte brodierte Geschirre auf eine Pirutsche, das Pirutsch ist mit feinem grünen Tuch und goldenen Dressen sehr reich verbrämt, 2 Schimmel zu Zugpferden; einen Rappen, und einen Falben, als Reitpferd; für 6000 Fl. schönes Porcellan, und eine Silbervergoldete Spieluhr.“ Rottenstein, S. 206f.
- <sup>6</sup> Rottenstein, S. 92.
- <sup>7</sup> Rottenstein, S. 35.
- <sup>8</sup> Rottenstein, Teil 3, S. 36.
- <sup>9</sup> Rottenstein, Teil 3, S. 42.
- <sup>10</sup> Rottenstein, Teil 3, S. 40; zur für seine Zeit tatsächlich auffallend reichhaltigen Bibliothek Windischs jüngst erschienen: Tancer, Jozef: *Im Schatten Wiens. Zur deutschsprachigen Presse und Literatur im Pressburg des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Bremen: edition lumière 2007.
- <sup>11</sup> Bernouilli, Band X, S. 186.
- <sup>12</sup> Siehe dazu die Studie von H. Balázs, Éva: Wer war Rottenstein? In: *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*. Wien: 1990, Nr. 41, S. 43–52.
- <sup>13</sup> H. Balázs, *Wer war Rottenstein?*, S. 52.



- <sup>14</sup> Seidler, Andrea (Hg.): *Briefwechsel des Karl Gottlieb Windisch*. Budapest: Universitas 2008; *Magyarországi tudósok levelezése*: Windisch an Cornides, 30. März 1787.
- <sup>15</sup> Rottenstein: Reisen durch einen Theil des Königreichs Ungern, im 1763sten und folgenden Jahren. In: Bernouilli: *Sammlung kurzer Reisebeschreibungen*, Band 9, 1783, S. 286.
- <sup>16</sup> *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* vom Jahre 1785. Erster Band. Januar, Februar, März. Jena und Leipzig, 1785, März, S. 218.
- <sup>17</sup> Megerle von Mühlfeld, Johann Georg (Hg.): *Österreichisches Adels-Lexikon des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*: enthaltend alle von 1701 bis 1820 von den Souveränen Österreichs [...] in die verschiedenen Grade des deutsch-erbländischen oder Reichs-Adels erhobenen Personen. Wien, 1822, S. 268.
- <sup>18</sup> 1093. Rottenstein v. [Rotenstein, Gottfried Edler von]: Reisen [Lustreisen durch Bayern, Württemberg, Pfalz, Sachsen, Brandenburg, Oesterreich, Mähren, Böhmen und Ungarn, in den Jahren 1784 bis 1791. 3. Thle. Leipzig: Schneider 1792–1793]. Leipzig 1787, 8°. In: Tancer, Im Schatten, Anhang.



## DAS WASSER ALS TECHNISCHES MATERIAL UND ELEMENT IN DER UNGARISCHEN GARTENKUNST UND REPRÄSENTATION DES 18. JAHRHUNDERTS

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Der Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit der Geschichte der Wasserkultur und deren architektonischen Implementierung im Zeitalter des Barock. In dieser Epoche scheint mir vor allem interessant, was der Mensch über das Wasser als physikalisches Element und dessen Gesetze im Königreich Ungarn überhaupt wusste. Eine der bedeutenden Quellen ist dabei das handschriftliche, enzyklopädisch angelegte Lehrbuch eines ungarischen Piaristen, der darin die zeitgenössischen Erkenntnisse der Naturwissenschaften zusammenzufassen versucht hatte. Es handelt sich dabei um Lukács Mösch's Skriptum *Bibliothecae mathematicae ... Classis I–III*. Anno 1684. Diese Handschrift unterlegt die wissenschaftlichen Erklärungen auch mit zahlreichen wertvollen Illustrationen, von denen einige hier wiedergegeben werden. Die praktischen Anwendung dieses Mösch'schen Lehrstoffes sehen wir in der ungarischen Gartenkunst des Zeitalters, in der die technische Attraktionen mit dem Theater und der christlichen Symbolik verbunden wurden. Die Beispiele dafür bilden die aristokratischen Gärten von Eger, Cseklész, Pozsonyivánka und Eszterháza, die in diesem Text näher besprochen werden.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Aufklärung, Wasserkunst, Naturwissenschaften, Theater, Gartenkunst, Mythologie

### Das Wasser als Ursymbol

Die Interpretation des Wassers außerhalb der Sphäre des Praktischen, als Urmaterie, als Analogie, als Symbol ist so alt wie das menschliche Denken selbst. „Jedes Element eignet sich dazu, metaphysisch behandelt zu werden und das vollkommene Verständnis für die Welt vermittelt Analogien zu antizipieren – aber es gibt kein Element, das geeigneter wäre als das Wasser, schon allein, weil Leben wasserartiger ist als luft- oder feuerartig. Das Leben ist produktiv und mütterlich und sensibel, und es gibt kein Lebewesen, dessen Organismus nicht zum Großteil aus Wasser bestünde.“<sup>1</sup>

In Europa wird Thales als Ausgangspunkt des philosophischen Denkens angenommen, der das Wasser als Urmaterie bezeichnet hatte und den Ursprung der Welt auf das Wasser zurückführte.

Thales ging davon aus, dass die Welt voller Dämonen sei – daimones – und von einem Gott, einem Weltgeist gelenkt werde. Diese göttliche Kraft gibt dem Urgewässer Leben. Dies war ein großer Schritt nach vorn: die kosmologische Erklärung basierte nun nicht mehr auf einer Geschichte, basiert nicht mehr auf den mehr oder weniger amorphen oder mit den großen Grundprinzipien identischen absichtlichen Handlungen der Götter. Den Eigenschaften der Urmaterie gemäß ist sie in diversen Formen vorhanden. Diese Theorie verkündete die Einheit des Lebens, egal, ob zudem noch eine „beseelte Welt“ darin einen Platz bekommt, oder nicht. Sie öffnet einem beispiellosen Gedanken Tür und Tor.<sup>2</sup>

Nachdem also Wasser bereits in der ägyptischen, babylonischen, sumerischen Mythologie gleichermaßen eine Schlüsselrolle spielte, erscheint sie auch in der griechisch-römischen Mythologie als eine Urkraft, und hat sowohl im Alten als auch im Neuen Testament hervorgehobenen Symbolstatus. Die Vorläufer dieser Symbolik sind in der griechisch-römischen Mythologie beheimatet, in Bezug auf das Christentum ist aber das jüdische Vorbild, wonach Wasser zur Reinigung dient, das ausschlaggebende. So wird das Wasser und die damit in Verbindung stehende Quelle, der Brunnen, zum Begriff der Reinheit, der Genesung, später das Wasser des Lebens zum Symbol in der christlichen Kunst.<sup>3</sup>

Die mystische Sichtweise des Barockzeitalters konzentriert sich anstelle der sichtbaren, praktischen und daher für seine Denker unbedeutenden Erscheinungen der Welt auf die unsichtbaren, auf das ewig Wahre und dies, indem es die Welt in Symbolen darstellt und erklärt. Gleichzeitig ist der barocke Mensch aber in ständiger geistiger Verbindung mit den frühen Mystikern des Christentums und der biblischen Auslegung, indem deren Werke immer wieder gelesen werden, und ist daher empfindsam für das Wasser einerseits als eines der vier Grundelemente, andererseits auf die Bedeutung des Urelementes und der sich daraus ergebenden – in erster Linie christlichen, in zweiter Linie griechisch-römischen – Symbolik.

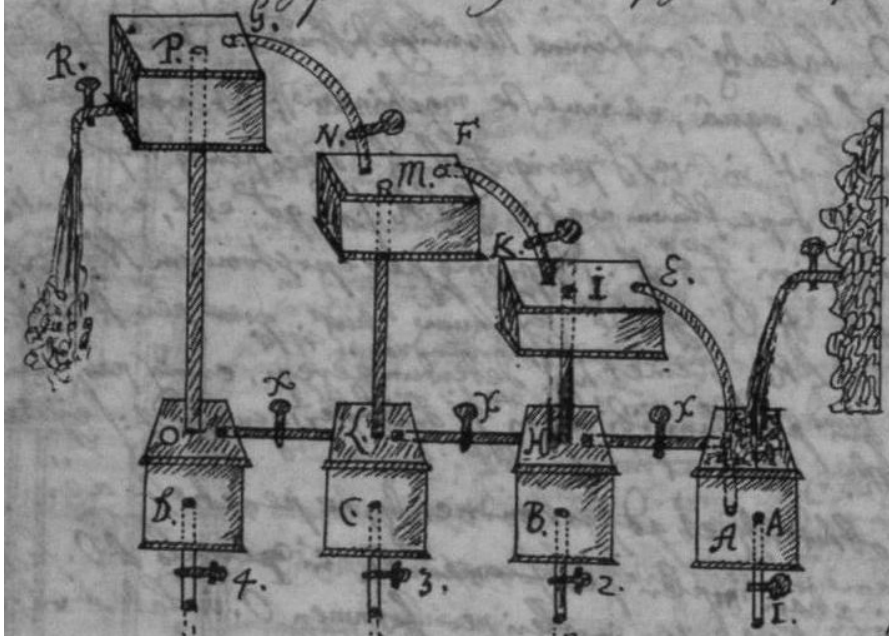
### **Das Wasser und die Technik**

Die Entwicklung der Physik als Wissenschaft, die moderne naturwissenschaftliche Denkweise beginnt sich generell mit dem Wasser als Mittel zu beschäftigen, als mit einem beherrschbaren, berechenbaren, durch Gesetze festmachbaren physikalischen Element. Bevor wir Beispiele für die Visibilisierung und Symbolik

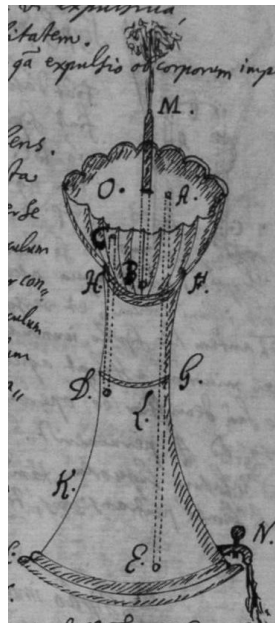
des Wassers in der Kunst des 18. Jhs suchen, muss zuerst die Frage geklärt werden, was der Mensch jenes Jahrhunderts über das Wasser als physikalisches Element und dessen Gesetze überhaupt wusste.

Als eine der bedeutenden Quellen ist dabei das handschriftliche, enzyklopädisch angelegte Lehrbuch eines Piaristen zu erachten, der darin die zeitgenössischen Ergebnisse der Naturwissenschaften zusammenzufassen versucht hatte: Lukács Mösch's Tätigkeit und sein handschriftliches Lehrbuch wartet noch darauf, von der Forschung entdeckt und aufgearbeitet zu werden. Mösch lebte und wirkte als lehrender Piarist zunächst in dem zur polnischen Provinz gehörigen Privigye, später in Podolin. Mösch spielte eine bedeutende Rolle in der Unabhängig-Werdung der ungarischen Provinz. Sein naturwissenschaftliches Interesse ist ungemein vielseitig und profund, seine militärwissenschaftlichen Kenntnisse trugen mittelbar vielleicht sogar zur Befreiung von Buda bei. Seine Werke erschienen wie gesagt nicht im Druck, er verfasste sie nur für den eigenen Gebrauch bzw. für seine Studenten. In den erhaltenen Handschriften trifft die Bemühung um Synthese des Apáczai Csere János und der ungarischen Karthesianer auf einen tief religiösen Anspruch und zugleich auf den Willen, gerade dieses Wissen über die Natur zu vermitteln. Das *Skriptum Bibliothecae Mathematicae... Classis I–III*. Anno 1684 enthält folgende Themenbereiche: angewandte Geometrie, Mechanik, theoretische und praktische Erdkunde, Akkustik, theoretische und praktischer Militärbaukunst, Chromatik, Hydrotechnik, Hydrostatik, Hydrographie.<sup>4</sup> Der VII. Band von Möschs Lehrbuch trägt den Titel *De Hydrotechnica et Hydrostatica demunq̄ue de Hydrographia, sive de Arte Aquaria, machinis atque Libratione Liquidorum*. Er besteht aus drei Teilen und insgesamt 18 Kapiteln. Der erste Teil, *De Hydrotechnica seu machinis Hydraulicis*, enthält 11 der erwähnten 18 Kapitel. Hier wird nach Beschreibung von einigen Versuchen die Funktion einfacher Maschinen erklärt, die Art und Weise, wie das Wasser sich erhebt, Maschinen, die mit Auftriebskraft arbeiten, die Spritzdüsenmaschinen und Maschinen, die aufgrund zusammengesetzter Kräfte arbeiten. Unter den diversen Maschinen des 9. Kapitels trägt eine den Namen *Machina 8: Aquilea cesarea horodictica* und sie zeigt vor, wie der Umriss einer Figur mit Hilfe einer Maschine beschrieben werden kann. Kapitel 11 beschäftigt sich mit dem Prinzip der Springbrunnen. So konnte offensichtlich sowohl das Konzept eines Gartens als auch das eines Bühnenbildes sehr wohl unter Zuhilfenahme von simplem technischem Mittelschulwissen verwirklicht werden. Dieses Wissen nutzte Mösch allerdings angesichts der Gefahr, die von den Türken ausging, vor allem für militärische Zwecke, wie auch sein Lebenslauf beweist.<sup>5</sup>

Die folgenden Illustrationen sind dem Werk Mösch's entnommen:

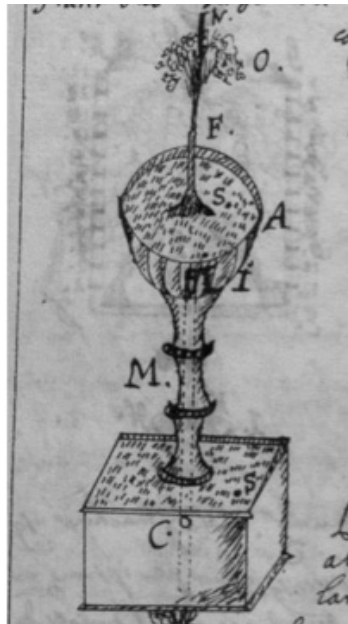


**Bild 1.** Hydraulische Einrichtung: Lucas Moesch *Bibliothecae Mathematicae... Classis I-III.*  
Anno 1684 (Budapest, Zentralbibliothek des Piaristenordens – Központi Piarista Levéltár)



**Bild 2.** Technische Einrichtung: Lucas Moesch *Bibliothecae Mathematicae... Classis I-III.*  
Anno 1684





**Bild 3.** Das Prinzip des Springbrunnens: Lucas Moesch *Bibliothecae Mathematicae...* *Classis I-III.* Anno 1684



**Bild 4.** Hydraulische Einrichtung: Lucas Moesch *Bibliothecae Mathematicae...* *Classis I-III.* Anno 1684

Durch diese Erkenntnisse wurde auch für das Königreich Ungarn der Grundstein für die dekorative Einbeziehung des Elements Wasser in die Gartenkunst aber auch in die Künste generell, zum Beispiel das Theater gelegt. Wasser konnte nicht nur zu Säuberung und anderen praktischen Zwecken dienen: es wurde gleichzeitig zur Attraktion.

### Das Wasser als Sehenswürdigkeit

Wenn wir die Besonderheiten der Bühnenbilder des 18. Jhs beleuchten, so kommen wir nicht umhin, die Rolle des Wassers und dessen Symbolik näher zu untersuchen. Wir können dabei die Gartenarchitektur und deren Künste und auch deren Symbolik nicht außer Acht lassen, da sich das Theater des Barock nicht auf einen geschlossenen Raum als Bühne beschränkte, sondern auch häufig einen zweiten Aufführungsort, nämlich den Garten, den Park in den Mittelpunkt setzte. Ich möchte hier nicht über den Reichtum der barocken Gartenarchitektur berichten, sondern lediglich die Bedeutung des barocken Gartens als theatralischen Ortes hervorheben. Der Einfluss, den der Garten somit auf das geistig-kulturelle Leben gewann, ist evident. Und dies umso mehr, als im barocken Garten Wasser und dessen Einsatz als attraktives Element so wichtig war wie in keinem Zeitalter davor oder danach je wieder.

Der Garten ist von Beginn an die verkleinerte Version des Kosmos, die Verwirklichung des irdischen Paradieses, und dies nicht nur in der christlichen Mythologie, sondern auch in den Erklärungen der Welt der alten östlichen Kulturen. Sehr früh erscheint der Brunnen, die Quelle als zentrales Element des Gartens: die Quelle stand und steht als Symbol des Lebens.<sup>6</sup> Dies kann natürlich auch aus dem alltäglichen Mangel an Wasser in diesen Regionen erklärt werden, aber der Kult, der sich um das Wasser herausbildete, weist darüber bei Weitem hinaus, und so dient Wasser oft als Zeichen für den Reichtum der Natur, als Ausdruck der Fruchtbarkeit.

Gleichzeitig ist das Wasser, die Quelle, das fließende Wasser aufgrund von biblischen Beschreibungen Träger diverser Symbole. Wenngleich in der offiziellen Theologie der Brunnen eindeutig das Symbol für Jesus ist, ist der Brunnen, das lebendige Wasser in der profanen Welt und in der Verwertung in der Kunst das Symbol für Maria. Diese Bedeutung geht auf das Hohelied Salomos zurück, ist also biblischen Ursprungs und – so sehr die Kirche sich auch dagegen verwehrt – weit verbreitet. So entwickelte sich im Zeitalter der Renaissance die neue Darstellung der rosenumwobenen Gärten, der so genannte *hortus conclusus*, in dessen Zentrum der ständig Wasser spendende, ständig in Bewegung seiende Springbrunnen steht.<sup>7</sup> Der *hortus conclusus* ist auch in der barocken Gartenkultur

zu finden, dort jedoch nicht mehr als Träger mittelalterlicher Symbolik sondern als Symbol für die *varietas*, das Vielbedeutende.

Ebenfalls in der Renaissance erscheint ein weiterer Garten-Typus, ein weltlicher Typus, der auch nicht ohne Wasser als tragendes Element auskommt, der *hortus deliciarum*, ein bis in die heutige Zeit geltender Topos.<sup>8</sup>

Diese beiden Gartentypen, der erste religiösen, der zweite weltlichen Ursprungs, weltlichen Freuden Ausdruck verleihend, sind im Zeitalter des Barock, in dem Mystik und Hedonismus Hand in Hand gehen, bereits untrennbar miteinander verbunden. Dies gilt auch für Ungarn, wenngleich wir über die Gepflogenheiten der Gartenkunst in Ungarn vor dem 19. Jh. noch zu wenig wissen.

Es ist aber bekannt, dass die in Gärten und Parks inszenierten Attraktionen auch im Kreise der ungarischen Aristokratie populär waren. Der Park von Eszterháza und die Beschreibungen, die uns darüber erhalten blieben, beweisen dies unmissverständlich.<sup>9</sup> Es wurden aber bereits früher, im Jahr 1724 in Nordungarn durch die Jesuiten im Park des für seine Unterhaltungen so berühmten Palais Fourcontrasti so genannte *theatrum navalis* aufgeführt. Das Anwesen gehörte dem Erzbischof von Erlau, Ferenc Barkóczy. Das Schloss wurde leider zerstört, man kennt es nur noch durch ein zeitgenössisches Gemälde religiösen Charakters, dessen Hintergrund das Gebäude darstellt. Auf dem Bild lässt sich jedoch gut erkennen, dass das Schloss inmitten einer großzügigen Anlage stand, und der Garten sehr wohl für opulente barocke Theateraufführungen geeignet war.



**Bild 5.** Das einmalige Schloss Fourcontrasti (Lucas Huetter: *Noli me tangere* 1753, Holz und Öl, Eger, Speisesaal der Barmherzigen Brüder)

Auch auf den Besitztümern der Familie Esterházy in Cseklész trug ein wunderbares Schloss umgeben von einem Park zur Erfüllung der Repräsentationspflichten der Familie bei. Über den Teich, der sich inmitten des Gartens befand, weiß man folgendes:

... geschützt durch eine Allee gelangt man zum Tiergarten; es ist dies ein elyptisch angelegter Ort und der grün und rot bemalte Turm des kleinen Häuschens ist das Nest der fliegenden Tauben. Auf diesem Platz befinden sich noch vier weitere Häuschen. Zwischen den vier Häuschen befinden sich zu beiden Seiten je ein Springbrunnen, insgesamt daher zehn; sie erhalten ihr Wasser aus einem Turm im Wald, ein Mann benötigt einen halben Tag um den sechzigküblichen Behälter des Turmes anzufüllen, und diese Menge an Wasser versorgt der Springbrunnen sechs Stunden hindurch [...] Nun gelangt man zum Ententeich. Über eine schöne Brücke spaziert man auf einen elyptischen Platz mitten im Teich, der von einem großen Sonnenschirm geschützt ist, in dessen Schatten sich Sitzgelegenheiten anbieten. Im Wasser selbst befinden sich für die Enten rundum sieben grüne Häuschen.<sup>10</sup>

Das neben Pressburg gelegene Ivánka gehörte zu den Besitztümern des Grafen Antal Grassalkovich, der eben zu jener Zeit zum Herzog geworden war. Grassalkovich hatte die Kaiserin in seinem Anwesen in Gödöllő seinerzeit unter derart luxuriösen Umständen empfangen, dass die Legende um dieses Ereignis noch heute in der Tradition des Ortes lebendig ist. Damals hatten noch Feuerwerk und Lichtspiele eine Hauptattraktion dargestellt. Man weiß allerdings schon Genaueres über einen Empfang auf Ivánka, der vier Jahre später stattfand und auf dem das Wasser bereits eine große Rolle spielte. Es war gerade der Garten des Schlosses, der unter den Zeitgenossen besonders berühmt geworden ist. Da es sich um eine Sommerresidenz handelte, fiel diesem vor allem bei Großereignissen bedeutende Funktionen zu. Graf Antal Grassalkovich II. schien mit Herzog Miklós Esterházy I. und den Attraktionen, die im Garten zu Eszterháza geboten wurden, in Konkurrenz getreten zu sein. Als Erzherzogin Marie Christine und Prinz Albert von Sachsen-Teschen, das ungarische Statthalterpaar, am 20. September 1773 Ivánka besuchten, vermeldeten zeitgenössische Quellen folgendes:

Man begab sich in das holländische Lusthaus, und auf einen Glockenschlag erschienen auf dem Teich acht hübsch dekorierte Boote. Das erste trug die türkische Musik, das zweite war nach chinesischer Form gebaut, das dritte war blau angestrichen, das vierte trug den Sängerkor, das fünfte war nach venezianischer Art ganz schwarz gehalten und so weiter. Die Schifflleute waren dem Stil ihrer Schiffe entsprechend kostümiert. Unter Musikbegleitung umfuhren sie mehrere Male den Teich.<sup>11</sup>

Es ließen sich noch zahlreiche Beispiele anführen, die beweisen, welche Schlüsselfunktion dem Wasser in der Gestaltung des Gartens aber auch in der repräsentativen Theateraufführungskunst des Barock zugeeignet wurde. Das Wasser wurde im Zeitalter des Barock zum Träger symbolischer Inhalte – im Gegensatz zu seiner früheren (religiösen) Bedeutung und Funktion als eines der Grundelemente des Lebens. Voraussetzung dafür war jedoch die technische Entwicklung – hier vorgeführt durch das Handbuch von Mösch – und die damit einhergehenden Möglichkeiten, Wasser gestalterisch einzusetzen sowie die gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen generell, die eine Umdefinierung der symbolischen Werte, eine Profanisierung des Elements erlaubten.

### Anmerkungen

- <sup>1</sup> Hamvas, Béla: *Scientia Sacra. Az őskori emberiség szellemi hagyománya*. Budapest: Magvető, 1988, 454–455.
- <sup>2</sup> Huyghe, Edith und Huyghe, François-Bernard: *Világképek. Az Univerzum ezeregy meséje Galilei előtt*. Budapest: Európa, 2000, 113.
- <sup>3</sup> Vanyó, László: *Az ókeresztény művészet szimbólumai*. Budapest: Az Apostoli Szentszék Könyvkiadója, 1988, 162.
- <sup>4</sup> Zu seinem Lebenslauf siehe: *Új Magyar Irodalmi Lexikon I–III*. Hg. von Péter László. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994 sowie vor allem über seine heereswissenschaftlichen Aktivitäten Kilián, István: Házikáplán, tábori lelkész, tanár, hadmérnök. Emlékezés Moesch Lukácsra. *Vigilia* 1986/8, 582–588.
- <sup>5</sup> Kilián, *ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> Siehe dazu: *Szimbólumtár, jelképek, motívumok, témák az egyetemes és a magyar kultúrából*. Hg. von Pál József und Újvári Edit. Budapest, Balassi, 2005, 263–264.
- <sup>7</sup> Kirchenbaum: *Marienlexikon*.
- <sup>8</sup> *Szimbólumtár*, 265.
- <sup>9</sup> Siehe dazu beispielsweise jüngst: Seidler, Andrea: Das ungarische Versailles – Eine Beschreibung des Schlosses Esterháza aus dem späten 18. Jahrhundert. In: Ágoston Zénó Bernád, Márta Csire, Andrea Seidler (Hg.), *On the Road – Zwischen Kulturen Unterwegs*. Wien: LIT Verlag 2009, 281–296.
- <sup>10</sup> Rapaics, Raymund: *Magyar kertek*. Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1940, 112–113.
- <sup>11</sup> In: Staud Géza: *Magyar kastélyszínházak*. II. rész. Budapest: Színháztudományi Intézet, 1963, 27. und Staud: *Adelstheater in Ungarn (18. und 19. Jahrhundert)*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, *Theater Geschichte Österreichs Band X: Donaumonarchie*, Heft 2. Wien, 1977, 175. Forrás: *Pressburger Zeitung* 1773. szept. 22.





## **AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL READING: A NEW APPROACH TO THE GENRE IN 20TH CENTURY HUNGARIAN LITERATURE**

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This paper delineates critical approaches to the reading of autobiographical writings that make no presumptions concerning the identity of language and subject or the identity of narrating self and narrated self. It proposes readings that posit the act of narration as a creative gesture through which the narrated self is constructed through the figures of language rather than described as an essence that preceded narration.

**Keywords:** autobiography, memory, recollection, narrative, self, staging, representation, identity

This paper proposes an innovative approach to the reading of 20th century Hungarian autobiographies by placing emphasis on theoretical considerations.<sup>1</sup> The choice of subject matter is justified first and foremost by the fact that the conditions for the reinterpretation of autobiographical texts of belletristic value went through a fundamental change at the turn of the millennium. This development was due in part to reconsideration of aspects of language and subject prompted by a turn in the interpretive potentials of literary scholarship and in part to the postmodern rewriting of this genre of self-interpretation.<sup>2</sup> In this context it is the destruction and re-creation of binary concepts related to the genre that prescribes the aspectual framework for the reading of autobiographies. The legitimacy of the contraposition in literary works between the factual and the fictitious, recollection and imagination, signifier and signified, language and reality, image and representation, and the intra-textual and extra-textual worlds has become questionable.

Reader expectations concerning the referentiality of literature have also gone through a significant modification. They have rendered invalid the premises for a contrast between reflection, mimesis, and creation. They have also nullified the basis for the distinction between the intra-textual and the extra-textual. Thus, the purpose of reading can hardly be a restoration of a perfect correspondence between text and a previously established image of the author, since it is also far from obvious to what extent the autobiographical subject may be considered defi-

nite and particular prior to narration. The texts affixed to the autobiographies, the books published under the name of the author, and the interpretive systems constituting the entire lifework of the author may not replace readings that focus on the poetic qualities of autobiographical writing(s). In the following, I offer a quick list and delineate the major analytical aspects of an approach to reading that focuses on the language-based means of the representation of the self.

### Language and Subject

Taking the notion of a personality existing in the medium of language as a point of departure does not necessarily entail the acceptance of the theoretical insight concerning the nothingness of the subject,<sup>3</sup> yet it does trigger the concept of the *autobiographical self taking form in a text of recollection*.

Human memory retains the acquisition of the surrounding world in the form of language, in which process the image of reality (*l'image du réel*) is created by acts of imagination and the experience obtained through the learning of names of entities, together with perception. According to Lejeune, the opening question in the case of autobiographical reading is not entirely legitimate from the perspective of the nature and the retention of memories. An image recorded in our memory can hardly be made to correspond with the object of contemplation prior to the form of written language. Language is the source, the carrier, and the re-creator of memories, so it would be a mistake to assume that, unlike fiction, autobiography reports events that preceded language. The items in the following list all support the notion that we must keep the possibility of rhetorical reading open: metaphorical descriptions of the world that vanished with the passing of childhood (an ever-recurring setting of autobiographical stories); the variations of language based self-reflection, the forms of its reaction to the readability of the text and perceptual modes towards images that figure as substitutes for the autobiographical self; in short, all those language based events that restrict anthropomorphic readings<sup>4</sup> and essentially demonstrate the unpredictability of the formation of meaning.<sup>5</sup>

It is precisely through the attempt to establish unity between language and the subject that autobiography, aspiring towards a presentation of the self, achieves its unstated goal by making the *gap* between the forms of utterances about the narrator and those created within the narration accessible for interpretation as language based acts. The examination of the use of language makes the rift between intended meaning and actual saying, or the incomparability of *sagen* and *Meinung* (which is closely related to the difference between the *said self* and the *intended self*), accessible to the reader.<sup>6</sup> The tension arising between the self as the cognitive object of narration and the self taking form in the text calls for an epitaphic

reading of the autobiographical subject doubled by the creative operation of language. This is illustrated by Bettina Menke in her book on prosopopoeia, to cite one example.<sup>7</sup>

As regards the manifestations of the assumed referential relationship between the author and his/her equivalent in the text, the sameness of the two subjects cannot be taken for granted because of the act of representation. Thus, even the author cannot take full responsibility for the statements made in the text. After all, the referential value of confessional forms of utterances cannot be identified by referring language beyond language.<sup>8</sup>

### **Staging the Self: The Inter-Replacing Play of Image and Representation**

It is almost essential that narrators reproduce the narrated self in the state of *crossing the border* towards changing their identity.<sup>9</sup> Writers of autobiography attain their selves through the other, or the double. For one who recollects, the staging (*la mise en scène, Inszenierung*) of the self offers an opportunity to relive his/her old self while changing his/her own identity through confrontation with the possibilities surfacing in it.<sup>10</sup> It would be a mistake to consider this production simple role-playing, which would weaken the impression of the factual credibility of the narration. The fact is that the changing self-understanding of an autobiographer postulates a continuous process of losing and re-creating identity over the course of recollection. The “recollector” establishes his/her identity *through the staging* of the recollected self, the fundamental condition of which is precisely the need to get distance from him/herself. What happens in the process of autobiographical reading is the mutual substitution of the doubled subjects. The mirror metaphor is somewhat misleading for the purpose of identifying the persons generated during these recurring metamorphoses, as we may assume the presence of relationships between images and their representations which are far more complex in the context of language than in the case of simply facing a mirror.

Fictitious events occurring in life, which are almost inseparable from a writer's *modus vivendi*, become essential parts of the world of an autobiographer, who alternates between his/her roles. It is not unusual that even the narrated autobiographical self is willing to change roles, too, and concomitantly to create an *alter* that replaces and expresses the *ego* in order to be able to contemplate itself in that other. In this case, the self generates itself with the help of what for others constitutes an imaginative act.

The above argumentation can be summed up in the following statement: the basic endeavor of an autobiographer to re-understand his/her own identity can be carried out as an act of staging.

**The Relationship between the Narrating and  
the Narrated Autobiographical Selves:  
Encountering the Inconclusiveness of Self-Interpretation**

None of the 20th-century Hungarian autobiographies making up the canon would fully satisfy the most important requirements of “the autobiographical contract.”<sup>11</sup> The criterion of the sameness of the author, narrator, and protagonist cannot be satisfied among the overall conditions of the rhetoric of forms in the case of autobiographies that render the personal life of the narrator in the form of recollections. Depending on the span of recollections, the changing time relations, and the systems of evaluation, we need to assume the presence of a multiplicity of constructed and destructed self-formations in the narrative. The shared identity of the persons involved in the “autobiographical contract” also presupposes the sameness of the narrating and the narrated selves. In the case of narratives of recollection, this effect can best be achieved through the introduction of the perception and mode of thinking of the recollected consciousness into the perceptual reach of the recollecting self. However, the gap between the two separate selves will not disappear because of the unyielding difference resulting from temporality. Any present tense recollection of past events can withdraw the narrator from the course of recollection only temporarily, while the doubling of the narrators (i.e., the termination of the continuity of the recollecting and recollected consciousnesses) seems unavoidable when returning to the present of the writing.

Instead of representing the personal life of the narrator, autobiographies can also be about something else, namely, about roles and parts played in belletristic and critical works and writings. The veracity of these may not be compared to the authenticity of actual events, so the author cannot accept responsibility for them by providing his/her own signature. According to Lejeune, suspicion concerning the contentions of individual authors is a constant concomitant of the reading process. In the case of autobiographies, it is the stated identity of the persons that becomes doubtful, while in the case of the reception of fictitious stories, it is the difference between the author and the protagonist that is thrown into question. The declaration of shared identity prompts readers to look for differences, while the assumption of separateness inspires them to search for similarities. The interpretation of autobiographies can be significantly influenced by the reader’s recognition of the fact that the narratives do not necessarily assert the presence of continuity between the formations of the autobiographical subject. The readers can hardly find a means to verify the similarities or resemblance (*ressemblance*) between the narrator, the narrated self, and the authorial self, outside the narrative. The so-called referential contract or agreement with the readers does not mean that the autobiographer guarantees the verisimilitude of the image of reality (*vraisemblance*). Instead, it rather refers to the notion that the narrator reconstructs the

story of *his/her own* life from the unique perspective of the entity that actually *experienced* it, or as Lejeune writes, “la vérité sur tel aspect de ma vie, ne m’engageant en rien sur tel autre aspect”.<sup>12</sup> Lejeune does not go further than this when he draws the borderline between biographies and autobiographies. The distinction between the factual and the imagined and the real and the veritable ultimately depends on the *personal perspectives* of the person who actually lived through and now looks back on the events.

The most important token of the contract/agreement is the analogy present in the names, which according to Lejeune constitutes the basis for the similarity between the author in the biographical sense and the person speaking in the text. Unfortunately, I do not have enough space in the present paper to provide detailed arguments for the contention that the problem of the identity of voices in autobiographies poses much more complicated questions than this. I would just like to note briefly how Derrida, on the one hand, distances proper names from their origins by referring the “spatialization” of the sign to the name and, on the other hand, opens up a way for the double readability of the signatures by assuming the existence of fictitious and real signatures. The readers, by taking just the signatures as a point of departure, cannot convincingly decide whether they are reading a belletristic or an autobiographical text. The dual readability of the signatures deprives the name of the author of its unconditional authority, the utmost token of the autobiographical contract/agreement, as long as it connects the voice speaking in the text and the author in the biographical sense on the cover of the book.<sup>13</sup> The kind of autobiographical writing that stages the self necessarily overwrites the factual biographical elements. The facts of birth or even one’s proper name are not exceptions to this, either. In sum, we can say that the source of truth *expressed* in autobiographies is not the factual veracity indicated by the signature provided.

It seems necessary to reinterpret the relationship between the narrating and the narrated autobiographical selves on the basis of the experience of the inconclusiveness of self-interpretation. For a proper distinction of the meanings of the notions, one point of departure could be Georg Misch’s comprehensive history of autobiographical writing. According to the approach of the author of this widely acknowledged manual, a normative characteristic of the works of St. Augustine, Rousseau, and Goethe, as creators of fundamental patterns of the European brand of the genre, is that the autobiographers undertake the task of introducing the facts of the path of the life in question and illustrating its symbolic meaning at the same time. The value or merit of representing life in its complete form is determined by the expansiveness of the worldview and the depth and the universal quality of self-understanding, in short, the so-called “objective truth-value” of the work. The moral truth manifested in the empirical events of the life experience is provided with a symbolic meaning when it is summarized in the closing of the life story. This symbolic meaning is based on a balanced and harmonic relationship

between the I and the world, i.e., subject and object, the comprehension of which leads the autobiographer to the climax of his/her life in the work. In works that satisfy the autobiographical requirements, the metonymic and metaphoric conclusions overlap, the ending of the story coincides with the symbolic ending point of the self-narrative, the consummated self-understanding. All of the above may be summed up from the aspect of the opening question as follows: the narrator undertakes the task of representative self-portrayal following the summary of the meaning of the life story.

The experience of the inconclusive quality of self-interpretation has a different application in de Man's reading of Rousseau. Here, it recognizes the mechanical functioning of the text in the paradigmatic act of accidental and incidental events that do not fit the system by following an infinite sequence of mutual replacements. This mechanical functioning displays no decipherable operating principle. As he points out, the consequent language based incident cannot be deduced from the system of tropes, and thus the meaning remains separated from the text. The uncontrollable creative functioning of language exerts some influence on the confession, too, as it becomes a textual allegory of the mechanical acts of apologizing in the reading.

### Memory and Identity

The autobiographical narrator *creates* his/her identity in his/her personal recollections and, by signing his/her name, vouchsafes for the re-understanding of the heritage to which it belongs.

In the complex perspectual movements of recollections, an interaction between recollecting and recollected consciousnesses has to be assumed. As a result, memory and imagination may not be distinctly separated from one another. From the aspect of *the demand for the expression* of the autobiographical subject, it is an issue of secondary importance whether the truthfulness of the narrated events can be factually verified. Fictitiousness and factuality, imagination and recollection are not mutually exclusive notions when we consider the recollected consciousnesses and the memory of the narrated autobiographical selves. As regards the accessibility of texts, it is perhaps more expedient to refer to various language based, rhetorical, and narrato-poetical modes and methods of *establishing* a personal past in the examples of Hungarian autobiographical writing in the 20th century. The borderlines for the fictive quality are not set by the authenticity identified with factuality but only by the realization of the *expression* of the narrated autobiographical self created in the text.

The origins are connected to the names, and a study of this requires the autobiographer to learn the meaning of the names. The actual goal of the inclusion of



narratives of family history into the course of recollections is to search for substitute representative images. The autobiographers create their self-portraits through an examination of the representative portraits retained from the familial store of recollections. In the play of mutual substitutions and replacements, the personality of the autobiographical narrator is divided among the representative selves, as it were. As I have pointed out above, the distinction between the factual and the imagined and the real and the veritable depends on the personal perspectives of the person who actually lived through the events and now looks back on them.

Autobiographical writing stages the genuine difference we may assume to be present between the recollecting and the recollected selves, and is not satisfied with the reflection of the dissimilation of the two different selves. The changing identity of the autobiographical personality reveals itself in the collisions and conflicts of language-based worlds that express various consciousnesses. The difference in the language versions of autobiographical writings can also be traced back to the fact that the (self-)identity of the narrator is inseparable from his/her recollecting activity, and that memory recollects and preserves not only the stories but also the languages that can be used to give voice to them.<sup>14</sup>

The interactions between time, memory, and identity can be illustrated by the fact that autobiographers may relate individual stories in several different versions. The possibility of re-writing personally related stories may call our attention to the fact that there are sense possibilities unfolding in the act of recollection which are complex formations in the process of establishing personal identities.

### **Inserted Autobiographical Discourses and Self-Interpreting Configurations**

It is through the gaps between the narrated self-interpretation of the narrator and the text of the autobiographical narrative that readers can find the path towards perceiving the conflicts resulting from the *opening up* of the sense possibilities of what has been narrated. The dramatization or the staging of the changes in personal thinking is worthy of special attention in the examination of the relationship between the perspective and the voice that can be rendered to the narrator.

The autobiographical writings of the time period in question almost without exception contain self-interpreting formations and configurations that allow for the possibility of a kind of reading that focuses on the poetic qualities of the texts.<sup>15</sup> These inserted discourses multiply the potential referential systems of the narrative. As a piece of embedded discourse, an actual or recollected diary makes the boundaries between the textual worlds created at different points in time relative and easy to cross.

A section of an earlier autobiographical text cited in the recollection or the summaries and interpretations of the works of the "author" present in the story being narrated are to be considered as other texts and not simply as mirrors in which the autobiographical narrator rediscovers him/herself. The autobiographers devise a role of a co-creator for the readers in the process of the reading of the faces/images reflected in one another. The re-reading of the sections of diaries, notes, or autobiographical drafts that tend to surface unexpectedly allows for a play among the different perspectives of interpretation.

The preliminary announcements concerning the modes of the narration of the autobiographical subject, together with their potential inherent contradictions, direct the attention of the readers to the relationship of the rhetorical strategy of statement and text. From a narrato-poetical perspective, this first of all means the study of the relationship between the narrator's self-interpreting activity, the narrator's articulation or pronouncement, and the narrated consciousness.

### **The Experience of Estrangement**

Paul de Man noted that it is in one's mother tongue, considered to be the most familiar medium, that the estrangement of language can be experienced in the most powerful fashion.<sup>16</sup> Shoshana Felman considered the failure of translation as a transposition of our own irreducible estrangement to the otherness of languages.<sup>17</sup> The ideas selected for points of departure are intended to refer to works born on the borderline between rhetoric and psychoanalysis. The reason for this is that they jointly provide us with a language and subject based foundation for accessing autobiographies which can be the starting point for the interpretation of the rhetoric of estrangement.

At this point, it would be relevant to make mention of what Freud referred to as the strange *subconscious*, which he likened to a strange language that is impossible to understand.<sup>18</sup> It was from the point of view of the estrangement experience in psychoanalysis that Lacan faced the question of language or rhetoric. According to the contemporary theoretical approach to the rhetoric of estrangement, the concept of estrangement is a rhetorical phenomenon that can be explicated through the mutual replacement (displacement) of the psychoanalytical school represented by Lacan and the rhetorical reading related to de Man. The strangeness of the original language for the users of the mother tongue is exactly as threatening as the experience of the unconscious for the subject that has lost stability. Shoshana Felman notes that Freud likened the operation of *suppression* to translation, and understood it as the failure of translation. Lacan emphasized the possibility of the mutual enlightening of language and estrangement, or uncon-

scious. Paul de Man was reluctant to appreciate the rhetorical transpositions of psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, this way of thinking was not totally alien to him, as long as rhetoric led him to posing the question concerning the relationship between *language* and *the unconscious*. As he pointed out, language serves the discourse of neither the conscious nor the unconscious, as it is exactly language that determines both:

Far from seeing language as an instrument in the service of a psychic energy, the possibility now arises that the entire construction of drives, substitutions, repressions, and representations is the aberrant, metaphorical correlative of the absolute randomness of language, prior to any figuration or meaning.<sup>19</sup>

Put in the perspective of reading, this means that the recipients themselves are also participants in the rhetorical structure of the text.

Making a distinction between the rhetorical and the not-primarily-rhetorical reading of the rhetoric of estrangement may be quite legitimate. The latter, in its most comprehensive sense, undertakes the task of interpreting the rhetorical configurations that convey estrangement as an aesthetic experience. The narrato-poetical approach does not dismiss the examination of language based functioning, and renders the rhetoric of estrangement as aesthetic experience. First, it builds up the system of regulations that control autobiographical operation in such a way as Derrida identified the rules of the genre.<sup>20</sup> Next, with the help of this interpretation, it finds the signifying processes that reorganize the principles of the genre. Regarding their effect, and depending on the context, the so-called disseminative language-based poetical procedures can also be understood as the manifestations of the rhetoric of estrangement. In this case, the interpretation conveys the experience of estrangement with the help of the identification of genre. Obviously, this depends on which concept of genre is taken as the starting point of interpretation. However, the interpretation of cultural estrangement appearing in autobiographical writings presents yet another new way of reading, the analysis of which will form the subject of another paper.

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## POLITICS AND LITERATURE: A CASE STUDY

### KOSZTOLÁNYI'S RECEPTION DURING THE COMMUNISM

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As a contribution to a larger theoretical discussion of the relationships between literature and political context, this paper offers an examination of the reception of the works of Hungarian poet and novelist Dezső Kosztolányi during the communist period, drawing particular emphasis to the origins of several misunderstandings. Over the past several decades Hungarian Marxist literary theorists, influenced by the philosophical and aesthetical heritage of György Lukács, have thought of artists as having a revolutionary role in society and literature as having an important role as a means through which to educate the nation. Kosztolányi's concept of art for art's sake did not minister to this ideological and political system, and as a consequence his reception and reputation suffered. Not only were critical evaluations of his writings, both literary and theoretical, distorted and crafted with the intention of creating a misleading image of the author, but the editions of his texts were also censored. It is not mere accident or circumstance that the critical edition series of his works could not be edited and research groups and projects dealing with an edition of his life's work were not financed under the communist regime. Hungarian intellectuals have yet to raise the question as to why open discussion of the beginning of the 20th century (when events took place that continue to exert an influence on conceptions of culture today) remains a taboo. Why are there no (or few) critical editions and anthologies or studies dealing with the period? Twenty years have passed since the political transition and the situation remains essentially the same. Hungarian philologists who deal with Kosztolányi's oeuvre must address these questions and challenge the Marxist axioms and stereotypes if they hope to further the development of Kosztolányi's reception. Relying on postmodern theories is not sufficient if there is little fundamental research.

**Keywords:** commune, Dezső Kosztolányi, György Lukács, literary canon, Hungarian literature, art for art's sake, literature, politics, Marxism, reception history

The interrelationships between politics and literature raise difficult questions. Politics is the domain of mundane power, laws and societies, while literature is the domain of intellectual and aesthetic values in their relation to consciousness. Nevertheless literature becomes subject to the play of public power, and its shaping role is directed towards the collective and individual mind. In line with this, litera-

ture responds to relations of cultural policy in the values it projects and the institutions and leading figures that serve it. We are perhaps better able to begin formulating answers to the questions of the interrelationships between politics and literature if we proceed with the analysis of an individual writer and the reception of his works, rather than dealing with the subject from a purely theoretical point of view. As a contribution to this larger discussion, I offer the following examination of the reception of the works of Hungarian poet and novelist Dezső Kosztolányi during the communist period, drawing particular emphasis to the origins of some misunderstandings.

Many theorists argue that literature (and indeed art in general) is free from political aspects, in accordance with the idea of art for art's sake. As Perez Zagorin argues in the foreword of his book on culture and politics,

*L'art pour l'art* (though even this phenomenon is hardly immune from the political) did not exist. Statesmen, ministers, and political men formed a comparatively small elite with many relations to writers great and small, philosophers, and artists. Popular and radical protest movements usually reflected their own distinctive cultural aspirations and identity.<sup>1</sup>

Kosztolányi also wrote essays on the question of the role of literature in society and whether literature itself should apostolate revolutionary programs for the public or remain independent. Most of his reviewers do not merely analyze his literary works, but rather take issue with his aesthetical statements. And subsequent upon these kind of comments the figure of the author himself and indeed his entire oeuvre becomes distorted. But we have to raise another question: are there any commentaries that might offer an image of the author that could be thought of as real? Indeed is this possible at all?

Over the past several decades Hungarian Marxist literary theorists have thought of artists as having a revolutionary role in society. An artist should be a sort of light in the darkness and should conduct himself as a prophet. Literature also has an important role in accordance with this idea as a means through which to educate the nation. It is for this reason that elements of art that do not serve this ideology were excluded during the communist period in Hungary. Kosztolányi's concept of art for art's sake did not minister to this ideological and political system. Essays on the theory of independent art were understood as being in opposition to the political and educational task of literature. Not only were the critical evaluations of Kosztolányi's writings, including literary and theoretical, distorted and crafted with the intention of creating a misleading image of the author, but the editions of his texts were also censored. It is not mere accident or circumstance that the critical edition series of his works could not be edited and research groups and projects dealing with the lifework edition were not financed under the com-

munist regime, and indeed this remains a thorny literary (and political) question today.

Ideologies always have an effect on broader society. The famous Marxist philosopher György Lukács wrote in one of his studies,

The duty of the literate is different. It is to keep the real questions of Hungarian national life alive and make them known, and search for and find the progressive answers to them. Achievement of that great task determines the responsibility of the literate.<sup>2</sup>

Since some of Kosztolányi's poems and novels are obligatory reading at secondary grammar schools in Hungary and the reception of his works creates an articulated part of contemporary literary and humanist life, the oeuvre acquires an additional function in the education of the nation and the definition of the role of literature, becoming part of the cultural and educational institutional system. The Kosztolányi question is an emblematic ideological problem as well, since both addressing it or keeping silence on it can function as an instrument of an oppressive (political) apparatus.

The history of the reception of Kosztolányi's oeuvre can be divided into several parts. As we are dealing mostly with interpretive communities and groups or schools that inherited one another's points of view, these groups created the determining opinions and interpretations of the image of Kosztolányi. Their functions were temporarily limited, so we can speak about distinct periods. These schools represent different ideologies as well. One could pose the question: can a *clear* image of Kosztolányi exist at all? I have no intention of posing as an omniscient interpreter, but merely wish to point out how politics and ideology influence literature and literary history in the 20th century in Hungary through this example.

The theorist György Lukács, who was one of the leading figures in the past decades of Hungarian literary and cultural life, argues in his early writings that interpretations of literature have connections with social life as well. According to his argument education and interpretation can influence common attitudes and conceptions of thought. In 1919 Lukács started to deal with Marxist thoughts. As Tibor Hanák notes in his work on Lukács, this was a political turn, not a philosophical one,

In the articles that he wrote during the Commune of 1919 he [Lukács] sees in the revolution only the potential for moral cleansing and cultural advances; at the time he professes, 'politics is only a tool, culture is the goal'. His decision to join the communists did not mean the discovery of redemptive doctrine, nor was it an ideological commitment [...] In the late autumn of 1918 György Lukács [...] simply made a political volte-face.<sup>3</sup>

Paul de Man also rejects the argument that one can make a distinction between the early and the later periods of Lukács' work. Instead of a Marxist turn he discerns a kind of continuity, and readers can find marks of the romanticist and idealist heritage in his later works as well,

The weaknesses of the later work are already present from the beginning, and some of the early strength remains operative throughout. Both weakness and strength, however, exist on a meaningful philosophical level and can only be understood in the larger perspective of nineteenth and twentieth-century intellectual history: they are part of the heritage of romantic and idealist thought.<sup>4</sup>

In time the Marxist trend becomes more particular in Lukács's texts. While Western tradition puts emphasis on the Hegelian basis of his ideas, the Hungarian reception focuses mostly on Marxist elements. This problem becomes essential in the discussion of the reception of the works of Kosztolányi.

Because of the decisive influence of the ideas of Lukács, the image of Kosztolányi that we have inherited is a distorted one. Lukács was one of Kosztolányi's contemporaries, and during the 1910s and 1920s they had personal conflicts in addition to their theoretical disagreements. Before World War I Kosztolányi published articles in Marxist periodicals such as *Népszava* and *Világ*, the latter of which was the official paper of the Hungarian freemasons and was edited by Oszkár Jászi and Lajos Purjesz. After the Commune of 1919 he became a contributor to *Új Nemzedék*, which was one of the main organs of governor Horthy during the period referred to by some historians as the White Terror.<sup>5</sup> While Lukács was minister of education during the Commune of 1919,<sup>6</sup> Kosztolányi became the editor of the column entitled *Pardon*, which gibbeted the leaders and followers of the four-month communist reign and which constituted an instrument (or weapon) in the hands of the governor during the white terror. But the antagonism between Kosztolányi and Lukács began before the appearance of Miklós Horthy. Lukács attacked Kosztolányi because of an editorial published on May 8th, 1919 in *Pesti Napló*. The article, entitled *Beer úr* (Sir Beer), was about the talks in Paris that concluded with the Treaty of Trianon, and it struck something of a nationalistic tone.<sup>7</sup> Due to this affair Lukács and the other leading political figures of the Commune not only advanced against Kosztolányi, but started to work out regulations and rules for controlling the media. According to a document entitled *Forradalomban* (In the Revolution), part of a collection of documents on Lukács's role in the Commune,

the history of the conflicts between the media and Lukács, or rather the Ministry of Education, includes the earlier order of the Ministry that editorials in bourgeois daily periodicals be published with the signatures of the authors. In his book entitled *Vallomások* (Confes-

sions), Ferenc Göndör [who emigrated to Vienna after the Commune] attributes the order, which was issued in the beginning of May [1919], to Lukács. One finds only a single remark in the media of the Commune concerning this in an editorial by Pál Hajdu printed in *Vörös Újság* (Red News) on May 9th [...] The article was a shrill attack on 'the slothful caste of journalists, who had degenerated into a class above classes.' This attack had been brought about by the publication in the media of the bourgeois citizenry of several articles commenting in a nationalistic tone on military and economic steps that had been taken against the commune and that had provoked the ire of the communist leaders. (The editorial *Beer úr*, published on May 8th in *Pesti Napló*, was among the problematic articles.)<sup>8</sup>

The minute books of the discussions on the media during the communist dictatorship in 1919 make apparent that journalists had to face difficult existential questions. The media law came into existence on May 14th, which meant unemployment for most of the members of the press.<sup>9</sup>

During the Commune of 1919 politicians established an organization for writers led by Ernő Osvát. Lukács validated the organization, which determined whether a manuscript would be published or not. The situation was similar after World War II, when the Writers' Union was established. As George F. Cushing argues,

At first this was a democratic forum, but it soon became a tool in the hands of the Communist Party to secure conformity. Writers who had never before submitted to direct control and who in any case inherited the traditions of opposition showed considerable reluctance to tow the Party line.<sup>10</sup>

Lukács talked about artistic aspects, not political issues, but books that promoted Marxist and communist ideas were favored. Furthermore, as may seem apparent in retrospect, artistic aspects were defined as artistic from a Marxist point of view. Books that represented theories of art for art's sake were not given priority in publishing. As is common knowledge, in the later period other communists took issue with Lukács's ideas. Other political leaders of the Commune asked him about his Hegelian and romanticist viewpoints. As Tibor Hanák, the emigrant Hungarian theorist, observes,

Lukács did not turn his back on the Hegel question, even after his self-criticism in 1934. In 1938 he completed his manuscript on the youth of the idealist German philosopher, which however he was not able to publish in the Soviet Union because of the ruling official school of thought [...] In [Lukács'] opinion, Hegel's analysis of intellectual development and a close attentiveness to the formation of idealist dialectics constituted an inseparable part of the genesis of Marxist dialectics.<sup>11</sup>

Lukács, who himself was a literary theoretist, liked to speak about Kosztolányi with a negative overtone, not simply about his works, but about his personality and his political role in 1919–1920, which all comprised the focus of several of his essays. In an essay published in *Huszedik Század* in 1907 he ranked Kosztolányi behind Ady, though he admired his poetic talent, commenting that

Dezső Kosztolányi [...] is the only lyricist since Ady who is worth attention [...] Endre Ady was the poet of the combative Hungarian intellectuals; Kosztolányi was an aesthete [...] Kosztolányi's significance is that he can see everything that the best among our painters see, and often is able to find words for this. If there were a few more poets like him, searching with such intense effort for the new Hungarian language, in ten years one would be able to write anything in Hungarian.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the later interpretations on Kosztolányi, which were founded on Lukács' ideology, contain the condemnation of his role in 1919–1920 as part of *Új Nemzedék*, even if these writings show appreciation for his literary works. This reveals that the key issue in the history of Kosztolányi's reception is its origins in the writings and ideas of Lukács (which relate to personal and historical aspects), his editorship of *Pardon* in 1919–1921, and the conflict with Ady's ideological and artistic heritage in 1929.

Journalists had to struggle amidst the changes of regime following World War I (first the Commune, then the so-called White Terror of Miklós Horthy) to survive professionally. Due to the rapid pace of change they were often only able to get work alternately at periodicals the editorship of which bore differing political views. Employment was frequently merely an existential question. This practical explanation notwithstanding, the reception of the writings of authors who worked as journalists characterized this as symbolic of a lack of principles. It is interesting that most of the interpreters only put emphasis on the activities of Kosztolányi and forgot to mention figures such as Emma Ritoók, who before World War I had been a member of the group of Marxist artists and theorists (Lukács and Béla Balázs among them) known as the *Vasárnapi Kör* (Vasárnap Circle). After the Commune she also became an author of *Új Nemzedék*, the leading newspaper of the Horthy regime. But one might also mention János Komáromi or Kálmán Harsányi, and it is worth noting that during the White Terror most of the leftist papers, such as *Népszava*, were censored, which rendered it more difficult to find a job as a journalist.

The question of whether the writers and artists who played cultural roles in the Commune of 1919 did so under pressure or not remains open in many cases to this day. Whether the writers, Kosztolányi among them, were obliged to deal with Marxist theories or whether they chose to is uncertain. The translation of the most celebrated works of Karl Marx constituted an important project of the Com-

mune's cultural policy. This required well-educated and talented writers who could prepare the translations. Sources concerning this, however, are contradictory. In one of his late interviews Lukács names Kosztolányi as an enthusiastic translator of Marx, and given this he brands Kosztolányi's behavior during the White Terror as shameful. Since Lukács exercised a considerable influence on the cultural policy of the Commune, his assertions remain suspicious. As a leading figure and a person responsible for the decisions made at the time, his reminiscences are hardly independent or objective, a fact that one should keep in mind when reading his recollections,

Mikszáth's notion, expressed in the line 'Show me a government that I will not support,' was pertinent under the dictatorship as well. I need mention only one example: Dezső Kosztolányi offered to organize a team to translate Marx's *Capital*. Nobody put pressure on him, on the contrary it was very difficult to dissuade him from undertaking his plan [...] We must not, for the purpose of idealization, omit from the history of the dictatorship the fact that people like Kosztolányi presented themselves en masse. In that situation my standpoint was that I did not take Kosztolányi's decision seriously, but I would have thought it ridiculous had the dictatorship not taken advantage of these possibilities. Subsequently people spoke about compulsion. Even Kassák talked about this later on, when he wanted to flatter the right-leaning social democrats.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast, several articles printed in the re-launched *Új Nemzedék*, which was also banned during the Commune, detail the sufferings of the red terror. Since that daily was owned by the *Központi Sajtóvállalat* (Central Media Firm) and was close to the circle of Horthy, these texts must also be read critically, as their authors were not in a position to write with a clear measure of objectivity. The following citation from an article entitled "Magyar újságírók a proletárdiktatúrában" (Hungarian Journalists in the Dictatorship of the Proletariat) printed in *Új Nemzedék* suffices to illustrate the differences between the two sources,

In the last month of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Béla Kun's government kicked journalists hard in the stomach through its decision not to pay their salaries, as the bourgeois dailies were suspended. Journalists were supposed to teach illiterates and translate Marx, as this was the only way society could make use of them. Of the 1,700 members of the trade union of journalists only 7 "failed to heed this call" [...] After the defeat of the counter-revolution of June 24th, the executive committee of the trade union of journalists, with the support of Lajos Magyar, Ödön Pók, Andor Gábor and others, hailed for its defeat of the revolution the government that had wanted to make unemployed journalists translate Marx and teach illiterates. By this time some of the journalists had come to their senses and decided to protest against this disgraceful idea. On July 5th they held a general



meeting, at which some of the speakers attacked the communist government with wild enthusiasm. On the next day, on June 6th [sic!], seven journalists were dragged at gunpoint from the *Otthon Circle* (Homeland Circle) [...] thanks to the intervention of Romanelli, however, they were not injured.<sup>14</sup>

Lukács' reminiscences in the 1940s constitute another point of interest in the history of the reception of Kosztolányi. Writing again on the days of the communist regime of 1919, he contends,

It is mere legend for example that during the period of counter-revolution Dezső Kosztolányi, supposedly like Mihály Babits, consistently adopted a clearly humanist standpoint. We cannot erase the era of *Pardon* from his biography. This period exists ineradicably, and Kosztolányi himself tried to give a psychological explanation for it in the first and last chapters of his novel, *Anna Édes* [...] As strongly as we may protest against the Kosztolányi legend, we must turn with equal resolve against any interpretation of his career that seeks to derive the whole of his oeuvre and literary image from the period of *Pardon*. Kosztolányi remains a significant poet even if he was responsible for *Pardon*, but this era and this frame of mind, as a trait or feature, should not be absent from his portrait.<sup>15</sup>

Yet while Lukács argues that one must not aspire to deduce Kosztolányi's lifework from *Pardon* (or reduce it to *Pardon*), he does precisely this, as does his disciple Ágnes Heller in her work published in 1957 entitled *Az erkölcsi normák felbomlása. Etikai kérdések Kosztolányi Dezső munkásságában* (The Disintegration of Ethical Norms. Ethical Questions in the Oeuvre of Dezső Kosztolányi).<sup>16</sup>

The notion of clear form and pure aesthetics in art implies that art is an end itself. Art is conceptualized as free from political and social concerns, and cannot have a revolutionary role. It is no coincidence that Hungarian literary history, influenced considerably by Lukács, valued the poetry of Endre Ady over Kosztolányi, an adherent to the notion of art for art's sake. Only a few aspects of his oeuvre were interesting for Marxist theorists, among them the problems of the poor and issues of servants and maids in *Anna Édes*. But those problems were interpreted only from a Marxist point of view, which means that literary history characterized *Anna Édes* as a novel of the conflicts between social classes. Kosztolányi's reinterpreted novels and poems acquired importance, but his thoughts on aesthetics, his conceptions of language, and his translations were gradually forgotten. After the political transition of 1989 Mihály Szegedy-Maszák brought renewed attention to these questions, suggesting for instance that the gesture of translating celebrated works of the fin de siècle should not be equated with the promotion of decadence. As Szegedy-Maszák observes,

Kosztolányi was attracted to self-reflective art from the outset. He probably had an early acquaintance with the two significant works of the aestheticism of the turn of the century, Jean-Karl Huysmans' novel *A Rebours* (1888) and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). Both of these writings were apparently close to Kosztolányi, as he translated them in 1921 and in 1923 under the titles *A különönc* and *Dorian Gray*.<sup>17</sup>

But the issue of *Pardon* was not given analysis, even following the political transition of 1989. While dealing with *Pardon* we have to raise an additional thorny question: was Kosztolányi an anti-Semite? Most of *Pardon* articles do contain anti-Semitic arguments but one cannot in fact know exactly who authored each article, since these writings were published without reference to the author. One therefore cannot make accusations of anti-Semitism against Kosztolányi on this basis. Nevertheless, there remains a more serious problem. Literary history failed to examine or make available the sources, and rather than pursue fundamental questions merely adopted the stereotypes of Marxist ideology that found validation in canonical interpretations. Philological research and general studies about the political and historical background in an international perspective remained underdeveloped. Neither biographies nor textual editions were published. Important manuscripts disappeared from public collections or became the property of leading figures of communist cultural policy, György Aczél among them.<sup>18</sup> They remain unavailable for research, or simply for public reading. Considering that it was possible for such events to transpire, one can hardly speak of the cultural transition that should have followed the political one. The volume of important studies edited by Geoffrey A. Hosking and George F. Cushing deals with censorship of the past decades. As they argue,

Western accounts of literature in the state socialist societies usually begin from the premise that censorship and political control there have reached an unprecedented level, with the result that to publish serious works of literature, especially those critical of the society, is virtually impossible. We then find ourselves faced with a number of exceptions to this rule.<sup>19</sup>

However, it was not only literary works that were censored and kept under state control, but literary histories and scholarly research as well. Hungarian intellectuals have yet to raise the question as to why open discussion of the beginning of the 20th century (which was when many of the most important events took place that continue to exert an influence on conceptions of culture) remains a taboo. Why there are no (or few) critical editions and anthologies or studies dealing with the period? Twenty years have passed since the political transition and the situation remains essentially the same.

Kosztolányi was condemned because of his role in editing *Pardon* not only in reception histories, but also by some of his contemporaries. Hungarian journalist Ferenc Göndör, for example, attacked him in his paper *Az Ember* (Man), which was established in Vienna. Since most of the leading figures of the Commune of 1919 emigrated to Vienna, a group of Hungarian intellectuals took form that included Lukács, Lajos Kassák, Béla Balázs, Andor Gábor and Lajos Hatvany. Hatvany contributed to the establishment of *Nyugat* (West) and helped the career of several young talents.<sup>20</sup> After some months Kosztolányi attempted to leave *Új Nemzedék* and tried to sell his works abroad, including in Vienna. Lajos Hatvany tried to help him, but the other emigrants refused him because of his earlier behavior. When his attempt came to light his colleagues at the daily also wanted to get rid of him. In 1921 Kosztolányi was finally able to leave *Új Nemzedék* and began work at *Pesti Hírlap*, where he was a columnist until his death. But the *Pardon* era taught him not to accept any political role (or role that brought him close to politics) in cultural life.

Shortly after his death the study by János Barta, published in *Nyugat* in 1939,<sup>21</sup> marked the first stage of the reception of Kosztolányi's oeuvre. Barta mentions irrationalism in his analysis of Kosztolányi's work. While Barta forgives him for his conduct or the pose he struck, in the later reception this pose becomes the cause of his displacement to the periphery of the canon. One of the first studies that inherited Lukács' ideas on Kosztolányi was Árpád Szabó's paper *Polgári költészet – népi költészet* (Bourgeois poetry – demotic poetry).<sup>22</sup> Szabó was the pupil of Ferdinand Georg Frobenius, professor of mathematics at the University of Berlin, and he also dealt with literature and classical philology. In his rhetorically well-structured essay he points out the connections between Kosztolányi's writings and existentialism by emphasizing his cult of the self and individualism. In his conclusion he argues that Kosztolányi was a proto-fascist writer and in that sense a relative of Martin Heidegger. Zoltán Szabó replies to these arguments, writing the following: "the sober mind cannot grasp why it would be necessary to execute someone whose body is dead but whose spirit is immortal."<sup>23</sup> Árpád Szabó begins by analyzing the changes that took place in Hungarian society at the turn of the 20th century. Adopting a standpoint that is in contradiction with the idea of art for art's sake, he poses the question of the close connections between literature and politics. In his opinion Ady was the only writer who broke out from aestheticism and tried to represent the revolutionary artist. It is not difficult to conclude that the origins of Ady's and Kosztolányi's place in the Hungarian literary canon under communism lie not only with Lukács but also Szabó. But one could also mention the discussion of Ady, when even Kosztolányi's contemporaries turned against him, since he attacked the memory of Ady in 1929 in an article that was published in *A Toll* (The Plume). Sándor Petőfi is also mentioned alongside Szabó, and named as a revolutionary poet. These key issues (the attack against

Ady, his conduct during the White Terror, and his belief in the idea of art for art's sake) create the main stream of the reception of Kosztolányi under communism. That fact clearly shows the connections between politics and literature, or at the very least the relationship between literary studies and the ideologies of the dominant classes. The figure of Kosztolányi becomes a kind of Satan in that context. In Lukács's words, he was a "conscious and malicious"<sup>24</sup> person who constituted a danger to communist society, and those who wish to pursue research on his work were also dangerous enemies of the communist system. In order to smirch Kosztolányi's reputation further, Szabó cites *Gyilkosok* (Killers), one of his early poems,

These lines speak so clearly that any commentary would be superfluous. The author assumes unqualified solidarity with the 'glorious force' – the killers – since the rule of law that smites them, the heinous Themis, is only a 'painted whore' [...]<sup>25</sup>

Like Ágnes Heller, Szabó also mixes biographical data with literary texts and draws essentially ethical conclusions from the bizarre miscellany. Due to their works, which are based on the ideas of Lukács, Kosztolányi was pushed out from the canon for decades. Heller also identifies what she characterizes as the journalist's moral (or rather immoral) attachment to decadent bourgeois society. The starting argument of her book is that as a journalist Kosztolányi was unprincipled and immoral, and this behavior can be discerned in his literary texts as well.

A journalist can only be saved from the bourgeois journalist moral by one thing: a consistent ideological attitude of mind. And only a consistent political attitude can create a consistent ideological attitude.<sup>26</sup>

Kosztolányi's thoughts on relativity become dangerous for the communist moral, since he forgot that according to communist ideology the role of art is to educate the nation and address questions of ethics. As there are numerous of nihilistic and ill-willed figures in his writings (Kornél Esti behaves like an anarchist sometimes, for example), Kosztolányi becomes a symbol of nihilism and his *ars poetica* a destructive way of thinking.

One might think that after the political transition of 1989 no one continued the tradition represented by Heller's book, but there are on the contrary several examples. These include László Márton, who also adopts the terms of the Marxist ethics. He does not speak directly from a Marxist point of view, but nonetheless raises moral questions when writing on Kosztolányi. He also mentions the Ady discussion and the case of the *Pardon* articles as well. By analyzing texts of letters and diaries, he comes to the following conclusion:

Whatever the case, we are not speaking here of the destruction of moral norms (as a study written 40 years ago attempted to demon-

strate), because this existed since Mikszáth, or even in the age of reforms, which was so richly gilded in virtue, in the work of Lajos Kuthy, and for this there is no need of all the linguistic-stylistic and role-switching bravura that Kosztolányi produces. These changes could rather be interpreted as a kind of inborn ‘prank of character’. It is a demonic feature of personality, a Protean variability.<sup>27</sup>

Mihály Szegedy-Maszák gives a reply to those who would like to base interpretations of letters and diaries on the supposed dark side of the author’s personality. He mentions Nietzsche, who had a considerable influence on Kosztolányi,<sup>28</sup> and notes that after the emergence of the German philosopher thoughts on moral values (since we are *beyond good and evil*) became problematic and notions of relativism acquired new significance. Given this Szegedy-Maszák’s perspective could be thought of as more current than Márton’s, but one might still raise the question as to whether relativism represents the final stage in human intellectual development. I would contend that the discernment of unity and harmony becomes more and more important both in common philosophy and in everyday life. Postmodern philosophers who promulgated the fragmentation and disintegration of the self reached a dead end.

András Lengyel also speaks about the influence of Nietzsche and correlates it with the problems of personality. He also mentions the poem *Gyilkosok* (Killers) and the anarchism of Kornél Esti. As he argues in his study,

The other example that should be discussed is [...] the creation of the figure Kornél Esti. In its own considerably complicated and cunning way, this literary character is, at least on some level, the mouthpiece of the ‘evil’ (thus anti-Christian in the Nietzschean sense) Kosztolányi.<sup>29</sup>

In the course of time Kosztolányi’s oeuvre became part of the canon. Marxist interpretators put the emphasis on his humanity and compassion with the poor. Pál Réz, who edited the series of the works of Dezső Kosztolányi, also notes his humanity, but does not neglect to mention the notion of art for art’s sake. He also addresses the articles written in *Pardon*, but he does not pass judgment on Kosztolányi because of them, as one cannot know which of the articles he wrote. As he writes in one of his essays,

But we also know that he edited the arrant heading *Pardon* of *Új Nemzedék*. According to the recollections of his contemporaries, articles in that column were written by four people: Miklós Kállay, István Lendvai, Father Béla Bangha, and Dezső Kosztolányi. Shameful articles were published in the column of that clerical, extreme nationalist, provocative daily. These articles make denunciations, issues calls for revenge, and demand that writers and artists remain silent. Journalists, fortunately, did not sign their articles and at

the moment it is not possible to determine who authored which horrible piece of writing. We use the word *fortunately*, and the word surely seems frivolous and absurd coming from the plume of a literary historian or philologist. But Kosztolányi is one of my favorite writers. This is why I am happy that we do not find his name under those petty and forbiddingly accusing articles.<sup>30</sup>

Since Réz worked during the communist era, he was unable to publish all of Kosztolányi's texts, and even though he did publish some that had a bearing on the contemporary political context, he was only able to do so under censorship. We can quote some documents here that demonstrate the pressure that he was under as an editor. Zoltán Héra, who was a celebrated cultural politician of the period and vice leader of the column *Culture* at *Népszabadság* (Freedom of the People), one of the main dailies, attacked Réz's afterword to one of the Kosztolányi volumes. As he argues in his review of the book in 1958 (in other words after the Revolution of 1956, at the time when people were being punished for participation in the events of the Revolution),

Kosztolányi's essays are quite 'ideological' after all. There was no more militant propagator or vigilant defender of the bourgeois notion of art for art's sake [...] He [Pál Réz, the author of the afterword] does not realize that Kosztolányi was on the side of bourgeois 'pure art' at the time when he wrote on Móricz or Lajos Nagy [...] Well, Kosztolányi was a far too 'writerly' for there to have been a chasm separating his feelings and thoughts. Principle and ideology were not abstract theories for him, they pervaded his instincts, his whole nervous system. It was reflex and routine.<sup>31</sup>

There was another tendency in the later Marxist interpretations. Like Héra, Sándor Koczkás also wanted to point out that Kosztolányi was a bourgeois who would have liked to promote bourgeois literature and ideologies that relate to that social system. Instead of branding him a person without principles, he characterized Kosztolányi as a conscious destroyer and enemy of communism. Sándor Koczkás, a one-time professor at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, analyzed Kosztolányi's philosophy of art for art's sake: "the thing for which people – for which we – most often criticized him, his facilely elegant lack of principles, was really only an effective mask covering his carefully thought-out principled standpoint".<sup>32</sup> Koczkás also mentions that Kosztolányi became a kind of symbol or an ideal of bourgeois ambitions for groups that were against communism. Considering the circumstances, it is no wonder there is still no critical edition of Kosztolányi's works.

During the 1990s postmodern theoretists discovered his oeuvre and analyzed his works almost exclusively from the point of view of narratology. A number of new readings were published and his theories on language also came to focus. As



one of the leading figures of the Kosztolányi renaissance, Mihály Szegedy-Maszák argues,

His view of language markedly differs from that of Hegel or Saussure, who believed that the connection between signifier and signified is arbitrary, and has more in common with that of Heidegger, decipherer of words, or Derrida, who rejected the familiar meaning by right of signifier.<sup>33</sup>

It is not coincidental that after the political transition of 1989 works came out to light that had been forgotten or censored. Applying the recent ideas of postmodern philosophy and literary theory, including hermeneutics, deconstruction and other trends, readers of Kosztolányi's oeuvre were able to reinterpret numerous questions, among them the case of Kornél Esti, the character, the genre, and its connections with the author's thoughts on the nature of language.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless there are some important questions that have not yet been answered. As mentioned above, questions concerning the articles in *Pardon* remain unanswered. Furthermore, there is little new philological research, and only one bibliography has been published (and it contains only a small part of the oeuvre as the first volume of the whole bibliography).<sup>35</sup> There is no authentic biography and the critical edition project, which began only two years ago, has had to face difficult questions concerning Kosztolányi's lifework. Hungarian philologists who deal with Kosztolányi's oeuvre must address these questions and challenge the Marxist axioms and stereotypes if they hope to further the development of Kosztolányi's reception. Relying on postmodern theories is not sufficient if there is little fundamental research.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Zagorin, Perez (1980) 'Preface' in Perez Zagorin (ed.): *Culture and Politics From Puritanism to the Enlightenment* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London: University of California Press). ix.
- <sup>2</sup> "Az írástudók általános feladata más: ébren tartani, tudatosítani a magyar nemzeti élet igazi kérdéseit, megkeresni és megtalálni rájuk a progresszív válaszokat. Ennek a nagy feladatnak teljesítése határozza meg az írástudók felelősségét." – Lukács, György (1945) 'Előszó' (Foreword) in *Írástudók felelőssége* (Budapest: Szikra). 17.
- <sup>3</sup> "A Tanácsköztársaság idején írt cikkeiben csupán a morális tisztulás és a kulturális felemelkedés lehetőségének megteremtését látja a forradalomban; azt hirdeti ekkor, hogy a »politika csak eszköz, a kultúra a cél«. Csatlakozása a kommunistákhoz eleinte tehát nem jelentette a megváltó tan megtalálását, az ideológiai elkötelezést. [...] Lukács György 1918 késő őszén [...] csak politikai fordulatot tett." – Hanák, Tibor (1974) *A filozófus Lukács* (The philosopher Lukács) (Paris: Magyar Műhely). 7, 65.
- <sup>4</sup> De Man, Paul (1971) 'George Lukács's Theory of the Novel' in *Blindness and Insight. Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). 52.



- <sup>5</sup> “Christian and national ideology and the political aims of the government were served by the media of several trends. The Jesuit preacher and politician Béla Bangha was the first who brought out Catholic and radical point of view and who started a number of dailies from September 1919, for rolling back the »destructive Jewish media«. These journals were the following: *Új Nemzedék* (1919–1944, earlier it was a weekly), *Nemzeti Újság* that inherited the position of *Alkotmány* (1919–1944) *Új Lap*, the literary and political periodical *Gondolat* and the the magazine *Képes Krónika*. At that time had begun functioning the Központi Sajtóvállalat (Central Media Company) as well. During the 1930s the company needed regular financial support – the amount exceeded 200,000 pengős (Hungarian currency of that period) per year –, although *Új Nemzedék* was one of the leading dailies at that age with its 77,000 issues.” (“A keresztény nemzeti eszmerendszert és a kormányzati célokat több, különböző áramlat sajtója szolgálta. A katolikus radikális álláspontot elsőként *Bangha Béla* jezsuita hitszónok és politikus szólaltatta meg, aki a »destruktív zsidó sajtó« háttérbe szorítására számos lapot indított 1919 szeptemberétől: az *Új Nemzedék* (1919–1944, korábban hetilap), az *Alkotmány* örökébe lépő *Nemzeti Újság* (1919–1944) és az *Új Lap* című napilapokat, a *Gondolat* című irodalmi és politikai folyóiratot és a *Képes Krónika* című képeslapot. Ekkor kezdett el működni az általa alapított Központi Sajtóvállalat is. Ez a harmincas években rendszeres támogatásra szorult – évi mértéke meghaladta a kétszázezer pengőt –, bár a 77,000 példányban megjelenő *Új Nemzedék* például a korszak kiemelkedően nagy lapjai közé tartozott.”) – Kókay, György – Buzinkay, Géza – Murányi, Gábor (eds) (1998) *A magyar sajtó története* (History of Hungarian Media) (Budapest: MÚOSZ). 184.
- <sup>6</sup> Besides Lukács Zsigmond Kunfi, Sándor Szabados and Tibor Szamuely were ministers of education during the Commune of 1919.
- <sup>7</sup> Kosztolányi, Dezső (1919) “Beer úr’ (Sir Beer), *Pesti Napló*, May 8th, 1.
- <sup>8</sup> “A sajtó és Lukács, illetve a Közoktatásügyi Népbiztosság közötti konfliktusok történetéhez tartozik a népbiztosságnak az a korábbi belső rendelete, amely előírta, hogy a volt polgári lapok vezércikkeit aláírva kell közölni. A május elején hozott rendeletet Göndör Ferenc Vallomások könyve című visszaemlékezése Lukácsnak tulajdonítja. A Tanácsköztársaság sajtójában csak egy helyütt történik rá utalás, a Vörös Újság május 9-i vezércikkében, amelyet, ugyancsak Göndör Ferenc visszaemlékezése szerint, Hajdu Pál írt. [...] A cikk élesen támadta »az osztály feletti osztállyá fajult újságírók henye kasztját«. E támadás kiváltó oka az volt, hogy a polgári sajtóban megjelent néhány cikk nacionalista hangvételben kommentálta a Tanácsköztársaság ellen irányuló katonai, illetőleg gazdasági lépéseket, ami visszatetszést szült a kommunista vezetőkben. (A kifogásolt cikkek közé tartozott Kosztolányi Dezső Beer úr című, a Pesti Napló május 8-i számában megjelent vezércikke [...])” – Mesterházi, Miklós (1987) ‘Jegyzetek’ (Notes) in György Lukács (1987) *Forradalomban. Cikkek, tanulmányok 1918–1919* (Budapest: Magvető). 534.
- <sup>9</sup> About the media law and the question of the media during the Commune of 1919, see: Kókay – Buzinkay – Murányi (1998) *Ibid.*, 178–179.
- <sup>10</sup> Cushing, George F. (1989) ‘Social Criticism in Hungarian Literature since 1956’ in Geoffrey A. Hosking and George F. Cushing (eds) *Perspectives on Literature and Society in Eastern and Western Europe* (London: Macmillan Press). 103.
- <sup>11</sup> “Lukács azonban közvetlenül az 1934-es önkritikája után sem fordított hátat a Hegel-problémának. 1938-ban már elkészült a német idealista filozófus ifjúkorával foglalkozó művének kézírata, melyet azonban a Szovjetunióban uralkodó hivatalos felfogások következtében nem publikálhatott. [...] Szerinte [ti. Lukács] a marxi dialektika keletkezéstörténetéhez elszakíthatatlanul hozzátartozik Hegel szellemi fejlődésének vizsgálata, az idealista dialektika kialakulásának nyomon követése.” – Hanák, Tibor (1974) *Ibid.*, 65–66.

- <sup>12</sup> “Kosztolányi Dezső [...] az egyetlen lírikus Ady Endre fellépése óta, aki komolyan tekintetbe jöhet, és az egyetlen Ady mellett, akivel érdemes foglalkozni. [...] Ady Endre a harcos kultúrmagarság költője volt; Kosztolányi esztéta. [...] Kosztolányi jelentősége az, hogy meglátja mindazt, amit festőink közül a kevés legjobb meglát, és hogy sokszor szavakat tud találni számukra. Ha még egypáran lennének, akik olyan intenzív erővel keresik az új magyar nyelvet, mint ő, tíz év múlva mindent meg lehetne írni magyarul is.” – Lukács, György (1977) ‘Négy fal között. Kosztolányi Dezső versei’ (Between four walls. Poems of Dezső Kosztolányi) in Árpád Timár (ed.) *Ifjúkori művek 1902–1918* (Budapest: Magvető). 117–118.
- <sup>13</sup> “A Diktatúrában is hatott Mikszáthnak az a gondolata: »Mutass nekem egy olyan kormányt, amelyet én nem fogok támogatni.« Hogy más példára ne is hivatkozzam, Kosztolányi Dezső felajánlotta, hogy munkaközösséget szervez Marx Tőkénének lefordítására. Nem arról volt szó, hogy Kosztolányit erre bárki is kényszerítette volna, sőt ellenkezőleg, alig lehetett tervéről lebeszélni. [...] Semmiféle idealizálás kedvéért nem szabad kihagyni a Diktatúra történetéből, hogy olyan emberek, mint Kosztolányi, tömegével jelentkeztek. Itt nekem az volt az álláspontom, hogy pillanatra sem vettem komolyan Kosztolányi elhatározását, de nevetségesnek tartottam volna, ha a Diktatúra ezeket a lehetőségeket nem használja ki. Utólag beszéltek az emberek kényszerről. Még Kassák is megtette ezt a későbbi időkben, amikor hízelegni kívánt a jobboldali szociáldemokratáknak.” – Lukács, György (1970) ‘Bartók és a magyar forradalom’ (Bartók and the Hungarian Revolution) in *Magyar irodalom – magyar kultúra. Válogatott tanulmányok* (Budapest: Gondolat). 651.
- <sup>14</sup> “A proletárdiktatúra utolsó hónapjában Kun Béla kormánya hatalmas rúgást mért a szolgámodon meglapuló újságírók gyomrába és elhatározta, hogy nem fizeti többé őket, mert hiszen a polgári lapok szünetelnek. Az újságíró menjen analfabétát tanítani és Marxot fordítani, mert különben nem veheti hasznát a társadalom. Ennek a felszólításnak 1,700 újságíró szakszervezeti tag közül csak 7-en nem tettek eleget [...]. A június 24-i ellenforradalom leverése után az újságírók szakszervezetének végrehajtóbizottsága: Magyar Lajos, Pók Ödön, Gábor Andor és mások támogatásával kimondotta, hogy a forradalom leverésének magasztos tényéért üdvözli azt a kormányt, amely Marxot akar fordíttatni és analfabétákat akar oktattatni az állástalan újságírókkal. Ekkor már észhez kapott az újságírók egy töredéke és elhatározta, hogy valamilyen formában tiltakozik ez ellen a gyalázatos szándék ellen. Július 5-én közgyűlést tartottak, amelyen néhány szónok váratlan heveséggel támadta meg a tanácskormányt. Másnap, június 6-án [sic!] hét újságírót szuronyok között hurcoltak el az Otthonkörből... azonban Romanelli közbelépésére nem történt komolyabb bajuk.” – Lenz, Géza [Riporter] (1919) ‘Magyar újságírók a proletárdiktatúrában’ (Hungarian journalists under the communist dictatorship), *Új Nemzedék*, September 15th, 15.
- <sup>15</sup> “Legenda például az, hogy az ellenforradalmi korszakban Kosztolányi Dezső, állítólag éppen úgy, mint Babits Mihály, mindig tiszta humanista álláspontot foglalt el. Nem lehet Kosztolányi életéből a Pardon-rovat korszakát kiradírozni. Ez a korszak kitörölhetetlenül létezik és maga Kosztolányi próbál rá lélektani magyarázatot adni az Édes Anna bevezetésében és befejezésében. [...] Amilyen élesen tiltakozunk a Kosztolányi-legenda ellen, olyan élesen kell szembefordulni minden olyan felfogással, mely a Pardon-rovatból akarja »levelezni« Kosztolányi egész életművét és írói egyéniségét. Kosztolányi jelentékeny költő annak ellenére, hogy a Pardon-rovatot csinálta, de ennek az időnek, ennek az állásfoglalásnak, ennek a magatartásnak – mint vonásnak – nem szabad hiányoznia írói arcképéből.” – Lukács, György (1970) ‘Régi és új legendák ellen’ (Against old and new legends), in *Magyar irodalom – magyar kultúra. Válogatott tanulmányok* (Budapest: Gondolat). 411–412.
- <sup>16</sup> Heller, Ágnes (1957) *Az erkölcsi normák felbomlása. Etikai kérdések Kosztolányi Dezső munkásságában* (The Disintegration of Ethical Norms. Ethical Questions in the Oeuvre of Dezső Kosztolányi), (Budapest: Kossuth).

- <sup>17</sup> “Kosztolányi kezdettől fogva vonzódott az öntükröző művészetéhez. Valószínűleg korán megismerte a századvég esztétizmusának két jellegzetes alkotását, Jean-Karl Huysmans *A Rebours* (1888) és Oscar Wilde *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) című regényét. Mindkét mű nyilvánvalóan közel állt Kosztolányihoz, hiszen utóbb, 1921-ben illetve 1923-ban az ő fordításában jelentek meg magyarul, A különc illetve Dorian Gray arcképe címmel.” – Szegedy-Maszák, Mihály (1998) ‘Kései művek előképe. Kosztolányi: A cseh trombitás’ (Prefigurations of later works. Kosztolányi: The Bohemian Trumpeter) in *Irodalmi kánonok* (Debrecen: Csokonai). 141.
- <sup>18</sup> See: Bíró-Balogh, Tamás (2008) ‘Előkerült Kosztolányi utolsó verse’ (Kosztolányi’s last poem has turned up), <http://www.litera.hu/hirek/elokerult-kosztolanyi-utolso-verse>
- <sup>19</sup> Hosking, Geoffrey A. (1989) ‘Introduction’, in Geoffrey A. Hosking and George F. Cushing (eds) *Perspectives on Literature and Society in Eastern and Western Europe* (London: Macmillan Press). 1.
- <sup>20</sup> Some of the remarkable articles are: Göndör, Ferenc (1921) ‘Dezső, ne hazudj!’ (Dezső do not lie!), *Az Ember*, May 15th, 6–7; Göndör, Ferenc (1921) ‘Egy szegény kis ember panasza’ (Laments of a little poor man), *Az Ember*, June 26th, 10; g. f. [= Ferenc Göndör] (1921) ‘Megdöglött a kurzus! Avagy: Kádár Lehel, Lendvai (Lehner), Kosztolányi, Szabó Dezső, Krüger Aladár, a Miklós Andor rituális ravatalán’ (The course died, or: Lehel Kádár, Lendvai /Lehner/, Kosztolányi, Dezső Szabó, Aladár Krüger are on the ritualistic catafalque of Andor Miklós), *Az Ember*, October 9th, 4–5; Gábor, Andor (1921) ‘Dezső lehazudja a csillagokat’ (Dezső Tells Nothing but Lies), *Bécsi Magyar Újság*, May 10th, 6.
- <sup>21</sup> Barta, János (1939) ‘Kosztolányi költői hagyatéka. Szeptemberi áhitat. Révai’ (Poetic heritage of Kosztolányi. Devotion of September. Révai), *Nyugat*, Vol. 5, 331.
- <sup>22</sup> Szabó, Árpád (1946) ‘Polgári költészet – népi költészet. 1. Kosztolányi’ (Bourgeois poetry – demotic poetry. 1. Kosztolányi), *Valóság*, Vol. 11, 1–24.
- <sup>23</sup> “... józan ésszel nem lehet megérteni, hogy minek kivégezni azt, aki testi mivoltában halott, szellemi mivoltában halhatatlan.” – Szabó, Zoltán (1947) ‘Kézmozdulat és vélemény’ (Pass and opinion), *Valóság*, Vol. 2, 126.
- <sup>24</sup> Lukács, György (1945) *Írástudók felelőssége* (Responsibility of literates) (Budapest: Szikra). 11.
- <sup>25</sup> “Ezek a sorok olyan világosan beszélnek, hogy szinte fölösleges minden kommentár. Az író fenntartás nélkül vállalja a szolidaritást a »dicső erővel«, a gyilkosokkal, mert hiszen az a jogrend, amely a gyilkosokat sújtja, az undok Themis, úgyszólván csak »festett szajha«...” – Quotes: Szabó, Árpád (1946) *Ibid.*, 11.
- <sup>26</sup> “Újságíró a polgári újságíró moráltól csak egyetlen dolog mentheti meg: a szilárd világnézeti állásfoglalás. Szilárd világnézetet egyedül a szilárd politikai állásfoglalás teremthet meg.” – Heller, Ágnes (1957) *Ibid.*, 21.
- <sup>27</sup> “Bárhogy van is, nem az erkölcsi normák felbomlásáról van itt szó (amit egy negyven évvel ezelőtti tanulmány próbált kimutatni), mert az már megvolt Mikszáthnál, sőt már az erényektől oly vastagon bearanyozott reformkorban, Kuthy Lajosnál is megvolt, s ahhoz nem kell annyi nyelvi-stilisztikai és szerepváltásbeli bravúr, mint amennyit K. D. produkál; e váltásokat inkább valamiféle természet adta »jellemcsínynek« lehet tekinteni. A jellem egyik démoni vonása ez, próteuszi változékonyság.” – Márton, László (1997) ‘Színes tinták bölcsessége’ (Wisdom of coloured inks), *Holmi*, Vol. 9, 1322.
- <sup>28</sup> Szegedy-Maszák, Mihály (1998) ‘A kánonok hiábavalósága. Kosztolányi a világirodalomról’ (Vanity of canons. Kosztolányi on world literature) in *Irodalmi kánonok* (Debrecen: Csokonai). 46.
- <sup>29</sup> “A másik példa, amely e beállítódás következményei között tárgyalható, Esti Kornél [...] figurájának megteremtése. A maga meglehetősen bonyolult és rafinált módján ez az irodalmi

figura – legalábbis egy síkon – a »gonosz« (tehát nietzschei értelemben vett antikeresztény) Kosztolányi szócsove.” – Lengyel, András (2000) ‘Csillogó felületek gyöngyhalászja. Kosztolányi Dezső nietzschei vázgondolatai’ (Pearl fisher of glittering surfaces. Kosztolányi’s Basic Thoughts, Derived from the Ideas of Nietzsche), in *Játék és valóság közt. Kosztolányi-tanulmányok* (Szeged: Tiszatáj). 85.

- 30 “De tudjuk azt is, hogy ő szerkesztette az Új Nemzedék hírhedt Pardon rovatát. A rovat cikkeit a kortársak emlékezete szerint négyen írták: Kállay Miklós, Lendvai István, Bangha Béla páter – és Kosztolányi Dezső. A klerikális, szélsőségesen nacionalista, uszító lapnak ebben a rovatában szégyenletes cikkek jelennek meg: denúciálnak, bosszúért kiáltanak, írók és művészek elhallgattatását követelik. A hírlapírók, szerencsére, nem jegyezték a cikkeiket, s ma már nem áll módunkban megállapítani, hogy melyik förmedvénynek ki a szerzője. Szerencsére, mondtuk, s a szó bizonyára léhának és képtelennek tűnik fel irodalomtörténész és filológus tollán. De Kosztolányi a legkedvesebb íróim közé tartozik; ezért veszem szívesen, hogy a kisszerűen, de fenyegetően vádaskodó cikkek alatt nincs ott a neve.” – Réz, Pál (1973) ‘Kosztolányi, a hírlapíró’ (Kosztolányi, the journalist) in *Kulcsok és kérdőjelek* (Budapest: Magvető). 100.
- 31 “Nos, Kosztolányi kritikai írásai nagyon is »világnézetiek«. A polgári l’art pour l’art-nak nem volt nálunk harcosabb propagátora, éberebb védelmezője. [...] Nem veszi észre, hogy Kosztolányi a polgári ’tisza művészet’ posztján állott akkor is, amikor Móriczról vagy Nagy Lajosról írt. [...] Nos, Kosztolányi sokkal »íróbb« író volt annál, semhogy hangulat és gondolat közt önála szakadék legyen. Elv és világnézet nem elvont teória volt az ő számára – átjárta az ösztöneit, egész idegrendszerét, reflex volt már és rutin.” – Héja, Zoltán (1958) ‘Részrehajlás, vagy elfogulatlanság? Megjegyzések egy utószóhoz’ (Favour or candour? Notes to an afterword), *Népszabadság*, December 25th, 19.
- 32 “S amit talán legtöbbször vetettek, vetettünk szemére: könnyeden elegáns elvtelenségét – valójában határozottan végiggondolt elvi álláspont hatásos álarca csupán.” – Koczkás, Sándor (1958) ‘A kritika elefántcsonttornya’ (Ivory tower of criticism), *Valóság*, Vol. 4, 37.
- 33 “Nyelvszemlélete erősen különbözik Hegel vagy Saussure felfogásától, akik önkényesnek vélték a kapcsolatot jelentő és jelentett között, és inkább rokon a szófejtő Heidegger vagy akár a megszokott jelentést a jelentő alapján kitörő Derrida álláspontjával.” – Szegedy-Maszák, Mihály (1995) ‘Kosztolányi nyelvszemlélete’ (Kosztolányi’s view of language) in *Minta a szőnyegen. A műértelmezés esélyei* (Budapest: Balassi). 170.
- 34 See: Kulcsár Szabó, Ernő and Mihály Szegedy-Maszák (eds) (1998) *Újraolvasó* (Rereader) (Budapest: Anonymus). 7.
- 35 Arany, Zsuzsanna (ed.) (2008) *Kosztolányi Dezső napilapokban és folyóiratokban megjelent írásainak jegyzéke I* (Bibliography of Kosztolányi’s writing published in dailies and periodicals 1) (Budapest: Ráció).

## EXILE IN THE HOTEL PLAZA: THE TWILIGHT YEARS OF FERENC MOLNÁR (1940–1952)

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The internationally recognized Hungarian playwright Ferenc Molnár settled over to the United States in 1940, well beyond the top of his career. He was an essentially Hungarian, more precisely metropolitan author, with accents from Pest, famous for his ingeniously Hungarian sense of humour. Yet he became the most frequently translated Hungarian playwright of his era, with immense and immediate international success. Practically, Molnár did not live in Hungary from the beginning of the Horthy era (1920–1944), but the Jewish-Hungarian author decided to leave Europe well after Hitler's takeover only. His name was known even in the United States: his first really successful play, *The Devil* was staged in New York in 1908, a year after being first performed in Budapest. Several of his plays had a phenomenal success story in the 1920s, his *The Play is the Thing* had its world premiere in New York in 1926. *Carousel*, the “Best Musical of the 20th Century”, by Rodgers and Hammerstein, was based on Molnár's 1909 play *Liliom*.

This article aims at reconstructing Molnár's overseas network and recreating the spirit and growing loneliness of immigrants. It also tries to answer the question of how the work of an author so deeply embedded in Hungarian language and culture could be translated and adapted to foreign languages.

**Keywords:** Jewish-Hungarian culture, international success, Max Reinhardt, Broadway, emigration, exile, *Paul Street Boys*, *Carousel*, adaptation of genre conventions, immigrant spirit

The Hungarian author Ferenc Molnár<sup>1</sup> (1878–1952) arrived in New York on board the Italian ocean liner *Rex* on January 12, 1940, on his 62nd birthday, as it so happens. By that time he was already a world-famous playwright. His plays, especially *The Devil*, *The Guardsman*, *Liliom*, and *The Play is the Thing*, had been performed all over the world with great success; his stagecraft served as the pattern of dramaturgy. A very young Ingrid Bergman, personally unknown to Molnár at the time, was also a passenger aboard the *Rex*. She would later play in the New York revivals of *Liliom* to great acclaim. The *Rex* sailed on New Year's Eve and the passage took twelve days. The quotation below is from Molnár's

autobiography *Companion in Exile* (1950). The curiosity of this autobiography lies in the fact that about one third of the book was copied by Molnár from his secretary's diary. She had worked for Molnár for fifteen years and had kept a diary about their life together.

When their vessel finally came alongside the pier in the dark winter night, the cheers from ashore could be heard on shipboard, followed by a singing chorus. M. was surprised: he supposed that either the Hungarian colony or his friend Gilbert Miller,<sup>2</sup> who had produced a lot of his plays in New York, had arranged it. Now M. says it is possible that Miss Bergman also thought the ovation was for her, because she was a famous Swedish actress, and a Hollywood picture of hers, *Intermezzo* (with Leslie Howard), was running successfully in New York. Even before they went ashore, M. discovered that the jubilant ovation and the chorus of hundreds of voices were a Zionist welcome intended for Dr. Chaim Weizmann,<sup>3</sup> the leading champion of the Jewish homeland in Palestine, who arrived on board the same ship, unknown to either M. or Miss Bergman. Despite his esteem for Dr. Weizmann, M. said it was quite an anti-climax to walk down the gangplank to the sounds of the chorus. The voyage was not at all bad, M. said, aside from the uneasy feeling caused by the whispering about a British destroyer that accompanied the vessel at a respectful distance in case of German submarines, to guard one passenger, a certain Mr. Butler, one of the highest officials of the British Embassy in Washington."<sup>4</sup>

This passage makes mention of the different social layers of the illustrious passengers on board the *Rex*, which functioned as a sort of Noah's ark between the continent and the United States for people fleeing from Nazi Europe: there was the writer, the actress, the politician, and the diplomat. When Molnár later read in the newspapers that the *Rex* had been sunk during the war, he offered the following remark: "Poor *Rex* has had a bad end, but she brought luck to some of my fellow passengers. The slow-rising and very different careers of passengers Michael Todd,<sup>5</sup> Ingrid Bergman, and Chaim Weizmann skyrocketed soon after landing."<sup>6</sup> It seems that the Hungarian writer did not include himself among those to whom America had brought luck. The reason was that by the time he arrived in the United States, his career had already passed its height. His fame was kept alive mainly by his successful plays, staged in long-running series. During his years of exile he did not write any works of outstanding merit, and most certainly none of the kind that would have become part of the international canon.

He did, however, write one important historical drama, *The Emperor*, in 1942. It is a surprising play because it is a tragedy, and Molnár was well known as a comedy writer. The play was conceived at the encouragement of his Austrian friend, Max Reinhardt,<sup>7</sup> the great European stage innovator who was also living in



America at the time. The goal of Reinhardt must have been to urge Molnár to write again, since having left Europe Molnár had lost his balance. (Reinhardt would have liked to play the role of the main character, but he died in 1943.) Presumably, Molnár intended to reenter the theatrical life of Budapest with this play. *The Emperor* is a tragedy about a theater company set in the Napoleonic era. Indirectly, it confronts the issues of dictatorship, war and the distinction between real and feigned emotions.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the play was put on stage only in Budapest, and for half a season and it did not have much success. The Hungarian audience had expected Molnár to provide what it had been accustomed to: light, attention-diverting entertainment. The comeback was not a success.

### **Budapest: The Beginnings of a Career**

Molnár was born in Budapest in 1878. His career developed along with the city where he was rooted. The united capital of Budapest had been established only five years before his birth. Previously it had consisted of three historically, culturally, and ideologically different cities, Pest, Buda, and Óbuda.<sup>9</sup> Up to that time, the national literature had been more rural in its orientation and world view.<sup>10</sup> Molnár used to refer to his birthplace as “my native village, Pest”. The city was bilingual, with the Hungarian bourgeoisie speaking German and Hungarian. This was the era of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Pest radiated a special ideological atmosphere: the heritage of the Revolution of 1848 was still palpable and the atmosphere was enriched by liberalism and the urban impulses. After the 1873 unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda, the capital underwent enormous development. With its 733,000 inhabitants it had become the eighth largest European city by the turn of the century.<sup>11</sup> Within the capital alone, forty-eight daily newspapers were published, more than in any other European city. In addition to the thirty-nine Hungarian language newspapers there were also nine German papers. The entire output of the Hungarian news publications reached 154,000,000 copies per year. This was a historical turning point in the intellectual life of Hungarians. 1882 marked a symbolic moment in Hungarian literature as the year in which János Arany died. He had been an outstanding, celebrated, and yet soft-spoken literary figure. He represented the combination of two worlds: the rural literary world and the Revolution of 1848 on the one hand and the world of the swiftly developing capital on the other. The older generation was frightened by these swift changes. It was at this moment that a new generation entered the scene. This latter, urban world was Molnár’s natural habitat.

Molnár was an urban character. He came from an upper middle-class Jewish family; his father was a well-known surgeon in Budapest. The social network and the high esteem surrounding the family were shown by the fact that Molnár’s fa-



ther, Dr. Neumann, was the company physician at the world-famous Ganz Works. He also treated the French architect Gustav Eiffel, who maintained an office in Budapest for some years. (Gustav Eiffel's design office built two landmarks which still define Budapest: the Western Railroad Station and Margaret Bridge.) Max Nordau, the doctor, Austro-Hungarian writer and editor who later became one of the leaders of the Zionist movement, was also among his father's close friends.<sup>12</sup> At the end of the 19th century it was quite natural for the family to send the son to pursue his studies abroad, in this case to Geneva, where Molnár studied law. Molnár regularly made excursions to Paris and saw everything that was worth seeing in the theatres. Up until the outbreak of the First World War anyone whose social status and financial conditions permitted it could move about freely and live anywhere in Europe without a passport.<sup>13</sup> Molnár Hungarianized his name in 1896, the year of the Millennium, and thus Ferenc Neumann turned into Ferenc Molnár. This was the era of the relatively tolerant, liberal Hungary of the period following the Compromise of 1867 and before the outbreak of the First World War. As an immediate consequence of defeat in the war, two left-wing revolutions took place in 1918 and 1919, followed by the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920, which remains one of the greatest calamities in Hungarian historiography. Hungary lost roughly two-thirds of its territory and fifty percent of its population. The decades between 1867 and 1914 are known as the Happy Times of Peace in Hungarian history. They were followed by a drastic transformation characterized by the hunt for scapegoats, in this case the Jewish intellectuals and revolutionary leaders. It was this atmosphere that brought about the passage of the first *numerus clausus* law in Europe in 1921.<sup>14</sup> Many of Molnár's friends were gravely affected by this atmosphere, and he himself was not unscathed. All this, however, took place primarily in Budapest, and the population and culture of the capital bore much of the blame for the disastrous state of affairs.

Both as a journalist and as a writer, Molnár dealt with the theme of the growing and changing city of Budapest. He wrote an article about what Budapest was like in 1911 entitled *The Hungarian Budapest*, in which he takes a resolute stance against accusations that the capital is not genuinely Hungarian in its culture. Molnár writes that the capital is referred to metaphorically as "a helpless, poor Jew" standing in the middle of a huge map of Hungary. He does not share this view. It is "her enemies who picture and make her as such. Her enemies say she is American, international, non-patriotic, un-Hungarian, riff-raff, she has nothing to do with Hungarians, and she does not deserve the appellation 'heart of the country'". In Molnár's view, if a city "enters the international association of capitals then it is supposed to live according to an unwritten line of ceremonies present in the common knowledge of the world; it has to take up ten thousand new customs and habits taken up by every capital; it has to build a Stock Exchange, it has to run electric trams, and so on and so forth; and through all this, it has to assume a capi-

tal-like appearance, which directly contradicts the atmosphere of a village or a small town, mistaken by these gentlemen for a national and racial atmosphere". It is important to remark that the phenomenon described by the writer was by no means exclusively Hungarian: many large European cities and capitals were subjected to similar criticism at the time.

The literature on Molnár has not yet taken into consideration the character of the circle of friends, writers and journalists who surrounded and influenced him in the early years of his career. It is revealing to consider his place in the circle of journalists with whom he started to work at the urban literary journal *A Hét* (The Week) and the daily paper *Budapesti Napló* (Budapest Diary). As the first journal of its kind in the capital, *A Hét* was the engine driving the modernization of literary life. If we examine the liberal spirit of these editorial offices at the turn of the century, it is easier to understand why Molnár felt much more at home in Western Europe after 1920, when the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had collapsed and the liberal spirit of intellectual and political life had disappeared from Hungary, practically from one day to the next.

The leader of the *Budapesti Napló* was József Vészi,<sup>15</sup> a liberal journalist who a decade later, as it so happens, became Molnár's father-in-law.<sup>16</sup> Oszkár Jászi, forced into permanent exile in 1919, also began his career at this daily. In a supplement, Jászi acquainted the Hungarian readership with the discipline of sociology.<sup>17</sup> Lajos Biró, Molnár's future brother-in-law, also worked there. In the bourgeois democratic Károlyi cabinet of 1918,<sup>18</sup> Biró (along with Jászi) became a state secretary in charge of nationality issues. From the turn of the century he had predicted that disregard for the rights of nationalities could be one of the breaking points of the Monarchy. He had been proven right in the weeks following the end of the First World War. Like Jászi, both Károlyi and Biró were forced to emigrate in 1918–1919. József Vészi, Molnár's ex-father-in-law, remained the leader of the consistently pro-government *Pester Lloyd*. The one-time admirer of the artistic and political radicalism of the turn of the century slowly came to accommodate (like so many others who remained in the country) the prevailing conservative views of the Horthy Era.

Under Vészi's editorship, the *Budapesti Napló* played a significant role not only in politics but in literature, too. At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th literature and journalism were not yet entirely separate. Perhaps the greatest merit of Vészi's work was that at the turn of the century and over next few years he managed to gather together the most talented writers of the era, the youngest of whom were to make their careers in the inter-war period. We need mention only the most outstanding talents, the revolutionaries of the first decades: Endre Ady, Dezső Kosztolányi, Lajos Biró, and Géza Csáth. Dailies were natural forums for literature, and they particularly favored the genre of the *feuilleton*.

Apart from Molnár's writings and short stories published in dailies, he polished the technique of his stage dialogues in his crime reports, sketches, glossaries, and articles. In the tableaux of a number of his works the background settings of certain scenes can be found in the "graveyard" of the once popular dailies. Molnár did not employ journalistic commonplaces. Nor are his writings, although published anonymously, difficult to identify, for his interests, views, and turning-points distinguish him clearly from the work of his colleagues. He had already become an internationally renowned playwright, with an omnibus volume<sup>19</sup> published simultaneously in Hungarian, English, German and Italian in Rome, when he professed that he considered himself first and foremost a journalist who "would never be anything else". During his first American tour he describes his profession like this:

Reporters in America and elsewhere go out and get the news, whereas we more often than not stay in the office or in our garrets and make the 'news', by which I mean that we report the news of the mind and soul of our characters as much as we do the actions and happenings of daily life, which are, after all, the material accidents of existence rather than the significant realities of life. There is a disposition in some quarters to call this fiction. But some of it, I insist, is literature. True literature is life translated into letters.<sup>20</sup>

Molnár turned a court trial into a *short story* in the news section. He became popular with *croquis* wittily making fun of the oddities of life in Pest and with *chronicles* that offer clever analysis of social issues. Interestingly, in 1898, as a mere twenty-year-old tenderfoot journalist, Molnár interviewed Ermete Zacconi,<sup>21</sup> the traveling prince of the Italian theater who in 1908 would catapult *The Devil* and its author into world fame.

At the beginning of *The Devil's* continental popularity, Molnár remarked once that when the play was staged three gestures had been modified or deleted by directors in the theaters of different European countries on the grounds that a Berlin painter would never make a comment like the one given him, a Viennese lady would never act in the way she is depicted as acting, and a London gentleman would never don the garb called for by the script. He wrote,

By the end of an international play, this is how I turned into [...] an author of intolerably Hungarian national character. This made me think: these are just small examples, but you see, they are still the result of my being Hungarian, my being born of this land, my being brought up here; these small things go unnoticed at home, but abroad my play is censored[.]<sup>22</sup>

This gesture of self-characterization is significant. The author labels his play *international*. Indeed it was, even in terms of its genre, since it built on situation

comedy. What is little known about Molnár is that at the beginning of his long career he also worked as a translator. He translated twenty-nine French works for the theater into Hungarian, including some serious dramas, but mostly operettas and farces.<sup>23</sup> His role, however, was not confined to that of the translator. He not only Hungarianized the plays, but also rewrote them, creating better psychological bases for the turning-points and making the dialogues more life-like and easier to perform. He knew various contemporary French authors personally. Translation served as a training school; he became skilled in successful clichés. Molnár did a remarkably good job, and drama critics even referred to him as a co-author. As a witty Hungarian theater expert commented, Molnár “learned his own style from foreigners”.<sup>24</sup> In *The Play Is the Thing* the author’s double actually confesses how many ideas and solutions he has stolen from the French.

By the time his first play was performed for the public, he was a fully-fledged playwright. His first longer play, *The Doctor*, was immediately well-received, and was quickly followed by three plays that led to world fame: *The Devil* (1908),<sup>25</sup> *Liliom* (1909),<sup>26</sup> and *The Guardsman* (1910).

### The Author of “Export Dramas”

Molnár’s popularity abroad did not win him immediate acceptance at home, however. A still highly esteemed volume, first published in 1934,<sup>27</sup> offering an overview of the history of Hungarian literature relegated Molnár, who enjoyed world fame at the time, to the short chapter bearing the title “export-dramas”. What does this category mean? Does it entail a value judgment or is it a simple statement referring to the fact that the author’s plays would live up to the expectations of any audience in the world? Hungarian literature is an East Central European literature tightly confined within its idiom. The historical development of the country gave rise to a largely moral imperative: namely, that a Hungarian writer’s role is to address the vitally important matters of the nation, i.e., to present unsolved social problems and elevate them into the sphere of literature, while at the same time calling them to the attention of the political sphere.<sup>28</sup> Though he was an excellent writer of prose, Molnár became world famous as a playwright. Yet his works as a playwright seemingly do not fit the above expectations at all, since he used a light tone even when voicing social criticism (though mostly at the beginning of his career and in his prose works).<sup>29</sup> However, one of his first novels, *The Paul Street Boys*<sup>30</sup> published in 1907, remains an emblematic Hungarian literary example of *self-sacrificing patriotism*. It constitutes one of the shared elements of Hungarian cultural national consciousness. Another masterpiece is a short novel from 1926 entitled *The Captain of St. Margaret’s*, where by offering a digressive

narrative of the life story of a romantic personality he widens the borderlines of prose writing and creates a new form of poetry.<sup>31</sup>

As far as the original meaning of “export” is concerned, however, it is true of Molnár in every sense. He was not merely an exportable author of Hungarian literature: he was the *very first* author of Hungarian literature who entered the wider world with such an overwhelming, loud, and intercontinental success.<sup>32</sup> At the age of 30 Molnár made his foreign debut with *The Devil*, which premiered in New York only one year after opening in Budapest. *The Devil* was the foundation of Molnár’s fame in Europe and overseas. After its premiere in Budapest, it was soon produced in Turin, Berlin, Warsaw, London and Vienna.<sup>33</sup> In New York it was put on by David Belasco, the most prominent and influential personality of the theatrical world of the era, at his Stuyvesant Theater on Broadway. At the time, the Stuyvesant was perhaps the most modern theater in the city, equipped with hydraulics and special lighting technology making use of Tiffany lamps.<sup>34</sup>

According to the bibliography on Molnár,<sup>35</sup> the Garden Theater<sup>36</sup> also produced the play in the very same season. In the monograph written by Molnár’s grandson in the style of a long essay based on anecdotes (and lacking any references),<sup>37</sup> two additional theaters ran the play in New York at the same time, one in German and another one in Yiddish. The bibliography contains the full list of New York and U.S. premieres, but a few details are worth mentioning in this context. By the time Molnár finally settled down in New York, he had had no less than twenty-nine theater premieres. Moreover, seventeen movies were made from his works in America.<sup>38</sup> To this impressive presence in American cultural life we can add that soon after his fiftieth birthday a collection of his dramas was published in English in the U.S. A decade later this edition was followed by a *deluxe* edition.<sup>39</sup> Both editions included David Belasco’s foreword and a literary portrait of Molnár by his English translator, Louis Rittenberg.<sup>40</sup>

As a result of his growing prominence in American theatrical life the many successes of his plays, *Vanity Fair* and many other American papers with large circulations published articles on his work and interviews with him. The popularity of his plays brought him continuous publicity. Molnár’s frequent statements were light-hearted; he knew what editors, readers and theater-goers were interested in. Having been a journalist himself, he must have been aware of the fact that his colleagues utilized manipulative techniques all over the world. As the letters he sent to his wife reveal, he sometimes consciously made use of publicity, while at other times he kept his distance from the limelight. (Molnár’s prose works are full of data regarding his ideas concerning the functions, technique and morality of the press of his age.) The turn of the century and the decade after it were the time of the birth of mass communication and mass culture in Hungary, and Molnár himself was one of its creators. Another phenomenon that went hand in hand with these changes was the development of the role of advertising.<sup>41</sup> Very early in this

process Molnár's "mother theater," the *Vígsház* [Merry Theater] in Budapest, advertised and popularized their programs internationally.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, something that was uncommon in Hungary at the time was the presence of professional agents and modern businessmen involved in publishing around the exportable writers and playwrights.<sup>43</sup>

### First Time in America

In 1940, when Molnár set foot on Ellis Island as an immigrant to the United States, he was already somewhat familiar with New York City. In late 1927 he had visited the country as a guest. He held a lecture on Hungarian drama at Columbia University<sup>44</sup> and appeared at a cocktail party given in his honor by the editorial office of *Vanity Fair*, where Ina Clair and Leslie Howard read from his writings published in the magazine.<sup>45</sup> In the company of Hungarian Ambassador Count László Széchenyi and producer Gilbert Miller, Molnár was also received by the President of the United States, Calvin Coolidge.<sup>46</sup> During his stay he got to know George Gershwin, who asked him for permission to set his play *Liliom* to music. Molnár did not grant the rights to Gershwin at the time, though he held Gershwin in high esteem and kept the autographed photograph he received from the composer on the occasion on his desk. Earlier there had also been plans for Puccini to write an opera based on *Liliom*. Various articles gave news about the issue in 1922, and there are documents proving that Puccini was considering the opportunity, but he was much too busy with *Turandot* at the time. As historian of American drama Roy S. Waldau notes,

There had [also] been a discussion of turning *Liliom* into a musical play with Kurt Weil to write the music and Arthur Guiterman the lyrics. But, when inquiries were made, Ferenc Molnár's agent informed the managers that the Hungarian author showed no enthusiasm whatsoever for sanctioning a musical version of his script as proposed by the organization.<sup>47</sup>

There is no information available concerning who initiated Molnár's trip to New York in 1927. It is suspected that he adjusted his trip around the visit to the city made by the theater company of Lili Darvas and Max Reinhardt. Molnár spent a shorter period of time there than the company. He arrived later and returned to Europe earlier than his wife. He was well-known in America and was celebrated as a star author immediately upon arrival. According to some of the biographies (which are based on sources impossible to check), he was nominated for a Nobel Prize in literature in the fall of 1926.<sup>48</sup> In 1927 he received the French Légion d'Honneur, and word had it that over the course of the 1920s he made over



one-million dollars, though no data are available to confirm this. If indeed this was the case, the source of his wealth may well have been the success of editions of his plays published in translation abroad and the popularity of life performances of his plays. *Liliom* was performed 285 times in 1921 and *The Swan* 255 times in 1923. This was followed by the influence of silent films and later talkies. Even before his first visit to America, the world premiere of *The Play Is the Thing* was held in New York in 1926. The Budapest premiere took place only three-and-a-half weeks later. *The Play Is the Thing*, translated by P.G. Wodehouse, was performed 326 times. The script was translated from German and, like Molnár's translations from French, was not faithful to the original.<sup>49</sup> It was Henry Miller,<sup>50</sup> actor and theater founder, and his son, Gilbert Miller, influential Broadway and the West End producer, who upon reading the German translation believed so strongly in the success of the play that he immediately resolved to translate and produce it. In the case of *The Play Is the Thing* this was more an *adaptation* than translation in the strict sense.

### A Small Language and World Literature

One might well raise the question as to how a small country with a distinctive language little known outside the region can enter world literature. Molnár's career seems to support the idea that small nations can influence the canon through the interference of cultural impact and the plasticity of genre conventions.<sup>51</sup> One might add that themes have to be built around general parables or symbols, not incidental aspects of national culture, so that the basic theme can be formed freely.<sup>52</sup> Molnár play constitutes an example of such a work.

Upon returning home from his first trip to America, Molnár wrote a one-act play entitled *One, Two, Three* in 1929.<sup>53</sup> In this play, America appears indirectly. It is about the apple of the eye of one of the wealthiest and most distinguished families of America, who gets to spend a few months with the family of a European banker. Just before her parents' arrival, the American girl confesses to her host (who is hoping to strike a profitable deal involving American cars) that she has not only married a taxi driver, but she is also pregnant with his baby. The parents are due to arrive in an hour, and the banker has to prevent a scandal. In the short time available to him, the banker turns the unpolished boy into a conservative young man of high rank, even going so far as to purchase him a noble title. Money is omnipotent; the banker's machine works according to orders. The play, of course, has a happy ending, and essentially equates *illusion and reality*. There is little information concerning the conception of the play, but supposedly it includes many of the author's experiences of his overseas visit. America means business, the op-



portunity to make good deals, and progress. The play lasts roughly one hour, during which time it is mostly the banker who speaks, giving orders to his employees with telegrams. America receives a strange rebuff from Molnár in the play. He considers America the central motivating power of business and the central point of the desires of the Europeans, but he sees the falsity of its world. The America theme had appeared in Molnár's oeuvre before this play, and not only in his writings. At the turn of the century, in the midst of the emigration fever, both public and literary attention were increasingly drawn to the continent that allegedly promised career opportunities and a high standard of living. This theme appeared in many short stories, novels, and travel accounts by various Hungarian literary authors.<sup>54</sup> The subject figures early in the oeuvre of Molnár as well, specifically in his first novel, *The Hungry City*, written in 1901. Lacking personal experience, he presents the stereotypical image of immense wealth alongside a depiction of the sober, honest American mentality. This novel suddenly put him in the center of attention of Hungarian literary consciousness, although it was in fact little more than a pamphlet-like inventory of urban perversities and gossip, as noted by critic Aladár Schöpflin, also a spokesman of the program of urbanization.<sup>55</sup> The shortcoming of the novel is that its characters are sufficiently vivid and function as transparent mouthpieces for the views of Molnár the journalist himself.

From the mid-1920s, Molnár lived abroad almost continuously in the elegant hotels of Europe. A well-known *bon mot* preserved his philosophy of life, namely, that in fact he was the owner of a five-room apartment with one room in the Hotel Hungária in Budapest, another room in the Imperial in Vienna, another in the Carlton in Cannes, another in the Eden in Berlin, and another in the Danieli in Venice. Following the rise of Hitler, he used his room in Berlin less and less frequently. Once the Germans had annexed Austria in 1938, he had to give up another room, and eventually all of them.

Molnár was proficient in German and French, and spoke Italian fairly well, thus he did not face linguistic barriers on the continent. The knowledge of languages is a prerequisite of cultural openness and freedom. At the turn of the century Budapest was bilingual, in particular the assimilating Hungarian Jewish community from which Molnár originated. His command of English, however, never reached a level that would have enabled him to communicate freely in it as if it were "his own" language.

At first he was able to travel because of the status of his family, and later he had to travel because of the productions of his plays abroad. Molnár appeared in front of the European public not only as a playwright. His successes made him extremely popular, and the public was interested in his writings in other genres as well. In the thirties, for example, the *Berliner Tageblatt* published a series of his feuilletons every other week.<sup>56</sup>

### Ferenc Molnár's Uneasy Private Life

There is a third reason underlying Molnár's absence from home. His third wife, Lili Darvas, twenty-four years younger than he, did not live with him. The actress, who was very young when she flashed like a shooting star through the theatrical life of Budapest, did not give up her career for her husband's sake. In the opinion of theater historians, she had obvious reservations about the gossip and critics of the theater life of Budapest. She did not consider the reviews honest, and she thought she was treated as an actress who belonged to Molnár. This contributed to her decision to leave Hungary. She began her highly successful German language career at Max Reinhardt's theater in Vienna in 1925, at the time of her wedding. She did much of her acting in Vienna and Berlin, and practically lived in those cities. As early as the first year of her association with the theater, Max Reinhardt wanted to take her to America for a guest performance. Molnár, however, did not agree, and shortly after the wedding the husband's word carried more weight. Although Molnár supported his wife's professional career, it was difficult for him to tolerate her absence. He wrote about this in his memoirs as follows: "My wife's brilliant stage career, tying her to Berlin and Vienna, kept her almost constantly thousands of miles away from me. My only chance of spiritual survival was to roam the Latin west."<sup>57</sup>

It was common knowledge that Molnár treated women roughly. He had violent arguments with his first two wives.<sup>58</sup> He never lived under the same roof as Darvas, but they stayed close to each other whenever possible, and they carried on a very intense correspondence throughout the thirties. Upon reading what has remained of their letters, one gets the impression that it was rather the wife who preferred to keep her distance. Eventually, they ended up living in New York just a few streets apart, and his wife's opinion always remained very important to him. Living separately, however, resulted in Molnár practically living together with another young woman from 1932 on, the devoted and naive Wanda Bartha, who looked up to Molnár like a god and officially acted as his secretary. The literature on Molnár discreetly avoids specifying the woman's relationship with the author.<sup>59</sup> The fact remains that they traveled around the most beautiful regions of Europe together. As Molnár commented: "We were a lonely, taciturn, wandering couple in trains, hotels, bistros, and sidewalk cafés."<sup>60</sup> Darvas tolerated the situation. Molnár needed a secretary, but as the letters reveal, it was his wife and his wife's independence and strength of character that had a great impression on him.

One touching aspect of Molnár's letters from the thirties is the way in which he took care of his wife. For example, when she had to travel he summarized the things that needed to be tended to beforehand in a colorful table for her. He outlined the procedure for obtaining a visa and purchasing tickets, and even gave advice on which carriage in which to travel. He also thought of contacting a few lo-

cal people to whom Darvas could turn in case of trouble. At the end of the thirties, immediately following the outbreak of the Second World War, when it became more difficult to send letters, he asked her not to write in Hungarian so that the letters could go through censorship more quickly and he would receive them sooner. Through his connections back home, he secured his wife's papers and asked for her citizenship certificate. Molnár deposited the documents he obtained in safe custody so that she would be able to access them whenever necessary. He arranged to have a monthly allowance of 2,500 dollars transferred to her, and in addition also authorized her to draw money from his friends abroad to the debit of his account in extraordinary cases. Whatever Molnár's monograph writers say, this relationship was a loving alliance of two people who belonged to each other right up to Molnár's death. Darvas' sympathy was clearly manifest in the fact that she allocated the royalties that were due her from Molnár to his daughter and grandchildren.

In the thirties, Molnár disguised his absence from Hungary as a series of trips dedicated to productions abroad or as vacations, though this absence was more and more a matter of compulsion. He also felt an increasing aversion towards his "native village" Pest. As early as the beginning of the twenties, right after the revolutions and the Trianon Peace Treaty, the political atmosphere of Budapest had changed. Many of his friends had either emigrated or lived far away from the country as foreign correspondents. In the meantime, Molnár was envied for his tremendous success and the prosperity that went with it by more and more people at home. The reviews he received had become increasingly hostile. The use of abusive language about Jews had become more and more common in Budapest. Through his secretary, this atmosphere was reflected in his memoirs in the following way: "She knew she would be the traveling-companion of a man whom the new, hateful, Central European tide had wounded to the heart and made shy on human contacts."<sup>61</sup> In spite of the great triumphs, he looked at the years of his European exile as the "unhappy twilight of my career."<sup>62</sup> One could argue that Molnár became an émigré not in 1940, but much earlier, after the collapse of the Monarchy and the failures of the 1918 and 1919 revolutions. The first and decisive shock for him had come with the disappearance of liberal Hungary. He began to feel as if he were a visitor in his home country. The rise of Hitler, the tragic swing to the right in Hungarian politics, and the country's commitment to Hitler's Germany only reinforced his absence and made it definitive. His emigration followed essentially the same pattern as that of Hungarian scientists. First he left for Europe and from there for America.<sup>63</sup>

The homeless writer – whose real home was Budapest and the Monarchy – established himself in new surroundings, in the public places of Venice, Geneva, and Paris: the hotels, foyers, restaurants, cafés and their terraces, small pubs, and sometimes embassies where émigré writers and intellectuals met. As he con-

fessed, he spent a considerable amount of time at railroad stations watching the passengers. Abroad he consciously maintained relations out of pure self interest with Hungarian diplomats, acquaintances who had become influential, native Italians and French, people from the world of the theater, and even the prefect of the Parisian police. He also cultivated ties with his circle of friends back home from both the world of the theater and that of journalism by writing letters continuously to many of them. He may have lived on the French Riviera or in Italy, but he still knew everything about the events going on in the field of the theater and the press at home. His measure of success was the premieres in Hungary, and the weather-vane of his achievements was his connections back home.<sup>64</sup> His closest friend was Andor Miklós, the proprietor and leader of the largest Hungarian newspaper, publishing and printing concern, the Athenaeum Literary and Printing House Company. With Andor Miklós's early death in 1933, a strong link tying Molnár to the Hungarian capital and its mobile intellectual and business elite was broken. The leading journalists of Andor Miklós's papers also belonged to the circle of his closest friends.

### **Last Time in Hungary**

The last time Molnár visited Hungary was on the occasion of the premiere of *Delila* in September, 1937. He did not face any obstacles in his visits to Hungary, even towards the end of the thirties, but after the passage of the so-called First Anti-Jewish Act<sup>65</sup> he became increasingly sure that he would not visit his home for a long time to come.<sup>66</sup> It was the task of the radical right-wing press chamber created by the act to drive Jews out of theaters and journalism. The organization did not register anyone automatically, and as Molnár was abroad he did not ask to be registered either. As a result, he could no longer publish in Hungary. It is absurd that when Molnár stepped onto American soil he was no longer welcome back home as a Jewish writer and journalist. Still, Molnár had on him an invitation from Hungary's Regent, Miklós Horthy, and his wife to attend the state celebration in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of King Mathias's birth. Molnár, the bitter émigré, was invited to the banquet on February 24, 1940, as the 1935 recipient of the *Corvin Wreath*, one of the highest government awards for cultural and scientific achievements in interwar Hungary. The writer still figured on the address list of the Regent's chef de cabinet,<sup>67</sup> in a country, allied to Nazi Germany, in which anti-Semitic laws were already in force.

In May 1938, following the Anschluss, he immediately lost all the possessions and deposits he had kept at the Hotel Imperial in Vienna. His personal property in

Hungary was preserved in the warehouse of the Budapest branch of the American Vacuum Cleaner company. In the spring of 1940, following an appeal, he had his villa in Buda (which, despite his tremendous successes, was hardly extravagant) registered in his daughter's name. With the assistance of attorneys and friends, he providently secured his bank account in New York. His contract with the bank made it possible for him to keep his wealth even as a citizen of a potentially belligerent enemy country.

His final departure went practically unnoticed in Hungary. The public had been accustomed to his living abroad, and in those days more and more people opted to leave their homeland behind. Amidst the great wave of emigration it did not strike anyone that Molnár had left for good. One peculiar literary commemoration was dedicated to him. The literary monthly, *Szép Szó* (Fine Words), which published all shades of left-wing ideology except communist ideas, bid good-bye to Molnár in the form of an obituary notice, though of course he was still alive. The title of the play was "A Vision of Departed Writers",<sup>68</sup> and it memorialized two writers who had died around the time. The word "departed", however, has the same double meaning in Hungarian as in English. In relation to Molnár, the writer uses the word in a symbolic sense. It is about the rupture between Molnár and his audience, putting into words the pain the writer feels when he is cut off from his readers, who are his spiritual relatives. The article characterizes Molnár as "a prince exiled with an internal Nansen passport," who lives "in the citizenship of fast trains," but who sends his new books

to the Hungarian homeland with drowning respect. [...] Because it is with an anxiety that makes your stomach ache that he wants to galvanize success from here and only from here. He is curious about the reviews of the filthy Arrow Cross<sup>69</sup> editorial offices in the countryside; his eyes are enchanted by the dusty, clotted forums of Pest[.]

The writer, the author says, is undeniably Hungarian. All that is remembered about him and what is rumored about him at home, "his haughtiness and relentlessly mischievous distrust", are sheer masks in order to disguise his bitterness, namely, that he knew that he would never become a tranquil, old pensioner living out his last days in the country of his birth.

Molnár showed the rapid changes and the criticism of the beginning of the 20th century, the "Hungarian changes", which were already "stale [and] addled" at the moment of their conception. They were desired and disliked, and Molnár was also immersed in and perhaps even depraved by them. Still, as the essay highlights, masterpieces such as his short novel *The Captain of St. Margaret's* took shape in this milieu.<sup>70</sup>

### Opportunities Offered by New York

There is only indirect information concerning Molnár's recollections of his visit to America in the twenties. Most probably, however, they were quite pleasant. When Darvas made up her mind to leave Europe and move to New York for good, Molnár definitely encouraged her: "As regards America, my *sure instinct* is that once you set foot in New York, you will breathe fresh air, full of ambition and possibilities, and you are bound to be refreshed! [...] You will land in a different world, where free and wealthy people think exactly like you and where general *tenderness and care* will await you. This is not solely my speculation, this is what I keep reading in the papers, and this is what two Hungarians who recently arrived from [America] told me the other day. *The greatest satisfaction and recreation will await you there*, and you will forget this damned Europe in a day." Overlooking the didactic tone of these sentences, the voice seems sincere. In addition, a few paragraphs later, Molnár reinforces it all with self-irony: "There is no reason to wither, and it is me telling you this, the sixty-year-old ancient Jew! [...] go where there is fresh air and rebirth, and the possibility of new struggle and new success is itself refreshing."<sup>71</sup> He also offered her serious advice on many occasions: she should beware of the media, especially of Hungarian emigrants; she should keep emphasizing that it is only an excursion abroad so that her potential rivals will not become jealous of her, at least not initially. It seems conceivable that he was also encouraging himself in these letters, though the available data do not suggest that he was seriously preparing to emigrate at the time. Even in November, he writes about traveling to America as something that requires a serious decision. What enticed him to contemplate emigration is rather the fact that in Paris, in November 1938, despite all the assistance, the "greatest connections" at his disposal, there were 500,000 "rivals", that is refugees, making it more difficult for him to obtain an extended residency permit. When in spite of this he finally received a one-year French visa that guaranteed multiple entries, he escaped from the irritating Parisian atmosphere to San Remo. Undefined Hollywood invitations reached him there as well. Still, contemplating a future extension of his French visa, he asked his wife to have thirteen copies of the American *deluxe* edition of his plays sent to his friends at his expense as soon as possible. The American offers kept coming, including the telegram from David O. Selznick in April 1939 that is mentioned as the fourth in his letters.<sup>72</sup> In the letter in which Molnár informs Darvas of Selznick's invitation, he already tells her briefly that he has an American visa and urgently requests the invitations promised by Columbia University through her.<sup>73</sup> He would have liked to have been asked to give lectures on literature by the fall of 1939. Even if the lectures were largely a pretext, they served as an official reason for the decision and facilitated his entry into the United States.



Molnár arrived in New York alone. His secretary, proofreader, and nurse for the next seven years, Wanda Bartha, followed him in May 1940. She lived separately on the 11th floor of the Plaza Hotel in a tiny room. After her death, Molnár confided that it was thanks to Wanda that he painlessly managed to cut the bonds between himself and mankind. The previous years spent together and the European trips created a dream world around him that “was a hypnotic trance,” and in the meantime he did not want to become aware of what was taking place in Europe. This statement should be read with some skepticism, however. According to his letters to his wife, he knew what was going on, and he might only have distanced himself from terror as a form of self-defense, just before the final catastrophe. He was no doubt *at home* in Europe until the very last minute, aware of its *cultural scene*, the human and national gestures. Everything had changed in the United States. The secure ground of Europe had vanished from beneath his feet.

Right after the war, upon the request of a certain “Mr. North” [possibly Alex], Molnár summarized in a relatively long and witty letter the differences between staging a play in Europe and in America. One can interpret this incidental letter as the confession of the European theater. The reason for the differences, according to Molnár, is not intellectual but merely financial, and it resides in the fact that “here far more people interfere with the author’s work than over there [...] The old and indestructible belief of people with money is that the more people are involved in writing a play, the more successful it will be.”<sup>74</sup> In sixteen points, he lists the different people who have their say in a performance on Broadway: automatically there is an assistant writer at the side of the playwright, then there is the director, the producer, a gagman guest, the male and female stars, an unknown gentleman, by virtue of being the agent of a certain somebody, probably even an elderly lady arguing for the particular requirements of morning performances, and the wives and sons-in-law and secretaries of each member of the crew. Eventually, this machinery suffocates originality, and the author, seeing what has become of his play, weeps silently during rehearsals in the last row of the first circle. In Europe, where productions are done with far less money, theater people can afford to venture working even with an original writer whose work the crowd might dislike. Molnár suggests that something innovative will probably come from European theaters with lower budgets, because this makes them more adventurous. Finally, he enumerates his favorite American playwrights in alphabetical order. The list proves his enthusiasm and thorough knowledge of contemporary American theater: Samuel Behrman, Ben Hecht, Sidney Howard, Eugene O’Neill, Sampson Raphaelson, Elmer Rice, William Saroyan, Robert Sherwood, and Thornton Wilder.<sup>75</sup>



### Emigration as a Disease

Molnár was working continuously, but he wrote barely anything new. The wheels of the mill were spinning, but they were not grinding anything. What he wrote was affected and sentimental.<sup>76</sup> He worked for the film industry, but no information is available concerning the outcome of the projects. It was rumored that Chaplin, whom he knew from Salzburg through Max Reinhardt,<sup>77</sup> would play the main role in his play ... *or not to be*, written in Geneva. The play does exist, and there is one copy of it in the New York and one in the Budapest Molnár papers. Nevertheless, the rumor concerning Chaplin proved false.

However, a great success was to come, even if Molnár himself was not an active participant in it. What George Gershwin could not achieve, Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein could. Until then, they had had only one success, which was later followed by many other phenomenal triumphs.<sup>78</sup> They had the possibility to write a *musical* – in Molnár’s interpretation an “opera-like music play” – based on *Liliom*, with the title *Carousel*. Molnár compared the result to *Carmen* and *La Bohème*. The premiere was on April 19, 1945 (the war in Europe had not yet ended). The story’s setting (originally the neighborhood of a city park in *fin-de-siècle* Budapest) was converted into a small American town by the sea in the state of Maine. What is more significant, however, is the altered ending. In the original play there is no salvation, whereas in this version there is. The play was met with enthusiastic acclaim and remained on the program in New York’s Majestic Theater for two years, going through 890 performances. According to Richard Rodgers’s diary, Molnár happened to appreciate the ending especially. The two authors remained grateful to Molnár for their success. In 1951, in a warm-hearted offer, they asked Columbia University to award Molnár the same honor that they had received for *Carousel*.<sup>79</sup>

Molnár learned after the posh and jolly premiere that his son-in-law György Sárközi had died of malnutrition in a forced labor camp in the city of Balf in Western Hungary. Sárközi, whom Molnár had presumably met no more than once or twice, was a respected figure in Hungarian literature. He had served as the literary manager of Athenaeum Publishers (in which by the way Molnár’s old friend, Andor Miklós had some interest), and was also a translator, poet, novelist and journal editor. Molnár commented on his death to his widowed daughter much later.

Márta Sárközi, Molnár’s daughter and the mother of three children, summoned the *crème de la crème* of Hungarian literature to the terrace of the bombed-out villa she had received from his father, where she resurrected *Válasz*, the best literary journal of the brief era of barely four years (1945–1948) of a democratic multi-party system in Hungary. György Sárközi had been the editor of the journal when it had been in publication between 1934 and 1938. Thus, the young widow

continued what her husband had begun. Márta Sárközi spent all the money that she received from her father on the periodical, which represents one of the intellectual and moral treasures of the 20th century.<sup>80</sup>

The relationship between father and daughter was one-sided in nature. It had always been like that, since the husband and his wife, Molnár and Margit Vészi, had separated before the birth of their daughter. Márta Sárközi managed her father's business at home and sent reports concerning the events, but with a few exceptions her reports and letters went unanswered.<sup>81</sup> Molnár's valuables, which were kept in storage, were first confiscated by the so-called "Commission for Abandoned Valuables," but were later returned, but it is not clear whether anything had been stolen. Nonetheless, the library that remained represented a serious problem. The flats of relatives and friends had been damaged during the bombing raids, and they could not accept the books. Several things were of vital necessity in Budapest after the siege of the city, but books were not among them. Molnár's daughter offered them along with her husband's books to *Eötvös Collegium*, an elite educational institute founded in 1895 on the model of the French *École Normale Supérieure*. The collections were thus transferred to an excellent institution. Later, Molnár stopped sending anything to his daughter when he learned from a letter from one of his friends that she was publishing works by Fascist writers in her journal as well. The accusation was nonsense, of course, though Sárközi did facilitate the return of writers who had been found guilty of right-wing sympathies during the general ideological chaos of the Second World War. Nevertheless, Molnár took the news literally and severed all his ties with his daughter and her family for good.

Molnár led a safely well-to-do life thanks to the royalties that continued to arrive. None of his works touches on contemporary politics or refers to the events in Europe and his home country. War might seem to have left Molnár unaffected despite the fact that, even as an emigrant, he was aware of everything. He was not entirely unsympathetic, for he supported many friends and relatives, among them his sister and daughter, sending them money, medicine and nylon stockings, items particularly easy to sell for good money in Hungary. One of the people he supported was his long-time friend, the book designer Elek Falus. The letters he sent to Molnár on his illness, his destitution and the current state of affairs in Hungary were not lost, and thanks to Darvas they became part of a public collection.<sup>82</sup> Molnár supported Dániel Jób as well, the ex-director and manager of *Vígsház*, who found himself in a state of disastrous poverty. Although he had regained the leadership of the theater, Jób had been removed two years later for political reasons.

In New York, Molnár received invitations from the elites of the art world on a regular basis, both immediately upon his arrival and during and after the war. He had Max Reinhardt as a steady liaison, but Reinhardt died unexpectedly in 1943.

The playwright George Middleton, chairman of the American Stage Writers' Association, was among his acquaintances. In fact he was Molnár's longest-standing American connection. Sam Jaffe was a regular guest and an occasional assistant. Molnár had a good relationship with the critic George Freedley, the curator of the New York Public Library's theatrical collection, the actress Ruth Gordon, and the entrepreneur Morris Gest, who happened to be David Belasco's son-in-law, as well as several leaders of the Metropolitan Opera. The owner of the Astor Hotel, Fred Muschenheim, was also among his friends. Molnár knew him from Europe, and there was always a colorful and intriguing company gathering at his place, including Vladimir Horowitz, Bruno Walter, John Barbirolli, Fritz Kreisler, Erika Mann and many other recurrent guests. While Molnár had many social acquaintances, he had few close friends. Molnár and Wanda Bartha would lunch together with Darvas regularly, sometimes together with Edward G. Robinson. Molnár sometimes met Sir Alexander Korda, who occasionally visited the United States. He was the owner of London Film Productions and a world-famous Hungarian film director whom Molnár had known in Hungary, though he remembered little more than how incredibly rich and nonetheless humble he was.

If the characters in Molnár's *Companion in Exile* are meticulously enumerated, the only thing that finally remains is the list of people with whom Molnár had come into contact. Though the list is formidable, Wanda Bartha's diary, the basis of the book, is little more than an inventory. Enumeration itself does not convey the nature, depth, sincerity, or, at times insincerity, of these relationships. It does not contain a single line of Molnár's reflections. In addition, there is little indication of Molnár's personal opinion of these people. One can hardly blame Wanda Bartha for these shortcomings, since she took these notes of celebrities and events for herself with the intention of writing about them to her siblings and friends. Wanda Bartha's enthusiasm for celebrity often proves a bit unsettling in its naivety. She was thrilled, for instance, to catch a glimpse of Greta Garbo from a distance.<sup>83</sup>

Bartha's suicide in 1947 was a complete shock to Molnár. He found himself completely alone. Instead of examining his conscience and realizing how he had treated her, however, he merely felt sobbing pity for himself at the loss of his secretary. He devoted a separate chapter to self-pity in *Companion in Exile*. The descriptions of his noble sentiments can be read as dubious excuses. Psychology terms this phenomenon *sublimation*: through the loss of Wanda Bartha, Molnár was confronted with his own callousness and insults, gestures of which he had been unaware at the time and for which he no longer had any opportunity to offer any atonement.

At the same time, Molnár's additions to Wanda Bartha's notes reflect the sorrowful ending of a truly glamorous life. A separate "short story" depicts the city block in which he lived with his secretary. It is about the everyday settings of an

ordinary life including shops, restaurants, cafés, pharmacies and the waiters, tailors and shop assistants in these places. “This is a rough cross-section of our New York ‘social life,’ which went on among simple, quiet people, the way we liked it to be[.]”<sup>84</sup> Molnár lived in noisy loneliness. He was truly alone, especially after Wanda Bartha’s death. The only person who remained with him was Darvas, living a few blocks away.

In a tragic work written in New York City Molnár describes emigration as a *disease*.<sup>85</sup> This text from 1946 constitutes a literary description of emigration and a personal confession. As long as one is a tourist, one can lead a normal life in the city. But as the years pass by, Molnár slowly becomes an immigrant. First his acquaintances detect the symptoms: “his nerves are more difficult to govern, his complaints are numerous but trivial, his talent for criticism rapidly develops, his desire to contact his natives diminishes constantly, and his English gets worse and worse because his mind gave up the futile fight of an aged person attempting to acquire the skills of a foreign language.” The first warning for the émigré comes when he realizes that he cannot sleep without pills. Some of them reach this stage more quickly, some of them not:

It is quicker in the case of a solitary person. For those who have families, it is slower. For the wealthy, it is also slower. But for the poor, it is not. Children are not infected: emigration is not an infantile disease. It is the disease of the so-called withering aged men. [...] One remains oneself more and more, while around one everything is beginning to appear different from what it seemed to be.

The emigrant does not get used to his circumstances or the foreign country, but to his own state. And that is the second phase of the disease. This stage is already detectable by an electrocardiogram, and the doctor prescribes injections and capsules. And what can you do when you are fed up with powerless doctors? Molnár regarded the friendship of Göndör as the only effective medicine. Göndör was an outstanding central figure among leftist liberal Hungarian emigrants in New York and the editor of *Az Ember* [The Man], a journal of émigrés published in Hungarian.<sup>86</sup> His special treatment lies in his attention and the fact that he recognizes the existence of the émigré. Göndör often calls, makes friendly inquiries, and conveys soothing messages. He invites him to his place and makes peace between him and other émigrés. But Molnár summarized all this in a prosaic address. The writing centers only on how Göndör’s method worked in the cases of others. None of it helped him personally.

For Molnár, who was an international author enveloped in the Hungarian language and culture, emigration represented a period of gradual demise. His works and his private life follow two radically different paths.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> There are two Hungarian language monographs on Ferenc Molnár: Sárközi, Mátvás (1995) *Színház az egész világ* (All the World is a Stage) (Budapest: Osiris – Századvég,); and Csordás, Lajos (2004) *Molnár Ferenc* (Budapest: Elektra Kiadóház); for English language monographs see Györgyey, Clara (1980) *Ferenc Molnár* (Boston: Twayne Publishers); Kövály, Georg (1984) *Der dramtiker Franz Molnár* (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner). There is a shorter biography and bibliography by Veres, András (1999) ‘Ferenc Molnár’, in Steven Serafin (ed.) *Twentieth-Century Eastern European Writers. Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 215* (Detroit–San Francisco–London–Woolbridge: The Gale Group, A Brucoli Clark Layman Book). 250–261.
- <sup>2</sup> Gilbert Miller (1884–1970), producer, director, theatre owner, performer and writer. He produced seven Molnár plays in New York, five before Molnár’s emigration. His connection to Molnár began in the theatrical season of 1920/21, when he came to Budapest to see *The Swan*. Interestingly, that season the *Vígsház* (Merry Theater) was purchased by an American entrepreneur, Ben Blumenthal. From then on, the theater functioned primarily according to business considerations. Supposedly, this change of proprietors had contributed to the fact that American producers had taken more interest in the theatrical life of Budapest.
- <sup>3</sup> Chaim Weizmann (Russia, 1874–Israel, 1952), scientist (chemist), president of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and first President of the State of Israel (1949).
- <sup>4</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 213. The original manuscript can be found in The New York Public Library.
- <sup>5</sup> Michael Todd (Minneapolis, MN, 1909–Grants, NM, 1958), Broadway and film producer. Todd was one of the contributors to technical innovation (big screen and sound system) in the film industry of the 1950s. He was the producer of the Broadway musical and later the film *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1946 and 1956 respectively). The film was awarded an Oscar.
- <sup>6</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 214.
- <sup>7</sup> Max Reinhardt (Baden bei Wien, 1873–New York, NY, 1943), an influential Austro-Hungarian, then American theater and film director and actor. See Carter, Huntly (1914 repr. 1964) *The Theatre of Max Reinhardt* (New York: Benjamin Blom); Jacobs, Margaret and Warren, John (eds) (1986) *Max Reinhardt: The Oxford Symposium* (Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic).
- <sup>8</sup> The characters in the play are actors. When the main character learns that Napoleon has had his son executed, he confesses to his actor friends that he is unable to face the pain he feels because unlike most people he has acted out pain on stage so many times: “I am unable to face *real* tragedy because I have faced the pretended and learned one so many times. I don’t know what to do [...] so that it would not be acting. [...] What a dreadful punishment this is for having feigned suffering on stage!”
- <sup>9</sup> Vörös, Károly (1978) “Pest-Budától Budapestig”, in *Budapest története a márciusi forradalomtól az őszirózsás forradalomig. Budapest története IV* (The history of Budapest from the Revolution of 1848 to the Revolution of 1918) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó). 117–320.
- <sup>10</sup> Lóránt Czigány, A Pseudo-Victorian Era. In: Lóránt Czigány, *A History of Hungarian Literature. From the Earliest Times to the Mid-1970s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984). 247–262.
- <sup>11</sup> At the time, Budapest was bigger than Amsterdam, Lisbon, Hamburg, Brussels, or Naples.
- <sup>12</sup> Max Nordau (Pest, Hungary, 1849–Paris, France, 1923), physician, writer, social critic and Zionist leader.

- <sup>13</sup> Still part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Hungary had introduced the comprehensive regulation of travel with documents for the first time in 1903 because of massive emigration to the United States. Prior to this date official travel documents were required only for journeys to the East, namely, to Serbia, Romania, Russia and Turkey. See Bencsik, Péter (2005) *A magyar úti okmányok története 1867–1945* (The History of Hungarian Travel Documents, 1867–1945) (Budapest: Tipico Design). On free traveling in the “good old days” see Polanyi, Michael (1944) ‘The Socialist Error’, *The Spectator*, March 31, 1944, quoted by Tibor Frank, Cohorting, Networking, Bonding: Polanyi, Michael (2001) ‘Exile’, *Polanyiana. The Periodical of the Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association*. Vol. 10, Number 1–2, 108. The famous Austrian writer Stefan Zweig was a member of this generation and a contemporary of Molnár. Zweig emphasized his European-ness in the subtitle of his well-known memoirs: Zweig, Stefan (1944) *Die Welt von Gestern. Erinnerungen eines Europäers* (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer Verlag), (1943) *The World of Yesterday: Memories of a European* (London: Cassel).
- <sup>14</sup> The law was passed by the incoming Horthy-regime in 1920. It introduced a population-based quota system in higher education. For the text of the act see 1920. évi XXV. tc. *Magyar törvénytár: 1920. évi törvények* (Hungarian Collection of Laws: The Acts of 1920) (Budapest: Franklin, 1921). 145–146.
- <sup>15</sup> József Vészi (Arad, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, 1858–Budapest, 1940), journalist, editor, one of the most influential press magnates of his era. He was the editor-in-chief of the German language daily *Pester Lloyd* for decades.
- <sup>16</sup> Margit Vészi (1885–1961) was Molnár’s first wife for quite a short time. She herself was a writer, painter, and participated in the group exhibitions at the beginning of the century. Actually, she was one of the first Hungarian female journalists. The war reports that she published during the years of World War I were even compiled into a separate volume. Having divorced Molnár, she married an Italian baron. She too decided to leave Hungary in the 1920s and, eventually, also ended up in Hollywood, where she worked as a scriptwriter for a few years. She returned to Europe and finally committed suicide.
- <sup>17</sup> Oszkár Jászi (Nagykároly, Hungary, 1875–Oberlin, OH, 1957), sociologist, university professor, and politician opposed to the system of large estates, clericalism and the repression of nationalities. In 1914, he founded the Civil Radical Party. In 1919, he left Hungary. He settled in the U.S. in 1925.
- <sup>18</sup> The government of Mihály Károlyi was in office between October 31, 1918 and January 19, 1919.
- <sup>19</sup> As is written on the inside cover of the book: “This volume [...] is published simultaneously in the languages of their countries, in Budapest, Berlin, Rome, London and New York.” Molnár, Ferenc (1929) *The Plays of Ferenc Molnár*. Foreword by David Belasco (New York: Macy-Maasius, The Vanguard Press).
- <sup>20</sup> Quoted by Louis Rittenberg. In: *The Plays of Ferenc Molnár*, XV.
- <sup>21</sup> Ermete Zacconi (1857–1948), Italian theater and film actor, director, representative of the “verist” trend on stage. He played the role of the main character in Molnár’s play *The Devil* for thirty years.
- <sup>22</sup> Ferenc, Molnár (1962) ‘Vasárnapi krónikák. Három kis eset’ (Sunday Chronicles. Three Little Cases), in Ferenc Molnár *Szülfalum, Pest* (My Native Village, Pest) (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó) 537–539. It is important to underline that literary scholarship and theater-research started to deal with the system of intercultural relationships much later. As of today, this area of studies is first and foremost dealt with by Patrice Pavis, the professor of Université de Paris VIII (Vincennes – Saint Denis). As visiting professor at Indiana University, Bloomington, Pavis gave courses on the problems involved in the translation of works for the theater.



- <sup>23</sup> The theatrical copies of the translations can be found in the Collection of the History of Theater at the National Széchényi Library in Budapest. For the literature on Molnár's translations see Molnár Gál, Péter (1993) 'Molnár Ferenc, a fordító' (Ferenc Molnár, the Translator), *Színház*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, 40–48; and Szilágyi, Ágnes (1996) 'Molnár Ferenc francia bohózatfordításairól' (On Ferenc Molnár's Translations of French Farces), in Ferenc Glatz (ed.) *Magyar író és világpolgár. Begegnungen. Schriftenreihe des Europa Institutes Budapest, Band 2*, 49–54. Molnár also translated into Hungarian Gerhart Hauptmann's drama *Fuhrmann Henschel* (1898), Anatole France's novel *Le lys rouge*, and Jerome K. Jerome's play *Miss Hobbs* (1904). He translated works by Alfred Hennequin, Georges Feydeau, Robert Flers, Gaston Armand de Caillavet, and Ludovic Halévy.
- <sup>24</sup> Molnár Gál, Péter (1993) 'Molnár Ferenc, a fordító' (Ferenc Molnár the Translator), *Színház* (Theater) Vol. 1, 40. Note that Péter Molnár Gál has written an extensive monograph on Ferenc Molnár that is forthcoming in Budapest in 2009.
- <sup>25</sup> The peculiarity of *The Devil* is that its title-role is the developer of desires and sexuality exiled into the unconscious. In the play, much influenced by the Faust-idea, the propositions of Freudian psychology are supported and confirmed on stage.
- <sup>26</sup> On *Liliom* see Kerr, Alfred and Franz Molnár (1917) 'Liliom', *Alfred Kerr Gesammelte Schriften. Die Welt in Drama* (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag). 269–272.
- <sup>27</sup> Szerb, Antal (1934) *Magyar irodalomtörténet* (The History of Hungarian Literature) (Budapest: Révai Kiadás). 491–493. Molnár's brother-in-law, Lajos Biró, was another export playwright whose career reached its zenith abroad. Lajos Biró was the scriptwriter of successful movies such as "The Private Life of Henry VIII", "Hotel Imperial", and "The Thief of Bagdad". Biró collaborated with London Film Production, the empire of Sir Alexander Korda (also of Hungarian origin), working with the Korda brothers as their equal.
- <sup>28</sup> For the most authentic treatise of this proposition see Illyés, Gyula (1963) 'Préface' in László Németh *Une possédée*. Translated by P. E. Régnier, C. Nagy, L. Gara (Paris: Gallimard). 7–20.
- <sup>29</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1901) *Az éhes város* (The Hungry City) (Budapest: Révai); Molnár, Ferenc (1918) *Andor* (Budapest: Athenaeum).
- <sup>30</sup> The novel has been translated into more than 40 languages. Two translations have been popular in German: Molnár, Ferenc (1910) *Die Jungen der Paulsstrasse. Ein Roman für kleine und grosse Studenten*. Translated by Eugen Heinrich Szhmitt (Berlin); and the translation by the same title by Deutsch von Edmund Alkaly. Leipzig – Wien, 1928. For the English version see: Molnár, Ferenc (1927) *The Paul Street Boys* Translated by Louis Rittenberg (New York, NY: Macy Masius).
- <sup>31</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1945) *Gőzszlop* (The Captain of St. Margaret's) Translated by Barrows Mussey (New York, NY: Duell, Sloan & Pears).
- <sup>32</sup> Menyhért Lengyel's (Melchior Lengyel) drama *Typhoon* resulted in a similar breakthrough in 1909. Lengyel, Melchior (1913) *Typhoon* (Taifun), Translated by Laurence Irving (London: Methuen). Some of Lajos Biró's plays and some fifteen years later the screenplays based on them met with similar success. It is important to point out though that Mór Jókai, the leading Hungarian novelist of the 19th century, was the first to be published in foreign languages; his works were popular mostly in German, but he had achieved significant successes in English too. See Czigány, Lóránt (1976) *A magyar irodalom fogadtatása a viktoriánus Angliában 1830–1914* (The Reception of Hungarian Literature in Victorian England 1830–1914). *Irodalomtörténeti Füzetek* 89. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó).
- <sup>33</sup> Schöpflin, Aladár (ed.) (undisclosed date of publishing [1929–1931]) *Magyar Színművészeti Lexikon. A magyar színjátszás és drámairodalom enciklopédiája* (Lexicon of the Hungarian Art of Drama) (Budapest: Országos Színészegyesület Nyugdíjintézete). Vol. III, 402.



- <sup>34</sup> Morrison, William (1999) *Broadway Theatres: History and Architecture* (New York, NY: Dover Publications).
- <sup>35</sup> Molnár Rajec, Elizabeth (1986) *Ferenc Molnár. Bibliography I–II* (Wien–Köln–Graz: Hermann Böhlau).
- <sup>36</sup> It must have been the Terrace Garden Theater that also produced Hungarian language emigrant acting.
- <sup>37</sup> Sárközi, Mátyás (1995) *Színház az egész világ* (All the World Is a Stage) (Budapest: Osiris – Századvég). It is important to note that most of the biographies dealing with Molnár are based on *anecdotes* and humorous *stories* often impossible to check. They have a common source: during his life, a weekly entitled *Színházi Élet* (Theater Life), similar to (or even the Hungarian equivalent of) *Vanity Fair*, often dedicated attention to Ferenc Molnár. It can also be observed that the essays written on Molnár take for granted what he quotes in his memoirs, *Companion in Exile*, from his secretary commenting on their life. In this book it was Molnár himself who denied being the author of the witty remarks that were attributed to him. According to him, at least half of them were not his. (See Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 28–29). Note that a thorough and reliable Ferenc Molnár biography and appraisal is still not available. Also missing is the publication of his correspondence from which the chronology of his travels, experiences, and relationships could be accurately reconstructed. As basic sources, there are two public collections related to Ferenc Molnár. The Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum (Petőfi Literary Museum, PIM) in Budapest preserves the legacy of Lili Darvas. With this group of documents hundreds of letters were returned to Hungary. The other and bigger collection is to be found in The New York Public Library, more precisely within the Billy Rose Theatre Division. Molnár himself donated these documents in 1947. The Molnár Papers contain a selection of scripts, correspondence and articles written by Molnár between 1927 and 1952. Another important point of reference would be the papers of Edmund Pauker, Molnár’s American attorney. See Edmund Pauker Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- <sup>38</sup> Molnár, Ferenc *The Devil* (1908: American Motoscope & Biograph Co., 1915: New York Motion Picture, 1921: New York Motion Picture), *A Trip to Paradise* (See also *Liliom*, 1921: Metro Pictures), *Fine Clothes* (1925: Louis B. Mayer Production Inc. – First National Pictures), *The Swan* (1925: Famous Players Lasky – Paramount Pictures), *His Glorious Night* (1929: MGM), *Prisoners* (1929: Walter Marosco Production – First National Pictures), *Olimpia* (1930: MGM), *One Romantic Night* (1930: United Artist), *The Guardsman* (1931: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), *Liliom* (1930: Fox Film Corp., 1934: Fox Films), *No Greater Glory* (1934: Columbia Pictures Corp.), *The Good Fairy* (1935: Universal Pictures Corp.), *The Bridge Wore Red* (1937: MGM), *Double Wedding* (1937: MGM).
- <sup>39</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1937) *All the Plays of Molnar* (New York: Garden City Publishing Co.). Forward by David Belasco, De luxe edition, 823. The same collection was published as Molnár, Ferenc (1929) *The Plays of Ferenc Molnar* (New York, NY: Macy Masius, The Vanguard Press). Note that prior to the American edition there had been published a drama anthology of Molnár in London: Molnár, Ferenc (1927) *Plays of Molnar* Translated and introduction by Benjamin Glazer, (London: Jarrolds).
- <sup>40</sup> Louis Rittenberg (Tiszaújlak, Hungary, 1892–New York, NY, 1962), journalist and translator. He moved to the United States quite early in 1906. From 1937 on, he was the editor in chief of the *American Hebrew*, and at the same time the American editor of the *London Jewish Chronicle*.
- <sup>41</sup> Advertising was becoming more and more powerful in Europe too. In 1910 the first and most successful Hungarian daily tabloid, *Az Est* (The Evening), was launched. It had a long-stand-

- ing and successful career and was circulated in hundreds of thousands of copies. At the request of the proprietor chief editor and friend, the advertisement texts were written by Molnár. Despite the fact that advertising was part of Europeans' everyday life, those visiting America were fascinated and also shocked by the sheer mass of American advertisements, their frequency and appearance. The memoirs of the Austrian-Czech tenor, Leo Slezak, are interesting from this point of view. The singer was contracted by the Metropolitan in New York at the time of Molnár's first premiere. Arriving from Europe and the world of the Monarchy, Slezak was taken aback by the appearance of the advertisements accompanying the opera performances. In the leaflet of *Othello*, for example, the section describing the content of the opera also included framed advertisements for food products. See Slezak, Leo (1934) *Meine sämtliche Werke. Der Wortbruch* (Berlin: Rohwolt). 30–70.
- 42 Gajdó, Tamás (ed.) (2001) *Magyar színháztörténet 1873–1920* (The Hungarian History of Theater 1873–1920) (Budapest: Magyar Könyvklub – Országos Színháztörténeti Múzeum és Intézet). 143–173.
- 43 Edmund Pauker, Molnár's American attorney of Hungarian origin, became his personal friend. He had an office on Broadway.
- 44 On December 14, 1927, Ferenc Molnár gave a lecture in *French* at Columbia University. The subject was the topics of contemporary European drama. According to the archives of Columbia University, 393 students attended the lecture. Unfortunately the University does not have the written transcript of the lecture. My thanks for accessing the data related to the University go to archivist Carolyn Smith.
- 45 Before Molnár arrived in New York, *Vanity Fair* had published one of his longer works in 12 installments. The magazine had commissioned this writing from Molnár by way of appeasement for having published a specious and insulting article about his previous divorce suit; Molnár's representative and attorney in New York, Pauker, had raised the issue with the magazine on behalf of the author. The actors read from the dialogs of this work. The party was held at the palace of Condée Nast, proprietor of *Vanity Fair*, at 1040 Park Avenue, on the roof terrace on the 14th floor.
- 46 The meeting took place on December 27, 1927.
- 47 Waldau, Roy S. (1972) *Vintage Years of the Theatre Guild 1928–1939* (Cleveland–London: The Press of Case Western Reserve University). 249.
- 48 Rumor has it that the Swedish writer, Selma Lagerlöf, who herself was a Nobel prize winner in 1909, nominated him. Probably his name was brought up among the potential nominees. See Csordás, Lajos (2004) *Molnár Ferenc. Életrajz sorozat* (Ferenc Molnár. Genre Series) (Budapest: Elektra Kiadóház). 93.
- 49 On the translations of the play see Nagy, Gabriella Ágnes (2004) 'Molnár Ferenc tengerentúli útja. A *Játék a kastélyban* fordításai, avagy a színházfordítás kultúrája' (Ferenc Molnár's Trip to Overseas. Translations of *The Play Is the Thing*, or the Culture of Theatrical Translations) in Imre Zoltán (ed.) *Átvilágítás. A magyar színház európai kontextusban. Recepció és kreativitás. Nyitott kultúra c. sorozat.* (Screening. Hungarian Theater in the European Context. Reception and Context. Open Culture Series). Gábor Palló (series ed.) (Budapest: Áron Kiadó). 155–170.
- 50 Henry Miller (London, Great Britain, 1858–New York, NY, 1926), actor, director, theatrical producer and manager.
- 51 Veres, András (2007) 'Molnár Ferenc színpada' (The Stage of Ferenc Molnár) in Mihály Szegedy-Maszák and András Veres (eds) *A magyar irodalom története III. 1920-tól napjainkig* (Histories of Hungarian Literature III, from 1920 to date) (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó). 153.

- <sup>52</sup> On the issues related to translating Ferenc Molnár see Schöpflin, Aladár (1937) ‘Dráma-irodalom – Molnár Ferenc’ (Drama Literature – Ferenc Molnár) in Aladár Schöpflin *A magyar irodalom története a XX. században* (The History of Hungarian Literature in the 20th Century) (Budapest: Grill Károly Könyvkiadóvállalata). 157–162.
- <sup>53</sup> Billy Wilder made a movie from this one-act play in 1961 (*One, Two, Three*, The Mirisch Corporation).
- <sup>54</sup> Kőrössi P., József (ed.) (2003) *Amerika! Amerika! Magyar írók novellái Amerikáról, az amerikai emberről és az amerikai magyarokról* (America! America! Hungarian Writers’ Short Stories about American People and Hungarian Americans) (Budapest: Noran Könyvkiadó). At the time when Molnár’s career was just beginning, the great old novelist of the era, Kálmán Mikszáth, came out with a novel, *The Noszty Boy’s Affair with Mari Tóth*. In this play, the father of the female main character, Mihály Tóth, also became a millionaire in America, and it is only because of a death in the family that he returns home. The already mentioned successful author, Melchior Lengyel dedicated a separate volume to his American trip. Lengyel happened to be in New York at the time when Ferenc Molnár’s *Liliom* was produced. The account of the successful premiere gets a separate chapter in his book. See Lengyel, Menyhért (1922) *Amerikai napló* (American Diary) (Budapest: Athenaeum). 190–196.
- <sup>55</sup> Schöpflin, Aladár *op. cit.* 157–158.
- <sup>56</sup> On the presence of Ferenc Molnár in Germany see L. Nagy, George (1978) *Ferenc Molnár’s Stücke auf der deutschsprachigen Bühne*. (Diss: State University of New York of Albany).
- <sup>57</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 51.
- <sup>58</sup> His second wife, Sári Fedák (Beregszász, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, 1879–Budapest, Hungary, 1955), a great actress of the era, did a long tour of the United States in 1921 performing in the Hungarian theaters of America too.
- <sup>59</sup> Within the parts of the Molnár legacy that actually made it to the Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest through Darvas, among the messages addressed to Wanda Bartha there is only one writing in which Molnár ends the message by referring to her in the informal. The rest of the messages are short and conclude with the neutral “Sincerely Yours”. Upon the secretary’s death, Molnár told his doctor Henrik Lax, also one of his best friends, who was the doctor of the Hungarian emigration too, that he felt he had lost his child. Doctor Lax corrected him: “When I told him that my child had died, he said, ‘No, it was your mother that died.’” Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 49.
- <sup>60</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 51.
- <sup>61</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 48.
- <sup>62</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 51.
- <sup>63</sup> On this aspect of Hungarian emigration see Frank, Tibor (2009) *Double Exile: Migrations of Jewish-Hungarian Professionals through Germany to the United States 1919–1945* (Oxford: Peter Lang).
- <sup>64</sup> Another author with a similar career, Melchior Lengyel, wrote down in his diary in various places how little he was interested in productions abroad. Lengyel, Menyhért (1987) *Életem könyve. Naplók, önéletrajzi töredékek* (The Book of My Life. Diaries, Biographical Fragments) (Budapest: Gondolat).
- <sup>65</sup> The First Anti-Jewish Act was passed by the House of Representatives on May 12, 1938, and by the Upper House on May 24. For the text of the act see 1938. évi XV. tc. *Magyar*

*törvénytár: 1938. évi törvénycikkek* (Hungarian Collection of Laws: The Acts of 1938) (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1939). 132–144.

- 66 To illustrate how hopeful Molnár still was in the first months of 1938 or how naively he looked into the future, let us refer to a letter in which Molnár was happy to tell her wife about the news that the ex-Prime Minister, Count István Bethlen, gave a major speech at one of the committee meetings in Parliament on February 9, 1938, which was like an emergency cry to “true Hungarians”. Bethlen was opposed to solving the Jewish issue following to the German pattern and to adjusting domestic politics to suit German requirements. Bethlen distanced himself from the extreme right in vain. The political climate had already changed irreversibly. Molnár, Ferenc (2003) “... or not to be”. *Molnár Ferenc levelei Darvas Lilihez* (“... or not to be”. The Letters of Ferenc Molnár to Lili Darvas) (Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó – Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum). 28. Also see Frank, Tibor (ed.) (2003) *Discussing Hitler. Advisers of U.S. Diplomacy in Central Europe 1934–1941* (Budapest – New York: CEU Press). 47.
- 67 Manuscript division of the Petőfi Literary Museum (PIM), V. 4326/41.
- 68 Erdős, Jenő (1939) ‘Sirató sorok. Látomás eltávozott írókról’ (Mourning Lines. A Vision of Departed Writers). *Szép Szó*, Vol. VIII, No. 31, 4–10.
- 69 The arrow-cross men were members of a “Hungaricist”, extreme right, anti-Semitic movement born in the second half of the 1930s. In October 1944, they took over power in Hungary. Jenő Erdős, *op. cit.*, 7–9; also see footnote 31 above.
- 71 Letter of Ferenc Molnár to Lili Darvas, March 26, 1938. Molnár, Ferenc (2003) “... or not to be”. *Molnár Ferenc levelei Darvas Lilihez* (“... or not to be”. The Letters of Ferenc Molnár to Lili Darvas) (Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó – Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum). 27–29. For a detailed review of the Hungarian volume see Sárközi, Mátyás (2007) ‘The Plays and the Wives’, Katalin Varga and Tamás Gajdó (eds) *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 188. 122–129.
- 72 It was in this very year that David Selznick made his world-famous film legend, *Gone with the Wind*, winning an Oscar in the “best picture” category.
- 73 The invitations were initiated not by the Americans but by the émigré Sándor Incze (1889–1966). Incze was the editor of the weekly entitled *Színházi Élet* (Theater Life) between 1910 and 1938. The paper was abolished as a result of the Anti-Jewish Act. In 1939, Incze migrated to New York, where he founded and edited two English language papers, the *Stage* and the *Theater Arts*.
- 74 Manuscript division of PIM, V. 4326/286.
- 75 The addressee of the letter could not be identified. For the Hungarian and English versions see the manuscript division of PIM, V. 4326/286. The curiosity of the typed and manually corrected Hungarian letter is that some phrases were originally dictated in English by Molnár.
- 76 Molnár, Ferenc (1945) *Farewell My Heart* (New York: Simon).
- 77 The descendants of Ferenc Molnár preserve a fifty-second silent film in which Max Reinhardt, Charlie Chaplin, Paul Robeson, Lili Darvas and Ferenc Molnár “play” Alexander Dumas’s work, *Dame aux camélias*. This is the only picture in the Molnár photographic archive where the man who has made so many laugh is laughing himself, too.
- 78 Their first success was the musical *Oklahoma!* (1943); from their later works let us mention *South Pacific* (1949) and *The Sound of Music* (1959).
- 79 Manuscript division of PIM, V. 4326/254.
- 80 On Márta Sárközi see Széchenyi, Ágnes (2004) ‘Műstoppoló és mecénás’ (Fine-darner and Patron of Art) in Ágnes Széchenyi (ed.) *Menedékház. Sárközi Márta emlékkönyv* (Refuge. A Book in Honor of Márta Sárközi) (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó). 11–74.
- 81 Manuscript division of PIM, V. 4326/95.

- <sup>82</sup> Elek Falus (Orosháza, Hungary, 1880–Budapest, Hungary, 1950), graphic artist, industrial artist, and stage-designer. He designed the cover of *Typhoon*, the play by Melchior Lengyel mentioned above. See Manuscript division of PIM, V. 4326/197.
- <sup>83</sup> “Yesterday I saw Greta Garbo again at Dr. László’s. I don’t know how many times I’ve seen her. GRETA GARBO! I keep wishing I could see her over and over again.” Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 266.
- <sup>84</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1951) *Companion in Exile. Notes for an Autobiography by Ferenc Molnár*. Translated by Barrows Mussey (London: W. H. Allen). 290.
- <sup>85</sup> Molnár, Ferenc (1962) *Szülfalum, Pest* (My Native Village, Pest) (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó). 584–587.
- <sup>86</sup> Ferenc Göndör (Kaposvár, Hungary, 1885–New York, NY, 1954), journalist. He was a war correspondent in the First World War. In 1919, he escaped to Austria, and in 1926, he settled down in the U.S. It was during the time of the bourgeois democratic revolution in 1918 that he founded his paper entitled *Az Ember* (The Man), which he carried on in Vienna and New York with identical titles up to 1952.



**KULTURELLE ABSTÄNDE.  
ÖSTERREICH UND UNGARN IM SPIEGEL  
VON ROBERT MENASSE UND PÉTER ESTERHÁZY  
AUF DER FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE**

ZOLTÁN PÉTER

Wien  
Österreich

Der Beitrag liefert Überlegungen und ein Fallbeispiel zu einer künftigen umfassenden Studie, deren Ziel darin besteht, Unterschiede der ungarischen und österreichischen Kultur zu erschließen und transparent zu machen.<sup>1</sup> Der auf ein bestimmtes Thema angewendete Blick und seine Erkenntnisse hängen gewiss nicht nur mit der dem betreffenden Subjekt zukommenden Position im Wissenschaftsfeld maßgebend zusammen, sondern auch mit seiner kulturellen Zugehörigkeit. Der so genannte Migrationshintergrund, mit dem in Europa lediglich ein relativ geringer Anteil der ForscherInnen am Werk ist, definiert sich als ein Sonderfall herkömmlicher kultureller Zugehörigkeiten. Die Beschreibung dieses Sonderfalls als Typus bildet den Gegenstand des ersten Teils der Abhandlung.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Robert Menasse, Péter Esterházy, Frankfurter Buchmesse, ungarischen und österreichischen Kultur

Zum 60. Geburtstag von Pál Deréky

Alle Menschen lassen sich durch den Ort charakterisieren, an dem sie situiert sind. Der Habitus eines Individuums oder die *durchmischende Farbe* eines Lebenslaufes, d. h. eine körperliche Gestalt angenommen habendes und daher sich nur zögernd änderndes Wahrnehmungsmuster einer Person, kann – trotz aller Postmodernität – nicht als „wurzellos“ betrachtet werden. Es ist daher der Habitus, der den unter neue soziale Umstände geratenen Wanderer auf externe Anweisung sich nicht integrieren lässt. Er ist es, der es bewerkstelligt, dass man (vor der Globalisierung insbesondere, derzeit etwas weniger) etwa den typischen russischen oder amerikanischen Zuwanderer auch nach längerem Aufenthalt in dem einen oder anderen Teil Europas allein an seinem Gang, geschweige denn an seiner Kleidung, an den Essgewohnheiten auf Anhieb erkennt.

Menschen können zwar nur virtuell zugleich in mehreren physikalischen Räumen und Zeiten anwesend sein, doch MigrantInnen bewegen sich jahre- oder sogar lebenslang zugleich in zwei oder mehreren Räumen: in einem verlassenen und



einem neu betretenen Ort. Sie bewegen sich in einem bis zu der Auswanderung in beachtlichem Maß inkorporierten, aber auf einen Schlag physisch inexistent gewordenen, in symbolischer Hinsicht jedoch weiter bestehenden Raum. So geraten sie zu Beginn ihres neuen Aufenthaltes in eine vielschichtige Orientierungslosigkeit. Mit der Zeit bildet sich bei jenen, die als Jugendliche oder Erwachsene ihren ursprünglichen Ort verlassen haben, eine Art Zwischenraum aus, eine aus den verlassenen und betretenen Kulturen herrührende Mischung von Welten; es bildet sich ein Habitus aus, der bestimmte Eigenschaften der beiden Kulturen hin- und rückübersetzend eine gesunde Einheit zu erzeugen versucht. MigrantInnen verfügen über einen Blick, für den die Eigenschaften der alten und neuen Heimat, sprich: die Charakteristika zweier Länder, sich grundlegend anders gestalten als für die, die einen solchen Ortswechsel nie vollzogen haben.

Das Leben im Raum zwischen den Kulturen gestaltet sich eher selten freiwillig und es verläuft auch nicht immer reibungslos. Manchmal nimmt es unbewusst die Gestalt einer Tugend oder einer Not an und öfters konstituiert es sich wahrscheinlich als Tugend aus der Not.

Die Landung zwischen zwei Kulturen (oft genug auch zwischen zwei Stühlen) bringt meistens ein bewusstes oder unbewusstes Reflektieren mit sich. Dieses Da-Zwischen-Sein definiert sich allerdings selten als eine statistische Mitte. Migrantinnen wandern vielmehr zwischen zwei oder mehreren Kulturen hin und her. Manchmal fühlen sich mehr der einen, ein anderes Mal mehr zur anderen Kultur hingezogen. Dieses Zugehörigkeitsgefühl ist jedoch vielfach von der hier oder dort verbrachten Zeit, der Praxis und von den politischen, sozialen Faktoren am ursprünglichen bzw. neuen Ort abhängig.

Das Bemühen um eine objektive Perspektive zwischen den Kulturen muss freilich auch für KulturwissenschaftlerInnen mit Migrationshintergrund eine niemals restlos realisierte Zielsetzung bleiben. Wobei die Perspektive des Subjekts von der Mitte heraus theoretisch eine optimale Ausgangsbasis zu implizieren scheint. Ein solcher Blick, da er zwingend *anderswoher* kommt, gestaltet sich auf jeden Fall anders als bei denen, die über die Erfahrung eines dauerhaften Ortswechsels nicht verfügen.

Nochmals: Die Menschen lassen sich durch den Ort charakterisieren, an dem sie situiert sind, sie sind aber dadurch weder restlos erfasst noch determiniert: „Als determiniert (im Elend) kann der Mensch alle Determinationen erkennen (Größe erwerben) und an ihrer Überwindung arbeiten. Paradoxe, die alle ihre Grundlage haben in dem Privileg der Reflexivität: [...]“<sup>2</sup>

### Ausgangsbasis der eigentlichen Studie

Ob mit oder ohne Migrationshintergrund scheint es auf jeden Fall erkenntnisbringend zu sein, zum Beispiel eine Kulturgeschichte Ungarns und Österreichs des 20. Jahrhunderts vergleichend zu erstellen. Man könnte hierzu programmatische und einflussreiche Texte oder Reden (literarische, politische Vorträge, Proklamationen, Festreden und auch populäre Songs) zusammenführen und im Kontext ihrer Zeit und ihres sozialen, kulturellen Raumes interpretieren.<sup>3</sup> Zwei Länder, die wie Ungarn und Österreich miteinander immer schon eng vernetzt waren, d.h. entlang der miteinander geführten Rivalitäten, der Zusammenarbeit und der Ignoranz (auf allen sozialen Ebenen) bezüglich ihrer kulturellen Unterschiede, zu erschließen, ist mit dem Endziel verbunden, ihr jeweiliges kollektives kulturelles Dasein oder ihre Identität zu erschließen.

Der folgende Aufsatz kann sich lediglich auf die Interpretation von zwei Texten der 1990er Jahre konzentrieren. Die beiden ausgesuchten programmatischen Texte stammen von zwei namhaften zeitgenössischen Schriftstellern – von Péter Esterházy und Robert Menasse. Die Fragestellung, welches Bild die beiden Schriftsteller in ihren Eröffnungsreden bei der Frankfurter Buchmesse über das Land, in dem sie leben, transportieren bzw. welche länderspezifische Unterscheidungsmerkmale sich aus ihren Texten ableiten lassen, wird von folgender Hypothese begleitet: Die ungarischen avantgardistischen Literaten und Künstler der Zwischenkriegszeit waren in der häretischen Phase ihrer Laufbahnen radikaler als die österreichischen. Genauer: Jene Schriftsteller, die im literarischen Feld der Kleinproduktion (und nicht der Massenproduktion) Ungarns unumgängliche reformistische Erneuerungen eingeführt haben, wie zum Beispiel Lajos Kassák und einige seiner Anhänger in den 1920er Jahren, gingen in ihren Ansätzen extremer, antitraditionalistischer und zugleich modischer vor als die vergleichbaren österreichischen Schriftsteller und auch Künstler; modischer im Sinne, dass sie die international gerade trendigen Ismen (Dadaismus und Konstruktivismus) deutlich stärker rezipierten als die österreichischen Avantgardisten – als zum Beispiel Robert Müller, um nur den bekanntesten zu nennen. Wobei kurioserweise gerade dort, wo das Terrain für radikale Erneuerung weniger geeignet zu sein scheint, nämlich in Wien, ein Großteil der ungarischen Avantgarde entstand.

Literaturreformer wie Robert Musil oder der alles Neue vernichtende Häretiker Karl Kraus sowie die überwiegende Mehrheit der Architekten Österreichs spielten mit der Avantgarde nicht mit oder lehnten diese gänzlich ab. Zwei Momente (deren Hintergründe noch immer ziemlich rätselhaft sind), eine gewisse Vorsicht gegenüber den neueren und neuartigen Tendenzen in Europa (wie insbesondere gegen den Dadaismus und Konstruktivismus) und die Suche nach der Synthese zwischen Tradition und Avantgarde, spielten im Kulturleben Wiens der 1920er Jahre eine zentrale Rolle.<sup>4</sup> Und (die neoavantgardistischen Tendenzen vorerst bei

Seite lassend) auch mit dem Aufkommen der Postmoderne, scheinen wieder die ungarischen Schriftsteller die extremeren und zugleich die *modischeren* gewesen zu sein. Der symbolisch dominierende Pol des ungarischen Literaturbetriebs (mitunter von Péter Esterházy belegt) wurde in den 1990er Jahren insbesondere seitens der Kritiker von einem regelrechten Enthusiasmus für die Postmoderne erfasst. Eine vergleichbare Begeisterung (ähnlich wie seinerseits gegenüber dem Dadaismus und Konstruktivismus) blieb in Österreich im Prinzip aus.<sup>5</sup> In der Kurzbeschreibung ihres Buches schildert Andrea Kunne die Situation wie folgt:

Trotz der starken Präsenz der Postmoderne in der österreichischen Literatur hat sich die österreichische Literaturwissenschaft nur äußerst zurückhaltend an der Postmoderne-Debatte beteiligt. Stärker noch als in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, wo Wolfgang Iser als einer der ersten einen wichtigen Beitrag zur internationalen Diskussion über die Postmoderne geliefert hat (der zusammen mit der kritischen Position von Jürgen Habermas zu einem beachtenswerten Diskussionsstand geführt hat), gab es in Österreich lange Zeit nur Abneigung gegenüber den Begriffen 'Postmoderne' (als kulturelle Strömung) bzw. 'Postmodernität' (als weltweites philosophisches, politisches und soziales Phänomen). Ein wichtiger Grund für diese Haltung liegt in der bedeutenden Tradition der 'Wiener Moderne', der gegenüber die postmoderne Spielerei nach Ansicht der Kritiker doch nur eine Verfallserscheinung darstellen konnte. Erst in den letzten Jahren hat man diesen Standpunkt verlassen [...].<sup>6</sup>

### Péter Esterházy: Über Alles

Péter Esterházy's äußerst satirische Eröffnungsrede zur Frankfurter Buchmesse im Jahr 1999 spielt mit der Titelwahl selbstverständlich an die Nationalhymne Deutschlands an, was wohl eine gewisse Anknüpfung an die deutsche Kultur bedeutet. Im Text kann dies an mehreren Stellen auch nachgewiesen werden, wobei die Anzahl der Anknüpfungen an die ungarische Kultur naturgemäß deutlich größer ist.

Seine Rede begann er in ungarischer Sprache. Er wollte offenbar den Klang der Sprache spüren, die Nation dadurch zu Wort kommen lassen. Er wollte weiters seine eigene Aussprache in Differenz zu der deutschen akzentuieren. Und schockieren wollte er natürlich auch. Der zweite Absatz (der erste deutsche) streicht die Eigenschaft der Ungarn als ein lächelndes, glückliches Volk heraus. Damit thematisiert er einen Umstand, der für die 1990er Jahre durchaus zutrifft, da das Land sich in der Zeit noch in einer euphorischen Aufbruchsstimmung befand.

Solang ich ungarisch gesprochen habe, konnte ich beim bloßen Hinschauen erkennen, wer ein Ungar ist. Ein schönes Gefühl. Ein Ungar ist jemand, der lacht, habe ich feststellen können. Jemand, dessen Augen voller Verstand blitzen. Der Ungar also ist glücklich. Das ist die erste Runde der Vorstellungen und Selbstbestimmungen. Die Ungarn, ein heiteres, gutgelauntes Volk – mag doch Johann Gottfried (von) Herder sagen, was er will.<sup>7</sup>

Herders düstere Prognose lautet übrigens wie folgt:

Wahrscheinlich saßen sie [Madjaren] zuerst im Lande der Baschkiren, zwischen der Wolga und dem Jaik; dann stifteten sie ein ungrisches Königreich zwischen dem Schwarzen Meer und der Wolga, das sich zerteilte. [...] [J]etzt stürzten sie aus Pannonien in Mähren, Bayern, Oberitalien und verwüsteten greulich; mit Feuer und Schwert streiften sie in Thüringen, Sachsen, Franken, Hessen, Schwaben, Elsaß bis nach Frankreich und abermals in Italien hinein, zogen vom deutschen Kaiser einen schimpflichen Tribut, bis endlich teils durch die Pest, teils durch die fürchterlichsten Niederlagen ihrer Heere in Sachsen, Schwaben, Westfalen das deutsche Reich vor ihnen sichergestellt und ihr Ungarn selbst sogar zu einem apostolischen Reich wurde. Da sind sie jetzt unter Slawen, Deutschen, Wlachen und andern Völkern der geringere Teil der Landeseinwohner, und nach Jahrhunderten wird man vielleicht ihre Sprache kaum finden.<sup>8</sup>

Im dritten Absatz komprimiert Esterházy mindestens vier Sachverhalte zusammen: „Mir hat niemand, kein einziges Wesen, gesagt, daß ich hier deutsch reden soll. Was die Ungarn betrifft. Wäre das noch verständlich, sie sind kein Volk von Organisatoren. Aber die Deutschen, so heißt es zumindest in den Parodien, sagen gerne, wie etwas zu sein hat.“ Er teilt also mit, dass er nach Frankfurt von den Organisatoren der Buchmesse (und nicht von den ungarischen Kulturverantwortlichen) eingeladen worden sei und obwohl (im Gegensatz zu den Ungarn) die Deutschen gute Organisatoren seien, habe ihm niemand gesagt, in welcher Sprache er vorzutragen solle. Damit erinnert er an eine der stillschweigenden Selbstverständlichkeiten, wonach ein Festredner zum Beispiel in Frankfurt auf Deutsch oder höchstens noch auf Englisch vorzutragen habe. Er erinnert also an den grundlegenden Unterschied, an die Macht bzw. Ohnmacht zweier Sprachen bzw. Nationen innerhalb Europas. Er bringt dazu im nächsten Absatz noch ein Beispiel. Die offizielle Erwartung sei seitens der Deutschen groß: „In einem der offiziellen Briefe lese ich zum Beispiel, daß von diesem *kleinen* Land Ungarn sowohl literarisch als auch politisch eine aufregende Vorstellung zu erwarten sei: selbst den Eisernen Vorhang hätten wir einst zerrissen.“ Doch da die Sprache es nicht zulasse, Deutschland „groß“ zu nennen, so müsse man es mittelmäßig nennen: „Das große Deutschland? Das klingt nicht gut, und auch die Franzosen würden gleich murren.“

Wenn es nicht klein ist und auch nicht groß, ist es offensichtlich mittelmäßig. Mittelmaß. Da haben wir es: zufällig ist es rausgerutscht, die kleinen Ungarn – und schon erstickt Deutschland im Mittelmaß! Mittelmaß und Wahn.“

Ich schließe nicht aus, dass Esterházy's Anspielung auf den deutschen Ordnungssinn und dazu die Auslegung des Mittelmaßes als Wahn auch an die Geschehnisse im Zweiten Weltkrieg, an die organisierten Verbrechen erinnert oder gar vor zu viel Ordnung mahnt.

Die Ungarn wären, so die nächste Eigenschaft, hochmütig und überheblich, sie glaubten, sie wären sprichwörtlich etwas Besonderes: „extra hungariam non est vita, si est vita, non est ita.“ Er zitiere auf Lateinisch deshalb, merkt er an, weil eigenwilligerweise etliche Sprichwörter über Ungarn auf Lateinisch vorkämen.

Zwar hätte jedes Land seine guten und schlechten Seiten, seine „Glorie“ und seine eigenen Schriftsteller, „[a]ber nicht alle haben einen Kosztolányi, einen Krúdy, einen Karinthy, um nur die mit dem Buchstaben K zu erwähnen. Den Buchstaben K haben aber (fast) alle. Zum Beispiel Künter Krass.“

Im nächsten Absatz spricht er einige Gegensätze zwischen den Ost- und Westeuropäern an und hebt eines ihrer aktuellen gemeinsamen Merkmale hervor. Die Westeuropäer seien auf das „unreflektierte ost-europäische Gejammer, diese sentimental-moralischen Verletztheiten“ nicht neugierig. „Und dort mag man nicht, daß man es hier nicht mag. Und überhaupt: wir mögen nichts vom Leiden hören, vom Leider [sic!] der anderen: am Ende des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts ziemt es sich nicht, zu leiden. Das verbindet Frankfurt, Leipzig und Budapest.“

Der 15. Absatz (von insgesamt 44) hebt weitere Gegensätze hervor. Die Ungarn fühlten sich schon seit der Zeit der Türkenkriege beleidigt:

Tief ist der Brunnen der Vorwürfe. Unsererseits haben wir die Türken schon im siebzehnten Jahrhundert mit unseren bloßen Händen aufhalten müssen – obwohl sie damals nicht einmal die doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft besaßen –, wir waren die letzte Trutzburg, das Bollwerk des Abendlandes, während ihr Euch Eurerseits vermehrt und den Klugen markiert habt. Na, und was war der Dank dafür? Einen Dank gab es nicht.

Und im 20. Jahrhundert. setzten sich die Probleme nur fort:

Niedergetrampelt ward manch eine unserer schönen Revolutionen, zerstückelt ward dies Land (oder sollte ich das vielleicht lieber in Paris vortragen?), und dann sind wir auch 1945 allein geblieben, erinnern wir uns nur an Churchills legendär zynische Zettel, als wären sie Pferdehändler, verhandelte er zu zweit mit Stalin über unser Leben, und bitte, auch 1956 hat es Euch beliebt, uns im Stich zu lassen, dann beliebte es Euch, allerlei kommunistischen Mördern die Hände die Hände zu schütteln (auch wir haben Hände geschüttelt, auch wir haben uns im Stich gelassen – darum reißen wir jetzt den Mund so weit

auf), aber dann, als wir vor zehn Jahren Eure östlichen Brüder aus dem Ostern hinausgelassen haben, das war Euch recht, nicht wahr ?, alle haben erschüttert geschluchzt, denn erinnert Euch nur, damals wart Ihr noch Brüder und ein Volk.

Im 17. Absatz kommt es zur Betonung von zwei weiteren skurrilen Eigenschaften, die sich bewusst widersprechen. Ungarn wäre ein Land der Literatur.

Eine literarische Nation. Was bedeutet das? Abgesehen davon, daß es, unter uns gesagt, nichts bedeutet, bedeutet es viel und Verschiedenes, bei der Auslegung dieses Begriffs können wir, Ungarn, auf eine reiche Tradition zurückblicken. [...] Nun also, Ungarn ist eine literarische Großmacht, nur seine Sprache, die ist ein Kerker.

Im nächsten Absatz empfiehlt er ein den vorhin ausgesprochenen Widerspruch multiplizierendes Programm: einen Ungarischkurs für das deutsche Volk, im Zuge dessen das Volk über die ungarische Geschichte und Literatur aufgeklärt wäre. Hierbei würde man die Klassiker kennen lernen: mithin Péter Pázmány, Mihály Csokonai Vitéz. „Dann aber müßten Sie die Namen Weöres – Pilinszky – Ottlik – Mészöly – Mátyás – Nemes Nagy – Szentkuthy so auswendig können, wie Rahn – Morlock – O. Walter – F. Walter – Schäfer. (Einzelheiten lassen wir jetzt beiseite).“ Mehr noch: Ein solcher Kurs trüge auch dazu bei, ein neues Glücksgefühl zu empfinden. Der Kursteilnehmer käme durch den Ungarischkurs in den Besitz eines ihm bislang unzugänglichen Nationalstolzes und Heimatliebe.

Seien Sie Ungarn und freuen Sie sich darüber! Damit könnte diese herbstliche Woche einen schönen Verlauf nehmen! Vor lauter Nationalstolz würden Sie nur so strotzen! Das ist bei den Deutschen ohnehin immer problematisch, irgendwie können sie ihr Land nicht aus vollem Herzen lieben, ständig müssen sie kompensieren! Ein Esel schilt den anderen Langohr.

In den folgenden Absätzen nimmt Esterházy etwas von der parodistischen Darstellungsweise zurück und beginnt so etwas wie Farbe zu bekennen. Er zählt ein paar Namen der neueren und zeitgenössischen Literatur auf, benennt ihre Stärke und erinnert daran, dass die ungarische Literatur doch nicht so gut sei, wie er anfangs gesagt habe, und auch daran, dass Lesen eine fröhliche Wissenschaft sei, an der man allerdings untergehen könne.

Ungarn sei „[e]in Land der Literatur, habe ich gesagt. Aber das soll nicht nur als Parodie verstanden werden.“ Zwar entstand vor lauter Widerstand zum Bestehenden zur Genüge schlechte Literatur, aber auch gute:

Ich möchte unsere Literatur an dieser Stelle nicht übermäßig loben. Sicher, auch meine Eier haben zwei Dotter. Auf Ungarisch geht dieser Spruch so, daß jeder Zigeuner das eigene Pferd lobt. Auf Ungarisch bin ich dieser jeder Zigeuner. Und auch das Pferd. Und gleich

auch Nietzsche, der das Pferd beweint. Jedes Wort ist ein Vorurteil.  
[...]

Ich möchte keine Namenslisten vorlesen, doch an wen ich auch danken mag, immer finde ich diesen feinen Widerstand, der, sagen wir, in einem endlosen Satz von Nádas oder Krasznahorkai steckt, oder in einem Absatz von Tandori, aber ich werde wirklich keine Namensliste vorlesen, möchte nur noch Miklós Mészöly erwähnen, als *primus inter pares*, seine festen Textoberflächen, die den Sonnenschein so zurückwerfen, daß man hinterher lange mit tränenden Augen blinzeln muß. Der Wahlspruch von Mészöly ist: Mit dem Kopf gegen die Wand rennen, und dann weiter, durch den offenen Spalt hindurch!

An dieses Weiter und an dieses Blinzeln erinnert mich unsere Literatur in ihren besten Augenblicken. Den Leser erinnert sie daran, daß er ein Leser ist. Nicht ein Käufer, nicht ein Opfer der Werbung, nicht ein Freizeitverbraucher. Und sie erinnert ihn daran, daß es eine fröhliche Wissenschaft ist, ein Leser zu sein, und dabei geht es immerhin um eine Fröhlichkeit, an der man zugrunde gehen kann. Auf eine solche schwere Heiterkeit lenkt sie die Aufmerksamkeit, darauf, daß es großartig ist, zu lesen: ein Leser zu sein, ist eine große Angelegenheit.

Um ein auch hier verständliches Beispiel zu nennen, ist es in unserer Literatur der Roman von Imre Kertész, der uns sagt, dass das Leben schön sei. Zumindest lese ich ihn meinerseits so.

Mit all dem habe ich etwas übertrieben, da ist wieder das Pferd des Zigeuners. So gut ist die ungarische Literatur auch wieder nicht. Ihre Möglichkeiten aber sind in etwa so. Sie hätte gern, daß dort, wo sie sich befindet, wie in den Überschriften auf alten Landkarten geschrieben steht: *hic sunt leones*. Das möchte natürlich jedes Sandkorn und jedes gute Buch: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

### **Robert Menasse: „Geschichte“ war der größte historische Irrtum**

Robert Menasses Ansprache fiel 1992 auf der Buchmesse geradezu als Antipode zu der von Esterházy aus: Sie ist sehr ernsthaft und pessimistisch. Wenn es nach ihm ginge, wäre der Menschheit nicht mehr zu helfen, sie sei bedroht und sie drohe sich selbst. Doch: „Die Autoren, die Literaten insgesamt sind nicht bedroht. Die Erfolge dieser Messe beweisen es.“<sup>9</sup> Das Geschäft mit dem Schönen scheint also gut zu laufen.

Zwar soll es einen gewissen Fortschritt auf der Welt geben, aber nicht im Sinne eines historischen Fortschrittes, wie ihn die Aufklärung vorgab. „Denn dieser Fortschritt beruht auf dem Vergessen der Geschichte.“ Jedoch, wie der Spruch ei-



nes gewissen Amsterdamer Rabbis es bereits vor dreihundert Jahren auf den Punkt gebracht haben soll,

[w]as einmal wirklich war, bleibt ewig möglich“. Wahrscheinlich unabhängig davon, so Menasse weiter, kreierte auch Adorno im Zusammenhang mit den grausigen Geschehnissen in Auschwitz bekanntlich den Satz: „Was einmal wirklich war, bleibt ewig möglich.“<sup>10</sup>

Für Menasse sind die zwei Sätze erstaunlich identisch, der Unterschied liege einzig und allein darin, dass er heute bedrohlicher klinge. Mit diesen Sätzen lenkt Menasse das Thema in die Richtung des Faschismus im Allgemeinen und die Aufmerksamkeit auf Österreich, konkret auf die Briefbombenserien, die in dieser Zeit drohen.

Anschließend greift er die Diskussion um das Thema der Geschichte und ihr mögliches Ende auf, das seit 1992, seit der deutschsprachigen Auflage von Francis Fukuyamas Buch „Das Ende der Geschichte“, zu einem der großen Themen der Intellektuellen wurde. „Vielleicht war ‚Geschichte‘ der größte historische Irrtum der Menschheit.“ Er räumt ein, wenn der Geschichtsbegriff einen Prozess bezeichne, „der ein Ziel habe, das man erkennen und auf das man schließlich bewußt hinarbeiten könne“, sei dies destruktiv. Denn ein derartiger Zugang „hat aus dem Kreislauf simplen biologischen und sozialen Lebens von Menschen auf diesem Planeten jene Abfolge von Greuel in immer neuer Qualität gemacht, die wir als ‚Geschichte‘ studieren und gleichzeitig verdrängen.“<sup>11</sup> Daher wäre es höchst notwendig, den Geschichtsbegriff so schnell wie möglich zu verabschieden, so auch den österreichischen Leitsatz:

Wir haben aus der Geschichte gelernt: Nie wieder Anschluß, nie wieder Faschismus! Was ist in diesem Satz alles verdrängt und vergessen! Etwa, daß Österreich historisch nicht erst einen ‚Anschluß‘ brauchte, um faschistisch zu werden. Und welche Möglichkeiten eröffnet dieser Satz für die Zukunft? Zumindest die, daß wir keinen Faschismus als ‚faschistisch‘ bezeichnen können oder müssen, der die staatliche Souveränität Österreichs unangetastet läßt.

Das ist eine ‚Lehre aus der Geschichte‘? Ja. Aber sie zeigt nicht, daß die Schüler dumm sind, sondern daß ‚die Geschichte‘ eine schlechte Lehrerin ist.<sup>12</sup>

Jede „Lehre aus der Geschichte“ sei also „dürftig“ und jedes „Geschichtsziel“ sei rein spekulativ. Geschichte gehöre also abgeschafft. Denn ohne Geschichte wären wir endlich schlichte Zeitgenossen, ohne die Laster der Vergangenheit und ohne Bedrohung der Zukunft.

Derzeit betrachten sich, so führt Robert Menasse aus, westliche Demokratien als Avantgarde, und das insofern, indem sie vorgeben, einen rein pragmatischen

und keinen ideologischen Zugang mehr zur Lösung der gesellschaftlichen Probleme zu haben. Nur, dieser Pragmatismusansatz, der momentane Diskurs über das Ende der Geschichte, sei auch historisch geführt. Der sich als „ideologiefrei“ schmückende „Pragmatismus“ des Westens, „der sich selbst als Vollendung der Geschichte sieht, nimmt allerdings kaltblütig die Möglichkeit eines Endes in Kauf, das niemand wirklich wollen kann: nämlich das Ende allen menschlichen Lebens auf diesem Planeten“.<sup>13</sup> Das deshalb, weil man noch immer davon ausgehe, dass durch die Vernunft alles machbar sei. „Machbarkeitswahn ist tatsächlich zur ewigen Bedrohung geworden.“<sup>14</sup>

### Interpretationen

Obleich die Autoren für die Festrede von den zuständigen staatlichen Einrichtungen oder von den Veranstaltern der Buchmesse ausgewählt wurden, ist ihnen auf jeden Fall eine hohe, etablierte Position im literarischen Feld ihres Landes und darüber hinaus gemeinsam; genauer: Positionen sowohl im nationalen als auch im transnationalen Feld der symbolisch bestimmenden und ökonomisch unterlegenen Literaten wie auch im intellektuellen Feld.

Wobei aufgrund der Themenwahl und des Stils Robert Menasse deutlich stärker in Letzteres involviert ist.

Nach Menasses Auslegung erwartet man sich von einem Festredner viel zu viel. Man erwarte von ihm, dass er wie ein „Rindvieh“ über die Bedrohung der Menschheit und zugleich über die möglichen Lösungen der bestehenden Probleme spreche. Péter Esterházy dürfte damit etwas leichter umgehen, da er meint, dass es manchmal peinlich sei, ein Festredner zu sein. Trotz durchklingender Vorbehalte nehmen doch beide Schriftsteller die Rolle des Festredners auf sich und reden über ihr Land. Während Esterházy zahlreiche historische und literaturgeschichtliche Details über Ungarn aufzählt, erwähnt Menasse Österreich nur im Zusammenhang mit dem Nationalsozialismus. Er redete mehr über globale als über nationale Fragen. Keiner der Redner hat es andererseits versäumt, zumindest in den Abschlussätzen der Ansprache auf ihre eigentlichen Interessen, nämlich Schriftsteller zu sein, Bezug zu nehmen. Robert Menasse tut dies, indem er die Geschichte des von ihm zitierten Rabbis, der sich verzweifelt die Frage stellt „*Wie – ? Wie kann ich – ?*“ (das Leben künftig meistern), literarisch abrundet und indem er – wohl an Thomas Bernhards *Holzfällen* anspielend – betont: „Unser Schreiben ist ein lautes Singen in finsternen Wäldern. Dieses Singen soll uns die Angst nehmen, nicht Ihnen. Es sind Poetische Wälder – Gefallen findet, wer sie gefällt.“

Esterházy kehrt zu seiner eigentlichen Rolle zurück, indem er am Schluss von der Redewendung „wir Ungarn“ abgeht und, auf seinen kurz vor dem Druck ste-

henden Roman (*Harmonia Caelestis*) anspielend, das „Wir“ mit seiner Person und der Figur des Vaters (der übrigens als vielschichtige, mitunter als Heimatland zu verstehende Figur in seinem Roman eine zentrale Rolle spielen sollte) substituiert: „Wir danken, mein Vater und ich danken für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit.“

Beide Schriftsteller haben ihre eigene öffentliche Aufgabe offenbar blendend erfüllt, das taten sie aber sehr unterschiedlich: Während bei Esterházy die Zuhörerschaft sich mehr amüsieren durfte, wurde sie bei Menasse unmittelbar an das Elend menschlichen Daseins erinnert. (Ob und inwiefern die Fröhlichkeit Esterházy's im Endeffekt auch auf ein gewisses Elend menschlichen Daseins hinausläuft, sei dahingestellt. Er hat in seiner Ansprache auf jeden Fall darauf hingewiesen. Das Lesen bezeichnete er als eine fröhliche Wissenschaft, an der man durchaus untergehen könne.)

Beide Vortragenden bilden gewollt oder ungewollt einige Eigenschaften sowohl ihrer eigenen Kunst als auch ihrer Länder ab. Während Esterházy in seiner Festrede und sämtlichen essayistischen Texten überwiegend einen literaturästhetischen, spielerisch zitierenden, postmodernen Sprachgebrauch bedient, bewegt sich Menasse in den Diskursen der sowohl literarischen als auch intellektuellen Felder. Wobei er mit seiner intellektuellen Zugangsweise dem eigenen Vorankommen als Schriftsteller zumindest in Österreich manchmal im Wege steht.<sup>15</sup>

Esterházy präsentiert sich als Mensch mit fröhlichen Eigenschaften und Ungarn lässt er all seinen Widersprüchen zum Trotz als fröhliches Land (vor der Wende bekanntlich als „fröhliche Baracke“ Osteuropas genannt) zum Wort kommen. Als Schriftsteller der „Insel der Seligen“ präsentiert sich Menasse als großer Skeptiker und die Lage der Welt sieht er als äußerst problematisch. Gründe zum Lachen findet er darin kaum. Er hebt das Denken und Handeln in historischen Kategorien als das zentrale Problem der Menschheit hervor und somit schaltet er sich in die postmodernen und posthistorischen Debatten der 1990er Jahre auch ein.

Zum Schluss drängt sich eine beinahe abenteuerliche Frage auf: Hätten bedeutende Reformer der literarischen Landschaft der vorangehenden Generationen, wie zum Beispiel auf der einer Seite Robert Musil und Thomas Bernhard, auf der anderen Géza Ottlik und Miklós Mészöly, sich und ihr Land entscheidend anders präsentiert als Robert Menasse und Péter Esterházy? Und wenn nicht so sehr anders, was wären dann die möglichen Gemeinsamkeiten? Welche habituellen Merkmale oder welche *durchmischende Farbe* des jeweiligen Landes ließen sich in ihren Reden festmachen?

Die Vorgänger Esterházy's hätten Ungarn vermutlich ebenfalls heiterer und vor allem historischer beschrieben als die Vorläufer Menasses Österreich. Der Grundton der österreichischen Schriftsteller wäre möglicherweise ähnlich pessimistisch wie jener von Menasse und auch die Problematiken des Nationalsozialismus hätte Thomas Bernhard wahrscheinlich erwähnt. In der Einschätzung der Lage Österreichs in der Welt und der Zukunft der Menschheit wären alle drei sehr skeptisch

gewesen und hätten das Thema, über ihre betont ästhetische literarische Sprache hinaus, mehr psychologisch und philosophisch als historisch abgehandelt. Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg die geradezu zwingende Thematisierung des Nationalsozialismus zum einen und der skeptische und ernste Grundton der Sprache zum anderen dürfte ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der österreichischen symbolisch bestimmenden Literatur sein. Thomas Bernhard zieht in seinem Roman *Gehen* folgende Erkenntnis aus der Geschichte:

Wenn wir die Geschichte anschauen, deprimiert vor allem ihre völlige Verstandeslosigkeit, von Geistesschärfe und Geisteskälte ganz zu schweigen. Insofern ist es keine Übertreibung, zu sagen, die ganze Geschichte ist eine völlig verstandeslose Geschichte, wodurch sie auch eine vollkommen *tote* Geschichte ist. [...] Die Geschichte ist eine Geschichtslüge, behaupte ich, sagt Oehler. Aber zurück zum Einzelnen, sagt Oehler. Verstandhaben hieße doch nichts anderes, als mit der Geschichte und in erster Linie mit der eigenen persönlichen Geschichte schlußmachen.

Das betont hypothetisch gemeinte invariante Merkmal, das die Erzählweise ungarischer Schriftsteller ihr Land betreffend adäquat beschreiben würde, kann in einer gewissen Fröhlichkeit der Darstellung des Elends menschlichen Daseins (bei Imre Kertész z. B.) und im historischen Umgang mit dem Stoff verortet werden. Das Ende der Geschichte ist in den westlichen Demokratien bei Weitem nicht erreicht, so lautete Menasses Befund. Nicht nur im Vergleich zu Österreich, sondern europaweit gibt es allerdings wohl kaum ein zweites Land, in dem Geschichte eine so große Rolle spielt wie in Ungarn. In welchem Land erinnert man sich heute zum Beispiel an die Revolution von 1848 dermaßen anhaltend und mit so viel Pathos wie in Ungarn?

Die historisierende Zugangsweise ist in der Eröffnungsrede von Péter Esterházy auch vorhanden. Trotz einer Postmodernität, die seine Literatur charakterisiert, ging auch er in seiner Rede historisch vor, obgleich nicht in gewöhnlicher Form. Dieser seltsame und ausgeprägte Geschichtsbezug hat mit dem österreichischen Leitsatz „Wir haben aus der Geschichte gelernt [...]“ so gut wie nichts zu tun. Die ungarischen Geschichtsbezüge, die heute noch auf Ereignisse, die vor mindestens 1000 Jahren über die Bühne gingen, zurückgehen und von denen etliche Jahr für Jahr offiziell gefeiert, ja gelebt werden, haben eher etwas mit Trauerarbeit, Nostalgie und der Pflege der nationalen Identität zu tun und sehr wenig mit der Aufklärung, geschweige denn dem Pragmatismus des Westens.

### Schlussanmerkung

So spekulativ die Folgerungen aus den zitierten Texten auf den ersten Blick erscheinen mögen, sie sind doch angesichts der real bestehenden künstlerischen Nähe Esterházy's und Menasse's zu den aufgezählten Vorgängern gar nicht so unwahrscheinlich. Sie sind nicht weit hergeholt, weil dort, wo eine solche künstlerische Nähe zwischen den Akteuren vorliegt oder die Köpfe derart aufeinander abgestimmt sind, die aufgezählten Ähnlichkeiten sehr wohl in den Vordergrund treten können. Natürlich, wäre die Frage etwa auf Oswald Wiener oder Dezső Tandori bzw. ihre Vorgänger bezogen gewesen bzw. wären sie die tatsächlichen Festredner in Frankfurt gewesen und nicht Menasse und Esterházy, so hätte man andere Österreich- und Ungarnbilder erhalten. Doch länderspezifische Eigenschaften ließen sich nichtsdestotrotz auch bei ihnen isolieren. Je mehr Akteure und ähnliche Texte unter die Lupe genommen worden wären, umso differenzierter und adäquater wäre selbstverständlich das erzielte Bild.

Die Bilder wären wiederum teils anders, teils ähnlich gewesen, wenn wir gefragt hätten, wie Lajos Kassák und Robert Müller, die beiden namhaften Repräsentanten der historischen Avantgarde Ungarns und Österreichs, auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse vor etwa 85 Jahren gesprochen hätten, welches Bild sie denn gebracht hätten. Kassák wäre wahrscheinlich ziemlich revolutionär und optimistisch, Robert Müller wäre wiederum stark pessimistisch gewesen angesichts der Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten der Welt durch die Kunst. Eine die beiden Schriftsteller verbindende Eigenschaft wäre zum anderen in ihrem Willen zur Aufhebung der Geschichte, im radikalen Neubeginn weltweit zu erblicken gewesen. Kassák wäre 1922 etwa mit folgender Redeweise an das Publikum getreten: Meine Damen und Herren!

Die Welt reinigt sich im vergossenen Blut, das Chaos fraß die Unbeweglichkeit auf, und der Wirrwarr, den Blinde rings um sich verspüren, ist bereits die primitive Gestalt der kreißenden Ordnung. [...] Und fortan gibt es keine gesonderte Gesellschaft und keine gesonderte Kunst. [...]

Kunst, Wissenschaft, Technik berühren sich an einem Punkt.

Es muß geändert werden!

Es muß geschaffen werden, denn Bewegung heißt Schaffen.<sup>16</sup>

Robert Müller hätte sich kurz vor seinem Selbstmord, 1924 etwa in der Weise präsentiert:

Die allgemeine Situation des intellektuellen oder geistigen Menschen in der Gesellschaft ist von vornherein gebrandmarkt und zum Outsidertum verpflichtet. [...] Die zunehmende Kapitalisierung

drückt den geistigen Menschen mit zunehmendem Wachstum der großen Betriebe zu einem noch geringfügigeren Faktor herab, als er es bis jetzt war. [...] Diese Verhältnisse müssen zur geistigen Entropie führen, auch wenn an der Spitze finanzieller Machtschöpfungen die ausdenkbar höchsten Intellekte der Menschheit stünden.<sup>17</sup>

### Anmerkungen

- 1 Studien entstanden. Ein einschlägiger Band erschien gerade vor Kurzem. Vgl. Károly Csúri – Zoltán Fónagy – Volker Munz (Hg.): *Kulturtransfer und kulturelle Identität. Budapest und Wien zwischen Historismus und Avantgarde*. Wien: Praesens 2008.
- 2 Pierre Bourdieu: *Meditationen. Zur Kritik der scholastischen Vernunft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 2001, S. 168.
- 3 Die zu untersuchenden Texte sollten plangemäß nach dem Kriterium der Bekanntheit, nach ihrer gesellschaftlichen Popularität und Wirkung ausgesucht werden; also erst wenn sie über das Ausmaß der feldinternen Anerkennung hinausgehen, werden sie Gegenstand der Studie.
- 4 Mehr zum Thema Lajos Kassák und der Wiener Avantgarde der 1920er Jahre in Zoltán Péter: *Die Sprache der Positionen. Die Auswirkung des Exils auf die ungarische historische Avantgarde – Wien 1920–1926*. Wien: Phil. Diss. 2008.
- 5 Andrea Kunne: *Postmoderne contre cœur. Stationen des Experimentellen in der österreichischen Literatur*. Studien: Innsbruck (u. a) 2005.
- 6 Vgl. URL: Buch.de (08.08.2009) [http://www.buch.de/buch/06634/251\\_postmoderne\\_contre\\_coeur\\_edition\\_brenner\\_forum\\_band\\_1.html](http://www.buch.de/buch/06634/251_postmoderne_contre_coeur_edition_brenner_forum_band_1.html)
- 7 Der vollständige Text ist zu lesen in: URL (09.02.2009): <http://www.frankfurt.matav.hu/nemet/live2.htm>
- 8 Johann Gottfried Herder: Finnen, Letten und Preußen. In: Ders.: *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*. 4. Teil, 16. Buch. Kap. 2. In: [textlog.de](http://www.textlog.de). Historische Texte & Wörterbücher. URL (09.02.2009): <http://www.textlog.de/5665.html?print>
- 9 Robert Menasse: ‚Geschichte‘ war der größte historische Irrtum. Rede zur Eröffnung der 47. Frankfurter Buchmesse 1995. In: Ders.: *Hysterien und andere historische Irrtümer*. Wien: Sonderzahl 1996, S. 23 (S. 21–97).
- 10 Ebd., S. 27.
- 11 Ebd., S. 28.
- 12 Ebd., S. 28.
- 13 Ebd., S. 31.
- 14 Ebd., S. 32.
- 15 Vgl. Verena Holler: *Felder der Literatur. Eine literatursoziologische Studie am Beispiel von Robert Menasse*. Wien (u.a.): Peter Lang (Deutsche Sprache und Literatur) 2003.
- 16 Lajos Kassák – László Moholy-Nagy (Hg.): *Buch neuer Künstler*. Wien: Julius Fischer 1922, Einleitung.
- 17 Robert Müller: Der Untergang des Geistes. In: *Künstlerhilfe Almanach der Literaria*. 1924, S. 87–96 (84–96).

## RECLAIMING THE STREETS – REDEFINING DEMOCRACY

### THE POLITICS OF THE CRITICAL MASS BICYCLE MOVEMENT IN BUDAPEST

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The Critical Mass bicycle movement, whose main aim is to reclaim cyclists' right to use city streets freely, safely and proudly, is arguably the single most powerful grassroots movement that has emerged in Hungary since the 1989 change of regimes. While Critical Mass is a critique of today's dominant motorized transportation practices as well as a celebration of alternative modes of transportation, it is not only about the environment. The Budapest Critical Mass can be read as the spatialized enactment of a direct and embodied form of democratic participation that goes beyond and at the same time transforms representative democracy. In the context of growing political apathy and widespread disillusionment with the formal public sphere in post-socialist Hungary, Critical Mass has emerged as a unique and powerful channel of citizen participation by forging a new kind of relationship between citizens, civil society and the state.

**Keywords:** Critical Mass, environmentalism, social movements, public space, political participation, embodiment, Hungary

City spaces reflect, organize and embody the categories, priorities and boundaries of urban society. As urbanist Michael Sorkin put it, "the city ... produces citizenship through the repetitive confrontation of citizens with an environment that organizes its prejudices and privileges physically" (1999, 7). The Critical Mass bicycle movement is one of the newly emerging social movements in Hungary that is consciously challenging the hegemonic physical and social norms governing today's urban environment. This movement is unique not only in the speed with which it has gained momentum but also in its ability to garner and maintain a strong grassroots constituency while exerting significant political impact. The Budapest Critical Mass is not only arguably the single most potent social movement that has emerged in Hungary since the change of regimes but it is also the largest – as both a movement and a ride – among the more than 200 Critical Masses organized in cities all over the world.



This paper is based on two years of ethnographic research that I have done comparing the Critical Mass movements in New York and Budapest involving participant observation and formal and informal interviews.<sup>1</sup> Even though that comparison offers intriguing insights, in this paper I am focusing on the case of Budapest alone. My research has been based on two complementary assumptions. First, that an examination of urban spatial practices reveals those social and political processes at work in a city that are often hidden from the eye and thus remain un-analyzed and naturalized. Second, that space is not simply a reflection of social, political, cultural and economic processes, but also plays a fundamental role in (re)producing these processes (Lefebvre, 1991). The purpose of my research has been to understand the ways in which urban public space is interpreted, contested and re-imagined in Budapest by participants in Critical Mass. Following in the footsteps of anthropologists and geographers such as Setha Low (1996), Michael Blomley (2001) and Don Mitchell (2003), I understand public space to be a spatial grounding of the public sphere. Through this lens, Critical Mass participants collectively imagine and perform active citizenship and re-define the relationship between citizens and the state. Critical Mass is a performance of political participation – all played out in the elaborate language and rituals of roads, bicycles, and traffic.

The specific features of the political opportunity structure (see della Porta, 1996) of post-socialist Budapest may partly account for the success of the movement in pressuring the city government for more bike-friendly policies.<sup>2</sup> However, in this paper I have chosen to study the movement as a participant from within, in the tradition of an emic (Headland et al., 1990) approach by focusing on explanations provided by movement participants and organizers.<sup>3</sup> Based on these interpretations, in the following, I will argue that the foremost significance of Critical Mass in Budapest is its contribution to the democratization of post-socialist Hungary by creating a unique space of political participation based on both an embodied experience of the city and a distinctive redefinition of both protest culture and civil society.

### **Why Critical Mass? – A Personal Note**

With cycling as my main form of transportation since 2002 I have spent a great deal of time on city streets and roads, bike lanes and bike paths trying to get from place to place. It is not always easy. Riding a bicycle makes one more aware of social relations; it is a first-hand experience of exclusion and discrimination. But it is also an experience of strength, resilience and pride. While riding a bike, one cannot help but contemplate the dialectics of urban traffic, the violence embedded in

a car-dominated city and the feeling of dignity that cycling in these conditions generates.

I took part in my first ever Budapest Critical Mass ride in April 2005 along with 20,000 other participants. My feelings were a combination of exhilaration and defiance: it was the first time after three years of riding my bicycle everyday to work, school and play that I felt I was not alone. I felt the power of the crowd – both its positive and negative power. I saw motorists shaking their fists angrily and scream obscenities as the thousands of cyclists passed by. I realized that the crowd that was so welcoming to me might seem threatening to others. Also, it was great to see people waving at us from their windows and pedestrians applauding this huge mass of happy cyclists. The ride ended with an ecstatic “bike-lift” with 20,000 cyclists lifting their bicycles above their heads, screaming with joy, relief and an incredible sense of power. It was a moment of euphoria I will never forget. Participating in Critical Mass has galvanized me for the 364 other days of the year. After this experience I knew that I had an invisible crowd behind and around me that dispelled my feelings of loneliness, isolation and weakness on the road. The term “empowerment” has become somewhat of a cliché. But it is still the best term to describe how I and many people feel about Critical Mass in Budapest. This movement has created an “us” from many isolated “I’s”. It makes us feel that we belong to a community. It has broken the invisibility of cyclists and made it impossible to ignore our presence and our needs on a number of different scales. And probably just as importantly, it has made us feel that we belong to the city – that we are not out of place anymore.

### **Critical Mass as a Global Movement**

Critical Mass is a loose global movement<sup>4</sup> that promotes regular bike rides in hundreds of cities worldwide. The movement was born in September 1992 with a mass bicycle ride organized in San Francisco then called “Commuter Clot” meant to be partly a celebration of cycling as a form of everyday transportation and partly as a protest of the bad conditions and maltreatment urban cyclists had to endure on city streets (Ferrell, 2001, 105). The ride was later re-named Critical Mass after the documentary titled *Return of the Scorcher* that showed images of cyclists in China who, as one of the commentators of the film explained, in the absence of traffic signals managed to get their right of way at intersections by reaching a ‘critical mass’ that could easily push through car traffic (White, 2002, 148).

In its original form, Critical Mass questions not only the dominant power relations of the road by claiming a bigger share of it, but also challenges the dominant democratic practices of protest and political participation. Based on the anthology *Critical Mass: Bicycling’s Defiant Celebration*, some of the main features of Crit-

ical Mass as understood in the United States are that everyone participates for a different reason; there are no leaders; it occurs regularly (often on the last Friday of each month); routes are chosen collectively and spontaneously; it is highly decentralized in its “organization;” it is both a celebration and a protest; it is non-violent; and, finally, a major form of its organization is xerocracy<sup>5</sup> (Carlsson, 2002). In most cities in the United States and many others worldwide, Critical Mass is considered an “organized coincidence” by its participants, so often no permit is sought from local authorities for holding the event. At times, this leads to confrontations with the police and shorter or longer periods of contentious relationship with the local authorities.<sup>6</sup> However, being a decentralized and flexible global movement that is shaped most forcefully by local circumstances, needs and conventions, in each country Critical Mass rides acquire specific local features and some of the rides are even legally sanctioned and organized with a protest permit. In fact, one example that stands out in both its apparent compliance and lack of confrontation with the authorities and its distinctive local features is the Budapest Critical Mass.

### **The Budapest Critical Mass**

The first Budapest Critical Mass occurred in 1998 when it was launched by a group called Friends of Urban Cycling (Városi Biciklizés Barátai) with inspiration from a Swiss urban planner interning at the Budapest City Hall.<sup>7</sup> In many ways, these first rides followed the original model of Critical Mass very closely – there was no press, no police permit and the event was spread by word of mouth.<sup>8</sup> In a way, these rides attempted to replicate the original American rides as more of an “organized coincidence” than a movement with specific and well-defined aims. However, this first attempt at starting regular Critical Mass rides came to an end after a few successful occasions with between sixty and two hundred participants.<sup>9</sup>

The Budapest Critical Mass as we know it today was born in 2004. It was initiated by a collaboration between the Friends of Urban Cycling, other cycling advocacy groups and a group of bike messengers as “a protest against a statement of the mayor of Budapest. ... It was an official demonstration for a real car-free day.”<sup>10</sup> The background to this “statement of the mayor” is explained by the following piece of news from 2004:

The City does not want to aggravate motorists so despite protests by bicycle organizations, it decided to organize the [Car Free Day] that every major European city holds next Wednesday in the middle of the rush hour, on a deserted Sunday afternoon. The City and the organizers think that motorists in Budapest would not yet be able to stand

such a bicycle shock on a weekday. The cyclists will organize their own demonstration on Wednesday (Földes, 2004).

The alternative Car Free Day<sup>11</sup> demonstration on September 22, 2004 drew around 4000 participants, which surprised even the organizers<sup>12</sup> and indicated an existing need among Budapest cyclists for both more political recognition and improved physical infrastructure.

In a larger historical-political context, Critical Mass in Budapest is at the intersection of several social movement traditions. First, it is an indirect descendent of political-environmental movements in Hungary (e.g., the Danube Circle) and other Eastern European states that emerged in the 1980s as the first to challenge to the socialist system (see Pickvance, 2000). Second, Critical Mass stepped directly into the political and social space created by groups such as the Air Task Force (Levegő Munkacsoport) established in 1988, the Bike Task Force (Bringa Munkacsoport) established in 1992 and the Friends of Urban Cycling established in 1993.

Third, Critical Mass clearly represents the interests and aspirations of a distinct urban social group that emerged after the change of regimes: bike messengers. The first official Critical Mass was preceded by not only the regular monthly rides of the Friends of Urban Cycling or the so-called Black Rides (Fekete Tekerés)<sup>13</sup> but the frequent and irregular rides organized by bicycle messengers such as the illegal night ride during the 2001 Cycle Messenger World Championship<sup>14</sup> and illegal bike contests called alleycats among others. Bike messengers can be considered a new kind of urban proletariat (see Kidder, 2006) who are at the service of the fast-paced, service-oriented capitalist city. Bicycle messengers' working conditions, safety and lifestyle are intimately tied to the city. No wonder they have been at the forefront of struggles for bike infrastructure and cyclists' rights worldwide. In fact, the two people who became the main organizers of the Budapest Critical Mass are bike messengers who work at the very first bike messenger company in Budapest.<sup>15</sup> Both of them clearly fit Marxist philosopher Gramsci's (1971) definition of "organic intellectuals" by representing the interests of a distinct social group while at the same time managing to attract allies from other social groups and classes – in this case mostly urban middle class youth. In this sense, Critical Mass exhibits many of the typical features of "new" social movements (della Porta – Diani, 1999) in that it is based less on class solidarity and more on cultural values and lifestyle choices. By all accounts, Critical Mass has managed to channel the amorphous, divergent and individualized needs of those who use cycling either for transportation or for employment into a more organized form of collective will – a truly grassroots social movement.

To some extent, Critical Mass resists a clear-cut definition as some of its most salient characteristics are flexibility, volatility and dynamism. However, when I

asked my interviewees to define Critical Mass, they all agreed that its main goal is to popularize the bicycle as a means of everyday transportation on a mass scale. As one interviewee noted, “to put it simply, the goal of Critical Mass is to have as many people on bikes as possible”.<sup>16</sup> A more elaborate description of the movement is provided by another interviewee:

Critical Mass is a bike ride that takes place twice a year, on Car Free Day and on Earth Day. And with this of course, I haven't even said one tenth of what Critical Mass is in reality. The protection and advocacy of cyclists' interests and the promotion and development of bike culture [such as using lights and understanding the difference between a bike lane and a bike path] is also part of it. It has many functions; practically all the functions that have to do with things that cyclists do both within their community and together as a community.<sup>17</sup>

While most outsiders would associate Critical Mass with the two big bike rides a year that attract tens of thousands of participants, for organizers, what takes place in between the rides is just as – if not more – important than the rides themselves. Over the years, Critical Mass has become a clearinghouse for “all things bicycle” in Hungary. Its website<sup>18</sup> has become a major forum for the discussion of topics ranging from national bicycle policy to bicycle basics such as how to fix a flat tire (for a detailed description of the role of the website in organizing the movement, see Tordai, 2008). Over the past few years, a number of thematic rides have also been organized under the auspices of Critical Mass including the Tour de Voks, an effort to put cycling on the agenda of major political parties, Night Rides, which are more informal and adventurous, the so-called Last Fridays or Minimal Masses and the so-called Radical Mass among others. Finally, inspired by the success of the Budapest Critical Mass, since 2005 similar rides have been launched in several Hungarian towns by local activists, making the movement national in scope.

In terms of its organization, Critical Mass Budapest has a unique combination of a hierarchical and open structure. Based in my interviews and long-term observations, the best way to characterize the movement's organization is in concentric circles. At its core, the movement has five or six leaders who have complete decision-making power over issues such as the messages of the rides, press relations, organizational issues, website management etc.<sup>19</sup> The presence of these leaders is what differentiates the Budapest Critical Mass from other Critical Masses all over the world and what partially gives it the character of a movement rather than a series of big bicycle rides.<sup>20</sup> One of the leaders commented on this in the following way: “You can only start a mass movement if there are some people in charge, if there is somebody to follow. ... If you do this anonymously, you can only have a small movement.”<sup>21</sup> While the core leaders still retain their veto power, in 2009 around 25–30 core activists have been invited to become part of a wider deci-

sion-making group that discusses strategic issues in an effort to cultivate the next generation of movement leaders. In the next layer of the circle are around 150–200 people who actively participate in discussions on the website and take responsibility for smaller projects such as thematic campaigns or specific rides. In terms of these smaller projects, questions of responsibility mostly depend on initiative rather than power differentials: whoever decides to take up an issue, topic or campaign will be responsible for it. Then, a group of around 300 people is made up of the so-called “organizers” or the “people wearing green T-shirts” who facilitate the two big annual rides. Many of them are veterans of Critical Mass and have participated in many previous rides; they play an essential role in making sure the two big annual events go smoothly and without major conflicts. A further layer of the concentric circle is represented by the many more thousand people who visit, read and post comments on the website (Tordai, 2008) that serves as an information and networking hub. While many of them do not or only sporadically take up specific active roles in the movement, their opinions and ideas still greatly influence the decisions of leaders and have an impact on the direction the movement is taking. Finally, there are the tens of thousands of cyclists who participate in the rides but might not even regularly visit the website and do not take up any active roles. Even though they are the most passive group, one of my interviewees pointed out their significance:

And then, there are those who “only” go to the demonstrations, which is very important because the number of people on the ride is the most important measure of a demonstration. They are those who are biking, would like to bike, don’t like the mayor or anything else; they have many different motivations such as being an environmentalist and other things. They are the ones who come, ride their bikes and have a good time.<sup>22</sup>

However, having thousands of people come to bike and have a good time serves a strategic purpose: the number of “average citizens” (as opposed to activists) participating in these rides is a constant reminder of the sheer size of the (political) constituency represented by Critical Mass as well as a basis for organizing a growing cyclist community.

In terms of the movement’s achievements, in addition to mobilizing tens of thousands of people through the actual rides, by fostering open communication on the website, and offering various possible levels of engagement as well as many different smaller projects promoted by movement participants, it has bred hundreds of activists and smaller special interest volunteer groups related to all issues of cycling. Thus far, no other social movement or civil initiative has managed to produce such active participation and such high turnouts in Hungary. Critical Mass has also achieved real and measurable political impact. Over the years, the



movement has managed to place cycling among the more prioritized issues of Budapest's transportation policy, which has also been translated into concrete infrastructural improvements as well as a growing recognition of cyclists as a distinct urban user group. Clearly, the political establishment has realized the (voting) power of Critical Mass participants. As one leader stated metaphorically, "I am very rich. I have millions of forints invested in bike paths and bike lanes."<sup>23</sup> Finally, it is undoubtedly thanks to Critical Mass that biking is no longer considered the sport of the freaks (as it was before Critical Mass started) and that Budapest is slowly becoming a biking city: every year the number of people who use their bikes regularly almost doubles (Index/MTI).

### **The Embodied Politics of Critical Mass**

But, after all, what is it about Critical Mass, the bicycle or cycling that activates so many people? One of the main reasons, as I have found in my interviews, is that urban cycling offers a powerful experience of both politics and the city. Building on this experience, Critical Mass has created a uniquely embodied<sup>24</sup> form of political involvement, which does not have deep traditions in Hungary, but still strongly resonates with many – especially young – people.

First, involvement in Critical Mass is heavily based on direct and personal experience: "this is a very personal cause".<sup>25</sup> The people who are involved in Critical Mass all have a personal stake in the goals of the movement: they are not fighting for something far away from them. "Critical Mass is about myself. This is about me getting from point A to point B in a decent way."<sup>26</sup> In other words, Critical Mass is firmly rooted in the experience, needs and self-interest of a relatively large – and constantly growing – group of people. It is not fighting for lofty ideals or ideologies. As one interviewee put it,

one of the reasons Critical Mass managed to attract so many people is that it started out with concrete, tangible issues. It didn't talk about the rights of cyclists or the right to transportation or equality, no such big words. ... It said: let's make a demonstration because we are fed up that you can't bike on the Car Free Day. Simple, tangible and comprehensible.<sup>27</sup>

Second, the practice of cycling creates a strong identity not only because of all the subcultural elements associated with it (which some people share while others do not), but also because of the spatial experience of cycling. Today, the logic of urban mobility constantly reminds cyclists of their being "different" and "out of place", which is a very strong basis for group identity. The following account by



an American cyclist – which could well take place in almost any big city in the world – describes how this message is continuously brought home:

When I started to use a bicycle as my primary source of transportation in the city, there were a lot of issues to contend with such as huge potholes, slotted curbside drainage gates, harsh winters, big hills, traffic speeding by on my left-hand side, and the constant threat of being smacked by a driver's side-door that is swung open without warning ("getting doored"). The more I rode, the more I became attuned to the fact that biking was still a great deal of fun, and also to the fact that most car drivers seemed like they did not want me on the street. Throughout my first year of commuting, I was consistently honked at, given dirty looks through windshields, almost run off the road, and had people yell things like, "get off the street!", "get a car!", and my personal favorite, "nice bike, faggot!" (Furness, 2005, xi).

In a similar vein, my Hungarian interviewees often described cyclists as a "minority" that needs protection. This feeling of minority status creates not only a strong sense of (in)justice but also a sense of community among activists, as illustrated by the following statement:

It's an awfully great feeling to join a team and to fight for a cause with others. It makes me so happy that we have been able to show that we also exist, that there is room for us on the roads of our country.<sup>28</sup>

Third, cycling is such a strong bodily experience that it often transforms a person's relationship to the physical and social aspects of the urban environment:

cycling is an exercise in geography – natural, social, cultural, political. As cyclists, we become intimately familiar with our network of public spaces, and with a city's terrain and its inhabitants (Switzky, 2002, 186).

Cycling in the city not only exposes the rider to elements of traffic and weather, but also creates a closer and more direct connection with the city's people and spaces. As one of my Hungarian interviewees put it, "when you bike, you realize how great a city can be. You start seeing and experiencing it from a completely different perspective. You see and feel things you haven't seen or felt before."<sup>29</sup>

Critical Mass not only magnifies and reinforces these elements of cycling, but adds a significant communal experience to it, which many people are clearly drawn to (and others, undoubtedly, are repelled by).<sup>30</sup>

When I saw the crowd [at the Critical Mass] I felt the same way the medieval troops must have felt when they saw the incredible size of

the army at their destination, overwhelming and insurmountable, showing who is really in charge. At that moment, I felt invincible.<sup>31</sup>

Critical Mass is a way for cyclists to reconnect with the city, to re-occupy and take into ownership spaces they are otherwise denied. In fact, the most popular and effective pictures of Critical Mass are always those that show a completely transformed city – with cyclists completely filling up certain highly symbolic spaces –, an immanent utopia, or as participants and organizers usually put it, the image of “what Budapest will look like in 5 years”.<sup>32</sup> For example, it is only through Critical Mass that cyclists get to (legally) take bridges – in themselves highly symbolic spaces in Budapest – into full ownership by riding in the middle lanes and not on the sidewalk. Demonstrating the centrality of bridges in the re-conquest of the city, one of the most popular images of the April 2009 ride, for example, shows both lanes of Erzsébet Bridge jam packed with cyclists in all four lanes in both directions, a striking contrast to the more typical experience of thick lines of cars on the bridge stuck in traffic jams. In all, Critical Mass helps (re)establish a personal connection with the city. As one of my interviewees put it,

I love being a part of Critical Mass, I love going around on my bike and listening to music from the sound bike. Everywhere I see smiling faces. You go with the ride and you see different things everywhere, you see all parts of the city and this is really great. In this way, everybody makes the city their own. Everybody feels liberated when we bike in the middle of Deák tér [a centrally located and highly polluted square] or sunbathe in the middle of Ferenciek tere [another congested downtown square] where otherwise we would choke from the smog.<sup>33</sup>

### Reclaiming the City

During Critical Mass cyclists occupy center-stage, which is in sharp contrast to their everyday experience of spatial and social marginalization in the very same places of the city. As geographer David Sibley (1995) observes, occasions

when inversions assume a center-periphery form, when the dominant society is relegated to the spatial margins and oppressed minorities command the center, may represent a challenge to established power relations (44).

In this way, Critical Mass can be considered a struggle for what French sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1996) termed the “right to the city:” the right to inhabit and create a city based on human needs as opposed to the ideological and economic pressures of consumer capitalism. At a more theoretical level, when cyclists fight

against the normalization of their inferior status on the road (and in urban policy in general), they are engaged in a struggle to turn city streets from what Lefebvre labeled as “abstract space” into “differential space” (Lefebvre, 1991). According to Lefebvre (1991), “abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities” (52) and is usually experienced as unquestionable. It is space that is produced by the “forces of the market” and backed up by apparently neutral “technical” considerations, which are largely alienated from everyday experience. Differential space, on the other hand, is based more on social practice than ideological considerations and aims to integrate difference, diversity and even conflict into the spatial experience. In this context, for many people, cycling is a way not only to re-appropriate but to re-humanize the abstract space of city. According to Michael Sorkin (1999)

propinquity – neighborliness – is the ground and problem of democracy [and] traffic is one medium through which this propinquity is engineered, the means by which different encounters are enabled and managed in the city (4–5).

As one Critical Mass organizer recounted in 2005:

In '95 when I started cycling in the city center, most of us knew each other by face. Since then, the world has changed a lot: only this year the number of daily cyclists has doubled. But greetings are still in vogue. And it is particularly common when it rains. It's incredible that this still is happening in a city of two million people. All of a sudden, this makes it feel like a small village. If pedestrians started saying hello to each other, people would think they are crazy. And, of course, it is impossible to do same thing from a car.<sup>34</sup>

According to Lefebvre, modern urban planning practices have greatly contributed to the creation of abstract urban space that prioritizes order through the segregation and separation of activities, behaviors and social groups and sees the facilitation of smooth and fast traffic flow as its primary goal. It is in this way that the domination of individual motorized transportation is built into the logic of today's urban spaces and that facilitating traffic – which is mostly synonymous with *car* traffic – has become a technicality that professionals have to take care of and not something open to change or negotiable by citizens.

Today, the utmost principle of urban streets is flow: anything that obstructs traffic is to be removed and “the automobile system seeks invariably to exclude other modes that might come into conflict with it” (Sorkin, 1999, 10). Budapest is an archetypal example of this modernist urban space: at the moment it is unable to accommodate the differential uses of the street by not only cyclists but by pedestrians, people with disabilities, elderly and young people as well as those with baby strollers etc. In this logic of urban mobility, with their relatively slow speed

and by being in places (e.g., roads) where they “do not belong” cyclists come to be seen as obstructing traffic. The institutionalization of this way of thinking is apparent in the practices and ideologies of Budapest urban and transportation planners, too:

It makes a difference how professionals relate to cycling, whether they identify with this cause or not. [...] When these professionals need to take up conflict, when it becomes obvious that some interests will be hurt, what appears in the final decisions is that the bicycle has no place here. [...] For these professionals, cyclists are a separate caste, a special group that stands apart from society and the norm. [...] They think that everybody has to be given the space they deserve and we cannot put driving in a disadvantaged position because of a tiny minority.<sup>35</sup>

By reclaiming centrality and creating what Lefebvre (1991, 39) calls a space of representation Critical Mass aims to dispel the myth of the “tiny minority” and create physical, symbolic and political visibility and recognition: swarming city streets in the tens of thousands is a very direct and almost desperate attempt by cyclists at making themselves seen as part of the city.

Finally, in the midst of perpetual out-of-placeness and physical and symbolic violence, cycling tends to have a politicizing or radicalizing effect on many riders. There are different ways of channeling the frustration and anger that builds up as one tries to navigate their way in a place not made for them, and activism is definitely one of them. According to one of my interviewees:

practically, there is nobody among those who use their bike on a daily basis against whom no crime has been perpetrated. [...] When someone bikes a lot, after a while they will encounter something that makes them so outraged that they need to take action. Sooner or later he or she will start thinking in broader terms and start making connections. This is how many people become activists.<sup>36</sup>

In all, Critical Mass poses an embodied and experiential alternative to today’s dominating abstract space and promotes a more personal and direct connection with the city. Much of the political strength of the Budapest Critical Mass is rooted in the powerfully embodied and personalized experience of urban cycling, which often leads to a questioning of the reification of the social and physical relations that dominate the city and brings about a desire to act collectively.

### Reclaiming Protest

Critical Mass is engaged in the construction of differential urban space in yet another way. Based on the movement's sensitivity to various forms and experiences of embodiment, it is using a wide variety of ways to define protest in order to reclaim both urban public space and the public sphere.

As noted above, traditionally, the Budapest Critical Mass takes place twice a year: on April 22 (Earth Day) and on September 22 (Car Free Day). While the 2004 ride had "only" 4,000 participants and went almost unnoticed by the press and the general public, participation in these events has been growing ever since with an all-time high in April, 2008 when an estimated 80,000 cyclists took part in it.<sup>37</sup> In the first years the rides had a well-planned route and were escorted both by the police and by hundreds of volunteers. However, the movement has undergone many changes since then and its volatile nature not only keeps the number of participants consistently high but also encourages participation. In fact, its various incarnations offer opportunities for very different (cycling) publics to engage in protest and express their needs and feelings as part of the same movement.

In order to differentiate between the two annual rides, in 2007, the organizers started calling the spring event the "festival" ride<sup>38</sup> and the fall event the "radical ride." With their sophisticated organization and friendly messages, the spring rides are extremely successful at creating a safe and inclusive communal space for those with less experience on the bicycle. These are also the rides where huge numbers can be produced: neither politicians nor motorists can simply ignore a 50,000 or 80,000-strong ride that blocks the city for almost an entire afternoon. The September Car-Free Day rides, on the other hand, did not only retain a more political and confrontational character but have even become bolder both in terms of their format and messages. The September 2008 ride that had the slogan "Transportation, not Demonstration" stands out among these: two venues were announced in advance, the starting point at Heroes' Square (Pest) and the end point on the other side of the Danube, Moszkva tér (Buda), but there was no set, permitted route in between the two points and participants were free to get from one square to the other taking whatever route they wanted. The goal was to shift away from the ritualistic demonstration of the past few years where participants were protected by closed off streets and to encourage both cyclists and motorists to use the city at the same time and interact with each other in a more or less regular traffic situation. While, the number of participants in this ride was estimated between five to ten thousand, organizers still considered it a great success. As one of them explained,

It would be a dead end street to create situations detached from the reality of life. [...] This day was an amazing experience for me. We were very brave to risk our good reputation and the big numbers by

using Critical Mass as a tool instead of putting it behind an exhibition case. [Politicians] had better start getting ready now – the bicycle revolution will happen whether they want it or not.<sup>39</sup>

Quite different from both big annual rides are the so-called small Critical Mass, Minimal Mass or Last Friday rides. These have grown out of the need to have more regular and intimate rides and have been held on the last Friday of every month since October 2006.<sup>40</sup> Importantly, the ride, which generally has from sixty to around a hundred participants, claims to be no demonstration: “This is a tour. If a tour bus doesn’t need to ask for a permit, we don’t need one either.”<sup>41</sup> Thus while the police are aware of the ride, no permit has ever been sought and the police have on occasion even escorted the ride.<sup>42</sup> Also, even though riders claim no organizer, the rides follow a set route, which takes participants on bike routes and bike paths as well as city streets where these are not available. Although different people attend these rides for different reasons and it has no official goals, the ride definitely aims to make beginner cyclists feel comfortable on city streets, build community and create a fun group ride. In all, with both its more informal and diffuse aims and less confrontational spatial practices – by always taking the same route, using bike lanes and bike paths and respecting all traffic rules – these rides represent an approach to “protest” that is closest to everyday cycling and does not fundamentally question the status quo of the road.

As a final example, a so-called Radical Mass or “illegal” Critical Mass was held on both April 22nd 2008 (Tuesday) and April 22nd 2009 (Wednesday) after the Earth Day Critical Masses in both years were re-scheduled for a Sunday.<sup>43</sup> While promoted on the main Critical Mass website and by many of the same people who are in charge of the big rides, the Radical Mass rides are aimed explicitly at a much smaller and more “hard core” audience of cyclists and wish to re-enact the spirit of the original San Francisco Critical Masses with no official police sanction, no pre-set route, no press coverage etc. While the ride goes wherever the people at its head take it, its route in both years has focused on major roads, thoroughfares and intersections in the central areas of both Pest and Buda including several bridges and the Tunnel. While it would be difficult – and probably also wrong – to assign a specific goal to these rides other than being a defiant and fun group ride, most participants love these rides for their freedom and, ostensibly, their almost provocative disrespect for some of the spoken and unspoken rules of the road and of protest (e.g., running red lights, taking up entire lanes, no request for permit, no appointed leaders) that the big Critical Masses take great pains to keep even when they try to imitate “transportation” instead of “demonstration.” These rides are the most confrontational among all the manifestations of Critical Mass in their use of space as they go head-on against many traffic rules and exhibit much more defiance and stamina. The most obvious example of this stance is when participants stop in the middle of almost every intersection and perform the

bike-lift followed by cheering and slogans such as “Every lane is a bike lane!”<sup>44</sup> Unsurprisingly, this ride has attracted the most negative police attention: the first year, five riders were given summonses as witnesses to appear at the police precinct (the case was dropped, no charges were pressed)<sup>45</sup> while the second year the police attempted to stop the ride (unsuccessfully), checked the identity cards of several participants and gave them summonses for traffic offenses (Földes, 2009).

Clearly, Critical Mass is much more than just two big rides every year. It is a multi-layered and multi-faceted grassroots movement with many different channels and forms of participation – both virtual and physical. With its various forms of protest, it embraces very different forms of political engagement and creates spaces for various people to feel at home in the movement. On the one hand, the Radical Critical Mass, represents what James Holston (1995) called insurgent citizenship. Similarly to its American counterparts, these rides are questioning basic structures of domination (such as the role of the police) and political participation (such as the practice of permitting protests). In this context, defying laws or traffic codes translates into a resistance against the hegemonic interests of motorized transportation – or, in more metaphorical terms – the hegemonic norms of living in and engaging with the structures of society. On the other hand, the big Critical Mass – both the Earth Day and Car Free Day rides – represents what I would call civic engagement, which is based on strategic interaction with the authorities and a respect for certain norms in order to achieve certain goals.

In all, by using variations on the same theme – biking en masse in urban traffic – Critical Mass upsets the naturalized order of the road and initiates a spatial dialogue about the logic of transportation, as well as the nature of both the city and protest, using a number of vernaculars. The movement creates what geographer Don Mitchell (1995) calls public space *in a political sense*. From this perspective, there are no inherently public spaces; without the enactment of contested meanings and uses, spaces are devoid of their public character. Spaces emerge as “public” only in and through action, struggle and contestation (Mitchell 1995, 115). While Critical Mass is contesting the inequalities and violence inscribed into Budapest’s (transportation) spaces, at the same time it is acting out a new, differential and more integrated kind of public space. In this way, Critical Mass is giving substance to the idea of citizen participation by engaging in a variety of different spatial and political experiences to re-inhabit city spaces.

### Reclaiming Civil Society

In addition to reclaiming the city for cyclists and redrawing the contours of protest culture, the final element that I have found in my interviews to be significant in Critical Mass’s ability to mobilize and maintain such a large activist base is



its efforts at carving out a unique and “authentic” space for citizen participation that does not necessarily fit current dominant ideas and practices of civil engagement. Briefly, in a country whose citizens have been more and more disappointed and repelled by mainstream politics since the transition from state socialism into capitalist democracy in the 1990s, Critical Mass seems to be creating an opportunity to act as a citizen without feeling that one is engaged in politicking.

The year 2005 brought a turning point in the relationship between Critical Mass and the Budapest city government. As one city official explained to me:

That year was a breakthrough: some people from Critical Mass walked into the office of the town clerk, talked to him and he had a moment of enlightenment – from that point on there has been a very strong expectation from above to speed up this bicycle issue. The civil initiative had a very significant role at that given moment. It might have arrived in half a year or a year, but they were the ones who ignited this new attention to cycling.<sup>46</sup>

Despite having gotten so close to the center of power, Critical Mass has managed to resist cooptation of any kind and keep its grassroots constituency throughout the years. Undoubtedly, boundary work has played a central role in this effort: two of the boundaries that Critical Mass is drawing the most forcefully are its separation from traditional politics on the one hand and the so-called third sector (see Anheier et al. 1990) on the other.

First of all, in an effort to create a new kind of space for political participation Critical Mass is challenging the extremely limited meaning of “politics” as well as the general overpoliticization of the public sphere in Hungary. Critical Mass leaders are very firm in that fundamentally, Critical Mass embodies hardcore (civil) politics.<sup>47</sup> However, they take great pains to differentiate what politics denotes in the general discourse and what they mean by it. As one participant put it,

it is always very difficult but we manage to keep politics away from Critical Mass. We don’t want politics to take over. By politics I mean what goes on in Hungary at large<sup>48</sup> – because what we are doing is also heavily political.<sup>49</sup>

One participant articulated Critical Mass’s old-new definition of politics very succinctly when he pointed out that: “in its original sense, politics means dealing with public affairs. ... And this is the kind of politics that Critical Mass engages in.”<sup>50</sup> In other words, Critical Mass is trying to create a kind of civil society that influences political society (see Gramsci, 1971) but is neither drowned in nor co-opted by it.

The absence of ideologies is central to this endeavor and core organizers agree that there is no universal political truth from the point of view of Critical Mass.<sup>51</sup> The integration of many different kinds of people – similarly to the different

forms of spatial re-appropriation Critical Mass is using – is also key to the movement's success:

Hungary has become so polarized that everybody needs to be something: rightist, leftist, Gypsy, Jew, this or that. People hate that. They can't take part in anything anymore. But there is an inner drive for people to be together. They need the communal experience, they need to belong to a community. [...] Critical Mass is the only place where [...] there is no polarization. In the same crowd there all kinds of extremists and they don't even know about each other. This is why it has become so big in Budapest.<sup>52</sup>

Critical Mass is so firm in keeping its doors shut to anything that does not fit its definition of "civic" that unlike many environmental movements all over the world, it is trying to keep a distance even from (alternative) parties that clearly define themselves as both grassroots and green. For example, participants of the movement were very critical of a newly formed party-coalition with a strong environmental and social platform (as well as overlapping membership) when its activists were soliciting recommendations for the upcoming European elections at the April 2009 Earth Day Critical Mass ride. Even though this party is definitely not part of the traditional political elite and it is the only party that takes cycling seriously as part of their environmental policy proposals, their presence at the ride caused considerable tension within the movement. This incident shows the firmness of the movement's boundaries when it comes to any kind of contact with what is perceived as the traditional realm of politics.

As for the vision of the movement regarding social change, movement leaders do not have illusions about the mechanism of political power. Taking the name of the movement as seriously as possible, their main strategy is to create a critical mass of people who are biking in the city so that their needs and voices are impossible for politicians and city officials to ignore. As the two main leaders of the movement explained, the movement is challenging the system at its weakest: the citizens themselves.<sup>53</sup> It is not targeting the state directly. It is keeping an eye on it, following its actions and even organizing around them, but the focus of organization is to radically raise the number of cyclists, which – given the fundamentally personal and embodied politics of cycling – is also a way to create more engaged citizens. The political agenda of Critical Mass is based on the recognition that the urban environment is produced by political and economic forces that are not outside of human will and action and that the main reason there is no room for cyclists on the road is because no room has been made for them. But if the necessary amount of people pushes hard enough, as in the case of the Chinese intersection that inspired the name of the global movement, urban space will be re-shaped so that it can accommodate their presence and needs as well. The basis of the politics

of Critical Mass is that people – and not bureaucracies or even the “rules” of transportation – make both places and politics. As one participant put it,

Many people think that in other places the bike infrastructure just appeared out of nowhere. It is not true. In Amsterdam it was called White Bicycle. There was a movement there, people who believed in this, who said that this is a good idea and pushed for it. [...] These things didn't just happen. People made them happen.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to distancing itself from mainstream politics, Critical Mass is drawing a second very clear boundary between itself and official NGOs. In my interviews several participants talked about their disappointment with the power struggles and formalities within official NGOs as well as with the compromises they are forced to make for the sake of survival. Many people seem to join Critical Mass exactly because it promises a different path. In an interview, one of the leaders of the movement expressed this stance in the following way:

Critical Mass is the only civil organization in this country that works like a civil organization. It is grassroots and there is no money involved – we never got, never asked for and will never ask for money.<sup>55</sup> We never write grants, we have nothing and we will not have anything. The only thing we have is a mass basis. I find those civil initiatives outrageous where there is a good grant writer and they decide what they are going to do with the money only after they got it. How can you get money from the same place that you are trying to go against?<sup>56</sup>

Similarly to politics, civil society has also acquired many negative connotations in Hungarian public discourse. With many of the NGOs formed after the change of regimes focusing on individual rather than collective empowerment (Larsson, 2004), distancing themselves entirely from the public sphere or following trends set by government and European Union grants, the post-socialist traditions of movement building are relatively weak.<sup>57</sup> With the bicycle as both personal and apparently apolitical, Critical Mass has been able to form a movement that creates an advantage out of not conforming to the image of the passive and even somewhat corrupted third sector organizations.

Critical Mass has many legs. You can be one of its legs but if you step out for a moment, the whole thing won't fall over as there are millions of other legs holding it up. It is a little bit like a very ideal social system – one that sociologists are dreaming about – a real civil thing. Everybody sees their own perspective, but they also see something of the whole. It is possible that these perspectives are total opposites of each other, but they are still pulsating and fertilizing the whole thing and it works. This is awesome. This is a quintessentially civil initia-

tive, with the largest and coolest mass basis and the most effective in the long run.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, one of the most effective ways Critical Mass has found to draw and maintain its boundaries with politics and the NGO sector without losing power is to facilitate the birth of a new cycling advocacy organization. The group called Hungarian Cycling Club (Magyar Kerékpárosklub) uses the political clout created by Critical Mass but works independently from it. In 2005 exactly at the moment when Critical Mass was first acknowledged by City Hall as a potent political force and got its first serious promises for significant improvements in the city's bicycle infrastructure, the Hungarian Cycling Club took over all the lobbying work from Critical Mass. Its staff and volunteers (most of them activists in Critical Mass, too) do everything that Critical Mass would never want to engage in for fear of having to make a compromise or selling out: they attend meetings with politicians and representatives of City Hall; they write grants; they attend international conferences and they make official public statements. The Cycling Club takes the pressure of political navigation off of Critical Mass by not only being a more conventional NGO but also by taking conventional politics more seriously. As the head of the Cycling Club put it,

We cannot afford the luxury to create a situation where there is no way out for our partners, where they feel cornered. We can't afford to shut the door and leave, because then we will have no results. We need to produce results. We never make trouble. We say less or more strongly what we want and we say it as long as we achieve what we want. [...] Critical Mass can say anything, they can curse the government as loudly as they want, but we cannot do that. We are partners.<sup>59</sup>

In fact, this “professionalism” and partnership between the Cycling Club, City Hall and the relevant Ministries is one of the things that ensures the continued “innocence” and firmly grassroots nature of Critical Mass, which is not unprecedented but very unique in Hungarian civil society.

### **Conclusion and Dilemmas**

As I have shown in this paper, Critical Mass in Hungary plays a very unique role in creating a forum for political participation in a society where despite their alienation from the political class and disappointment with politics in general, citizens are craving democratic participation. Critical Mass fills up this vacuum for many people: it works because it is based on real needs and aspirations and because it has no identifiable party political or ideological identification. One participant summed up this achievement in the following way:

I can feel the potential in Critical Mass, that we can change things. [...] The ailment of Hungarian democracy is that people see themselves as separate from it. People are outraged at how the politicians are, how the roads are, how everything is, and they feel they don't have anything to do with that. They feel like they are not even a part of it: it is awful how politicians are but I have no role in this story. [...] It's not true. I am also part of the big whole. And then comes the question: what have I done for this whole thing?<sup>60</sup>

Critical Mass's greatest contribution to the democratization of post-socialist Hungary is to break passivity, educate a new generation of active citizens and re-define civil engagement in widely accessible terms. Framing itself as movement "only about biking" makes it easier for many people to connect and participate. However, this is also a highly ambiguous path and movement's future poses a number of dilemmas. In a country with serious social and economic problems, why is the strongest movement organized around biking? Does Critical Mass foster citizen participation in general or is biking the smallest possible common denominator? How far can the political tolerance of Critical Mass stretch in terms of accepting all worldviews, orientations and ideologies including those of the far right as long as "only" biking is at stake? Do Critical Mass participants see the broader implications of their fight for the right to the city? Would they be willing to form alliances with groups very different from them such as the Roma, the homeless or immigrants whose exclusion, discrimination and oppression occurs on a much larger scale? Would it be possible to apply the mobilization strategies of Critical Mass to launch movements around other pressing issues or they only work for this particular issue? One participant's musings reflect these inherent dilemmas well:

I am very interested in many things, but cycling has caught my attention the most because it brings everything together and because everybody can bike. So when I do this it already shows a mentality, it is the same as if I was working with the Roma in a village. The two require the same mentality. [...] It would be great if this city developed in a progressive way and if city leaders also recognized this. This is not just about people making trouble who want something that's only good for them. This is a question of whether you think in progressive terms or not. *Of course, now I am already being divisive*<sup>61</sup> (emphasis added).

Critical Mass is a revolt not only against the fetishization of the automobile, the consumer culture it is embedded in and the skewed public and transportation spaces these produce but also against the indifference and passivity of Hungarian society. As such, it is an extremely significant protest initiative. However, the question still remains as to where Critical Mass's rejection of any kind of value judgment or ideological-political orientation will take it. Why is being progres-

sive seen as divisive, as my interviewee above has indicated? Is it possible for a social movement to strip itself of any and all values other than a love for biking without falling into the trap of technicalities or very narrowly defined self-interests? A close examination of the development of both Critical Mass and Hungarian democracy in the next few years will provide us with some of the answers to these questions.

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The interview excerpts and quotes in the text come from 20 interviews I conducted with organizers and participants of the Budapest Critical Mass as well as representatives of the Budapest Police Department and the Budapest City Hall between the winter of 2008 and the spring of 2009. Most interviews took place in person, while some were conducted over email. The interviews lasted about 1.5 to 2.5 hours. Interviewees were selected with snowball-sampling until theoretical saturation (Strauss 2008) was achieved. In addition to the interviews, some of the quotes in this paper come from the publicly available [www.criticalmass.hu](http://www.criticalmass.hu) website. All of the interviewees have signed consent forms promising them anonymity.
- <sup>2</sup> The fact that Budapest has had a liberal mayor for 20 years whose political sympathies – at least at the level of rhetoric – are with progressive causes has certainly had a role in creating a welcoming or at least tolerant political environment for Critical Mass to have significant practical achievements in such a short span of time.
- <sup>3</sup> My position throughout this research was that of an engaged researcher or “citizen anthropologist” (see Tax 1964) and in no way did I try to conform to the myth of the “disinterested researcher.” I see my role as a passionate critic whose mission is to use various frames of understanding including personal participation, fieldwork and theoretical insights by relevant au-

thors to provide a kind of analysis that helps members of the movement reflect on themselves and grow as a collective.

4 Although Critical Mass has been described on various occasions as a movement (see for example Blickstein et al 2001), one of the main features of Critical Mass is that participants “have been successful in their ability to resist external definition, classification, or reduction by creating independent, autonomous, non-hierarchical groups of riders throughout the world” (Furness 2005, 89).

5 Xerocracy is defined as the spreading of ideas by Xeroxing them on fliers, posters etc. (Carlsson 2002).

6 In the United States, famous cases of usually unwarranted and violent police crackdowns on Critical Mass rides include those in San Francisco, Minneapolis, Austin and New York City (for more on this see Blickstein 2008; Carlsson 2002).

7 Interview, Budapest Department of Transportation, 09.26.2008

8 Email interview, 09.29.2008

9 Email interview, 09.28.2009

10 Blog posting by Kuku 09.26.2008. <http://criticalmass.hu/blogbejegyzes/20080925/level-new-york-i-cm-tol>. Author’s translation.

11 Among other things, the issue of Car Free Days has remained an important framing device for the movement. In 2005, after a 10,000-strong Earth Day Critical Mass in April, the City decided to close down Andrásy út, one of the major thoroughfares of the city on Thursday, September 22, signaling a growing (symbolic) commitment to the cause of cycling. From then on, the City has always made a point of closing off Andrásy út on September 22nd, the actual day of Car Free Day, regardless of whether it was on a weekday or a weekend. In this way, Car Free Day was transformed from a mere bureaucratic gesture into a meaningful event as well as a powerful platform for both community participation and community input for cyclists.

12 Interview, Szóda Café, 01.14.2008

13 Organized since 2002 in memory of cyclists killed on the road and to promote a better understanding between motorists and cyclists.

14 Interview, Szóda Café, 01.14.2008

15 Called Hajtás Pajtás, also established in 1993.

16 Interview, Gödör Klub, 07.10.2008. Author’s translation.

17 Interview, Millenáris Velodrom, 07.23.2008. Author’s translation.

18 [www.criticalmass.hu](http://www.criticalmass.hu)

19 The general public identifies two people as the main organizing figures of the ride, but they insist that from the beginning of the movement there has been a group of 5–6 people who are not as visible but have just as important a role in all decisions regarding the movement.

20 In New York City, for example, great emphasis is placed on the leaderlessness of Critical Mass in both rhetoric and practice: „It is a leaderless ride, free and open to all, where bicyclists take to the streets to promote bicycling as the best means of urban transit. ... Critical Mass is a bike ride, not an organization, and no two riders participate for exactly the same reason” (What is Critical Mass? Electronic document, accessed from <http://times-up.org/index.php?page=critical-mass-what>).

21 Interview, Hunyadi tér, 09.24.2008. Author’s translation.

22 Interview, Millenáris Velodrom, 07.23.2008. Author’s translation.

23 Interview, Szóda Café, 2008.01.14 Author’s translation. See also blog posting by Kuku 11.29.2006, accessed from <http://criticalmass.hu/blogbejegyzes/20061129/hogyan-legyel-milliomos-nehany-ora-alatt-a-critical-mass-el>

24 I use embodiment or embodied politics in a variety of interlocking senses including the intense physical-sensory experience of cycling in the city, the feminist understanding of the personal



as political, the performative nature of subversive politics (see Martin 1990), the inscription of power and spatial relations on the body of cyclists (see Douglas 1996) as well as in the sense of embodied space as “the location where human experience and consciousness take on material and spatial form” (Low 2003, 10).

25 Interview, Millenáris Velodrom, 07.23.2008. Author’s translation.

26 Interview, New York City, 05.10.2008. Author’s translation.

27 Interview, Millenáris Velodrom, 07.23.2008. Author’s translation.

28 Blog posting by Virus 04.21.2008, accessed from <http://criticalmass.hu/blogbejegyzes/20080420/mit-jelent-szamodra-critical-mass-elmanybeszamolokat-keresek>. Author’s translation.

29 Interview, Gödör Klub, 09.24.2008. Author’s translation.

30 Over the past few years, I have heard more and more avid cyclists (both commuters and bike messengers) complain about the size of the crowd and the impossibility of getting ahead on the ride. As participation in the Mass is becoming less and less crucial because of obvious significant public support, some people in the biking community support the movement but do not actually participate in the rides.

31 Blog posting by Dogfish 04.21.2008, accessed from <http://criticalmass.hu/blogbejegyzes/20080420/mit-jelent-szamodra-critical-mass-elmanybeszamolokat-keresek>

32 Interview, Hunyadi tér, 09.24.2008. Author’s translation.

33 Interview, Gödör Klub, 09.24.2008. Author’s translation.

34 Blog posting by Kuku 12.22.2005, accessed from <http://www.criticalmass.hu/blog/20050922/koszonjunk>

35 Budapest Department of Transportation. 09.26.2008. Author’s translation.

36 Interview, Millenáris Velodrom, 07.23.2008. Author’s translation.

37 The exact number of participants in Critical Mass has been an object of debate from the very beginning as neither the authorities nor organizers are able to produce exact numbers, only estimates. 80,000 is the number usually publicized about this ride, some estimate that the actual number of participants must have not exceeded 20,000 – which is still a huge number for any demonstration in Budapest.

38 They also often call it a “majális” or May Day ride referring to the family and consumption-oriented tradition of celebrating Labor Day during and even after the socialist regime in Hungary.

39 Blog posting by Kuku 09.23.2009, accessed from <http://www.criticalmass.hu/blogbejegyzes/20080923/koszonet-es-egy-kis-ertekeles>

40 Interview, Gödör Klub, 07.10.2008. That year, the Car Free Day Critical Mass was cancelled due to violent riots in Budapest.

41 Interview, Gödör Klub, 07.10.2008. Interview, Millenáris Velodrom, 2008.07.23. Author’s translation.

42 Interview, Gödör Klub, 07.10.2008

43 This has been criticized by some as replicating the mayor’s earlier decision to postpone the Car Free Day. However, by putting this ride in the context of the whole movement, the organizers attribute strategic significance to being flexible enough with the dates in order to be able to accommodate a variety of different audiences and interests.

44 This is the Hungarian version of the original slogan “Share the Road!”

45 Blog posting by ubi 06.27.2008, accessed from <http://criticalmass.hu/blogbejegyzes/20080627/biciklis-szabalysertes-fold-napjan-tanuk-meghallgatasa>

46 Budapest Department of Transportation. 09.26.2008. Author’s translation.

47 Interview, Szóda Café, 01.14.2008

- 48 My interviewee here was referring to the continuous bickering between major political parties  
in the Parliament and through the media.
- 49 Interview, Gödör Klub, 09.24.2008. Author's translation.
- 50 Interview, Millenáris Velodrom, 07.23.2008. Author's translation.
- 51 I concluded this from a series of discussions that took place in April 2009 on the mailing list of  
core organizers preceding the Earth Day Critical Mass ride of that year when a number of dif-  
ferent organizations including some legal advocacy groups asked to be represented at the ride  
and organizers decided to turn them down.
- 52 Interview, Pasaréti tér, 09.25.2008. Author's translation.
- 53 Interview, Szóda Café, 01.14.2008
- 54 Interview, Gödör Klub, 09.24.2008. Author's translation.
- 55 The expenses of Critical Mass (e.g., the production of stickers and other PR materials) are cover-  
ed by private donations as well as from the sale of commemorating T-shirts for each year's  
ride.
- 56 Tömegbázis és hitelesség (Mass basis and credibility). Video, accessed from <http://www.legrovidebbut.hu/szemelyes-galleria/content/tomegbazis-es-hitelesseg>
- 57 While movements of the radical right are emerging as powerful actors in the public sphere,  
some of the more successful progressive grassroots social movements formed since the change  
of regimes include the Humanist Movement and the broader environmental movement, al-  
though neither is able to mobilize such a mass basis as Critical Mass.
- 58 Interview, Gödör Klub, 09.25.2008. Author's translation.
- 59 Interview, Pasaréti tér, 09.25.2008. Author's translation.
- 60 Interview, Gödör Klub, 09.25.2008. Author's translation.
- 61 Interview, Gödör Klub, 09.24.2008. Author's translation.

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## REVIEWS

Jozef Tancer: *Im Schatten Wiens. Zur deutschsprachigen Presse und Literatur im Pressburg des 18. Jahrhunderts.*  
Bremen: edition lumière, 2008. Presse und Geschichte – Neue Beiträge,  
Band 32, hg. von Holger Böning, Michael Nagel, Johannes Weber

Der vorliegende Band ist dem deutschsprachigen Literaturleben in Pressburg um die siebziger Jahre des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts gewidmet. Konkret befasste sich der Autor mit den Moralischen Wochenschriften des Pressburger Privatgelehrten und Lokalpolitikers Karl Gottlieb Windisch, dem *Freund der Tugend* und dem *Vernünftigen Zeitvertreiber*. Das dritte Beiblatt, das *Pressburgische Wochenblatt zur Ausbreitung der Wissenschaften und Künste* fällt nicht in das Genre, oder gar in die *Gattung*, um Wolfgang Martens Ansatz hinsichtlich der Kategorisierung von Moralischen Wochenschriften zu übernehmen. Alle drei Blätter waren Beiblätter der ebenfalls von Karl Gottlieb Windisch ab 1764 redigierten *Pressburger Zeitung*, der ersten, über einen langen Zeitraum hinweg existierenden Zeitung des Königreichs Ungarn, erschienen wöchentlich zwei Mal in der Druckerei Landerer in deutscher Sprache. Windisch selbst war zur Zeit der Gründung des Hauptblattes und der Beiblätter kein Unerfahrener mehr: er knüpfte seit den fünfziger Jahren intensive Kontakte zu Gelehrten und Kulturorganisatoren sowohl in protestantischen deutschen Landen als auch innerhalb des Habsburger Reiches, in jüngeren Jahren allem voran in Olmütz und Wien. Er publizierte selbst in Wochenschriften, angeblich kleinere Gedichte und später auch Abhandlungen zu wissenschaftlichen Fragen. Leider wurden noch nicht alle seiner zu Beginn vor allem anonym erschienenen Texte eindeutig identifiziert.

Jozef Tancer beschäftigt sich in seiner Studie zunächst mit der Gattungszugehörigkeit der beiden Blätter. Der *Freund der Tugend* gehört seines Erachtens eindeutig zu den Moralischen Wochenschriften, alle Gattungscharakteristika wie die Einbeziehung eines vermeintlichen Publikums durch fiktive Briefe an den Herausgeber, die fiktive Figur des Verfassers selbst seien vorhanden, wohingegen

sich die Feststellung für den *Vernünftigen Zeitvertreiber* nicht mehr so eindeutig machen lässt. Es scheint wahrscheinlich, dass das Blatt – entgegen der Ankündigung im Hauptblatt – überhaupt nicht periodisch erschien. Die gebundene Ausgabe – das einzige Exemplar, das uns bekannt ist, befindet sich in der Ungarischen Nationalbibliothek OSZK – besteht nicht aus einzelnen Stücken, sondern ist in vier Sammlungen unterteilt, einzelne Texte umfassen an die 50 Seiten, die – so Tancer – offensichtlich nicht in gleichmäßigen Fortsetzungen publiziert wurden. Es fehlt die genretypische Vorrede des Verfassers sowie die Hinweise auf die Möglichkeit des Abonnements. Inhalt und Wahl des Titels entsprechen wiederum genau den Voraussetzungen einer Moralischen Wochenschrift. Ob der mageren Quellenlage (ein einziges Exemplar) stellt sich natürlich die Frage, ob nicht auch frühere Ausgaben existierten, die der *Pressburger Zeitung* wie angekündigt periodisch und stückweise beigelegt worden waren und es sich bei diesem gebundenen Exemplar eventuell um eine nachträgliche Ausgabe des Gesamtblattes, nach Einstellung desselben, handeln könnte. Wie dem auch sei, viel wichtiger als die formale Frage scheint mir zu sein, dass die inhaltlichen Kriterien denen der Moralischen Wochenschrift durchaus entsprechen: die Texte sind moralisch-unterhaltenden Charakters, belehrend sowohl in den Abhandlungen zu einzelnen gesellschaftlichen, politischen, religiösen oder kulturellen Fragen als auch in den literarischen Texten, den Fabeln, kleineren Erzählungen.

Tancer geht in der Folge auf diese inhaltlichen Schwerpunkte ein, erschließt die vorwiegend Wiener aber auch nord- und mitteldeutschen Vorbilder, das Programm des *Freundes der Tugend* generell sowie die Kommunikationsstrategien Windisch'. Hervorgehoben wird das Bemühen des Herausgebers, sich vor allem durch Beiträge zur lokalen Geschichte Pressburgs sowie Beiträge zu Religionsfragen von den Wiener Vorbildern abzuheben. Letztere Inhalte lehnen sich vor allem an die Praxis der nord- und mitteldeutschen Blätter an, an denen sich Windisch generell stark orientierte. Hervorzuheben sei hier beispielsweise der komplette Abdruck von Johann Joachim Spaldings 1748 erschienenem Werk, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*, die Windisch im *Freund der Tugend* in sechs Fortsetzungen präsentierte, ohne allerdings den Verfasser zu nennen.

Tancer widmet den Medien als Lesestoffe für Frauen ein eigenes Kapitel, wobei er betont, dass es sich bei dem vermittelten Idealbild der Frau nicht um ein allgemein gültiges Muster handelt, sondern der sich im 18. Jahrhundert etablierende Mittelstand angesprochen wurde, der sich gerade mit Hilfe seiner Tugendlehren und Verhalten vom hohen Adel und den sozialen Unterschichten abzugrenzen suchte. *Frauenfragen* bildeten den thematischen Schwerpunkt zahlreicher moralischer Reflexionen und literarischer Beiträge, beispielsweise zu den Geschlechterbeziehungen, zur Erziehung, zu den Aufgaben der Frau im Privaten und im Öffentlichen. Interessant scheint mir die Analyse in Bezug auf philosophische Vorbilder Windisch' zu sein: während sich die Wiener moralischen Wochenschriften bei-

spielsweise eines Sonnenfels stark auf Fénelon und Rousseau – mit all den Vorbehalten weiblicher Gelehrsamkeit im Hintergrund – stützten, klagt Windisch diese Theoretiker oft zynisch-spöttisch an und propagiert die Notwendigkeit des umfassenden Zugangs der Frauen zu Bildung. Er weist jeden naturbedingten Determinismus entschieden zurück und führt gerne das Vorbild starker Frauen in der Geschichte – wie zum Beispiel Anna Maria Schurmann (1607–1678) – vor.

Der zweite Teil der Studie ist der Bibliothek Windisch' gewidmet. Der Verfasser stieß während seiner Forschungen auf ein Verzeichnis der Titel der Privatbibliothek, das 1792 niedergeschrieben wurde. Die Handschrift entspricht nicht der des K. G. Windisch. Insgesamt führt der Katalog 1263 Bände, gebunden und ungebundene zusammen auf. Bei 30% der Sammlung handelt es sich, dem Interesse Windisch entsprechend, um Werke aus dem Bereich der historischen Wissenschaften, wobei sich 73 Titel auf die vaterländische Geschichte beziehen, Pray, Katona, Kaprinai, Wagner, Cornides, Seivert, Schwartner, Kovachich, Bél, um nur einige zu nennen. Die Sammlung geographischer Schriften ging weit über den mitteleuropäischen Erfahrungsbereich hinaus. Schlözers, Drücks, Schabes Werke, zahlreiche Reisebeschreibungen sowie 266 Blätter geographischer Karten waren vorhanden. Windisch' Mehrsprachigkeit erlaubte ihm offensichtlich die Lektüre englischer, italienischer, französischer, deutscher, ungarischer, lateinischer Werke, auch Belletristik. Interessant im Zusammenhang mit dem ersten Teil der Studie ist allerdings die Sammlung von periodischen Schriften in der Bibliothek, die laut Tancer 41 Titel also 5,6% des Gesamtbestandes ausmacht. Darunter befinden sich Titel wie das *Journal für Freimaurer* (Wien, 1784–1786), der *Ephemeren der gesamten Freimaurerei* (Wien, Jg. 1785) aber auch eine repräsentative Auswahl der Moralischen Wochenschriften, die Windisch als Vorbilder dienten und aus deren Inhalt er zuweilen auch schöpfte: die Blätter von Addison and Steele, Klemms *Österreichischer Patriot*, der Mannheimer *Unsichtbare* (1769), der Hamburger *Einsame* (1766), der Hamburger *Bienenstock* (1760).

Tancer beweist in seiner Studie eindrucksvoll, wie wichtig es in Bezug auf ältere Literatur und deren Interpretation ist, Quellen verschiedenster Art zu erschließen und zusammen zu führen. Er wertete hinsichtlich der Moralischen Wochenschriften des K.G. Windisch Briefe des Verfassers, seine eigenen Texte, ja seine mögliche Lektüre aus und erst die Zusammenschau der ausgewerteten Informationen erlauben erste Schlüsse auf Kommunikationsweisen, Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten, organisatorische Netzwerke aber auch auf die Inhalte der Periodika zu ziehen. Es zeigt sich deutlich, dass Windisch – wenngleich überzeugter Hungarus und Patriot – in Bezug auf die Rezeption von wissenschaftlicher und schöner Literatur ein weit über die Grenzen der Habsburger Monarchie und die beiden Hauptstädte Wien und Pressburg hinausreichendes Spektrum benötigte und verwertete. Sein Publikum war in dieser Zeit in erster Linie der Pressburger lesende Mittelstand, erst später, durch seine Gelehrten Blätter *Ungrisches Maga-*



*zin* und *Neues Ungarisches Magazin* in den achtziger und frühen neunziger Jahren galt sein Bemühen dem Verbreiten von Wissen über Ungarn im gesamten deutschsprachigen Europa. Die Erschließung seiner Bibliothek durch Jozef Tancer erlaubt einen schönen Blick auf das Hineinwachsen des Pressburger Privatgelehrten in diese Aufgabe. Abschließend möchte ich noch die exklusive Ausführung des Bandes, die reiche Illustrierung und die präzise redaktionelle Arbeit hervorheben, der die Publikationen der Bremer edition lumière seit Jahren auszeichnet.

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