CARTOGRAPHY AS A TOOL OF NATION-BUILDING IN HUNGARY AND MEANS OF LEGITIMIZING HUNGARIAN ETHNIC BORDERS AND SPACES

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This paper focuses on the set of ideological means and systems of scholarly argu-
mentation presented by the field of geographical science between the two world
wars in an attempt to prove the unity of the Hungarian national space and demon-
strate the impracticability of the spatial confines within which the state had to exist
due to the ruling implemented after the Paris Peace Treaty. Specifically, I will elab-
orate on the geographical myths used to legitimize the so-called Hungarian state
space, with special attention devoted to ethnic mapping as an ethno-political device
and means of articulating discourses of power discourse.

Keywords: map, space, myth, nation-building, spatial-turn, ethnic boundaries

It is perhaps not by chance that geography, or "the science of space," is now in-
cluded in academic discussions of the processes of nation-building. This may be
simply because in order for the field of history to be able to interpret the nuances
of potential approaches to the rather complex relationship between society and
space or spatiality, it is necessary to implement the viewpoints offered by other
disciplines as well.

At the end of the 19th century geography on the one hand found its appropriate
place among sciences and scholarly disciplines and, on the other hand, managed
to clarify its proper subject matter. A central concern became the detailed analysis
of the natural *environment* that surrounds humankind as well as the (external) *en-
vironment* that human beings themselves shape and transform around themselves,
along with the interpretation of *spatial* correlations. In other words, in the schol-
arly/scientific philosophy related to geography, the concept of *space* appeared as
the uniform basic issue of the discipline of geography. According to Karl Ritter,
however, space is not empty, but "filled with objects," which means that this con-
cept is based on the absolute theory of space. However, the view of space as an
"objective container" became more and more diversified in the second half of the
past century, and spatial concepts and spatial theories appeared in the process of
what could be assessed as a "spatial turn" in scholarly-scientific thinking, which
tended to regard space increasingly as one of the projections of *social processes*.

As the appearance of "soft" spatial concepts facilitated the approach of geography (a discipline that moves essentially in the synchronic time frame) towards the application of the achievements and methods of social sciences and the recognition of the diachronic aspect, the field of history, which is basically vertical in its treatment of time, was equally forced to move closer to spatial philosophical thinking and social geography by the declaration and acceptance of spatial synchronicities and parallel worlds (see Soja, 1989). This is exactly why, as a matter of course, geography uses archives and various records of drafts and censuses (among other things), as the historical spatial processes can be interpreted correctly only with the help of these sources, just as these sources may also provide logical and scholarly explanations for the phenomena of natural geography. This means that the historical viewpoint (and sources) can enrich and simultaneously highlight the approach of geography by adding an additional aspect that has proved to be a basic concern of geography, which is *temporaneity*.

After all, we all know for a fact that time is the concern of cartographers. The human branch of classical geography focused primarily on the *external, environmental (spatial) relations* of human presence, the order of social activities and of the population itself as shaped in the (absolute) space through historical development, and it used to concentrate pointedly on the *present,* even if it used historical data as well. Conversely, present-day geography has ("at last") turned this relationship *upside down*. It does not anymore discuss temporal processes from the aspect of space, but rather addresses spatial structures that are formed *on the basis of* historical processes. This path seems to be appropriate for the purpose of approaching mythical ideas in geography with *due criticism* and for providing reasonable explanations for the origin of natural forms "created by supernatural powers." It is in this context, i.e., by considering the time horizon, that we need to approach the former (and sometimes also even the present) ideological constructions of Hungarian geography, constructions with which it has interpreted the *spatial imprint* of the (national/ethnic) presence of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. This seems to be all the more the case, given that a deeply rooted feature in Hungarian geography and even scholarship in general is the declaration of how Hungarians are bound to their natural environment and landscape, which finds expression in the principle of "a history and culture that could happen only here and only in this way." The interpretation of this basic principle, i.e., that of the triad of place, historical time, and natural environment may move towards the establishment of creation myths. The forced amalgamation or confusion of empirical or historical time and the huge time periods of natural processes (e.g., geological formations) can only result in the acceptance of the tenet of "created space." Thus according to this way of thinking, the events that create our geographical environment *necessarily* determined our historical processes and gave our (national) spatial structures the form they have today.

For easily understandable reasons, Hungarian geography between the two world wars put special emphasis on the efforts to explain the questions surrounding the issues of landscape, space, and nation and the close-knit (or even fateful) relationship that developed between them in the wake of the shocking decision made at the Paris Peace Treaty. This should not be surprising, however, as it has been recognized for some time in contemporary social research, due to the work of Pierre Nora and Alieda Assmann, that the most original, most ancient, and most important part in national cultural memory is played by *space* (Nora, 1990; Assmann, 2003).

Entire landscapes can become the medium of cultural memory and may be filled with semiotic content. As a consequence, the conscious acts of the local population to harmonize the given part of space with certain mythic notions have been very important in the process of strengthening their ethnic/national identity in the past as well as the present (Gribben, 1990, 277–91).

Veikko Anttonen, interpreting the term "sacral," has analyzed the connection between space and religion and, with the help of this viewpoint, indirectly discussed the so-called "sacred" functioning of national spaces. Anttonen contends that individual communities mark the special points of the area they use as early as the time of their settlement of the given area. These include natural places (such as rivers, lakes, or hills) that separate their own space from the (wilderness) areas of the "other" group(s) of people. In Finnish culture, the basically adjectival term "pyhä" (meaning "separate" or "highlighted from the environment") expresses the significance of such locations, the significance of spatial points as borders and boundaries between peoples, the crossing of which is considered to be of magical or religious nature. Transgressing these borders is only possible after the appropriate, i.e., socially prescribed, rituals. The decoding of the meaning of these sacral borders or boundaries is possible only for those who belong to the given communities (Anttonen, 1999, 9–22).

In this context the reasons for the existence of the Hungarian political/national space area theory can be understood as a part of historical geography, as the range of the Carpathian Mountains and the area surrounded by it never constituted merely simple geographical frames, but always had a distinctive role for Hungarians.

The notion of the thousand-year-old country of Saint Stephen as a "Sacral Unity" became especially strong after 1920 (see Zeidler, 2001, 2002). This meant that in scholarly life in Hungary not only Ratzel's principle of "nature created Hungary through the complete organic correlation as a unified life province" held sway, but also the idea of how "something more" or "some Larger Power" assisted in creating the natural (sacral) space of the Hungarian nation. Thus, in the last decade of the 19th century and in the first few decades of the 20th an aspiration took root in Hungarian scholarly circles to proclaim the idea of a unified na-

tional and state space, very similar to the notion of an organic, unified national history and folk culture.

It was precisely this "nature-given created state space" that the government feared, as early as the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries, was endangered by the ethnic minorities living in Hungary, which is why the government paid increasingly close attention to the spatial situation and spatial movements of non-Hungarians and their "space-occupying power," which was seen as a force that might drive back Hungarians. The best scholarly/scientific tool for monitoring these processes was what is referred to as the ethnic map.

The history of ethnic cartography contains reports of a number of newly created ethnic maps dating from the first half of the 20th century that deploy increasingly refined methods of delineation. We know for a fact, as noted by Pál Teleki, that it was expressly out of political interests that ethnic maps were produced for the peace treaties that brought an official end to World War I. According to semiotics, maps are *icon*s or *pictorial* sign(al)s that bear some sort of resemblance to their subjects. However, the universal codification of maps also results in an inevitable simplification of reality and, thus, given their inherent abstraction, maps cannot be seen as anything more than conceptual *model*s. Yet the intensive generalization highlights only those features of macro-level ethnic processes displayed in maps of small scale relations (based on single-word statistical responses) that provide a superficial, if perhaps spectacular impression of the most basic ethnic components (structure) of a given area.

Due precisely to this quality, the history of the establishment of modern European nation states demonstrates that the ethnic/linguistic maps and statistics were either made on the basis of ideological considerations in the first place or they represented/represent a possibility for exploitation according to the current (nation state) political interests.

In one of his treatises, *Pál Teleki* himself acknowledges that, for all the most painstaking scholarly efforts put into the project, it is simply impossible to produce a "politically neutral" ethnic map in the middle of Europe that would be acceptable for all, since it is exactly the non-correspondence of the individual ethnic and state boundaries that causes the basic antagonistic conflicts between the peoples of this region (Teleki, 1937, 60–70). In Hungarian cartographic practice, the above attribute ("spectacular") refers to optical and psychological effects that are not featured as the subject matter of individual studies but represent parts and parcels of a tacit agreement legitimized by the history of the science of ethnic cartography: namely, the legend and colors used in the maps. The various charts, diagrams, and other means of representation (including circles, balloons, cubes, and columns) may lead the non-specialist viewer of a map astray when assessing degrees of magnitude. Even colors can exert an irrational and/or emotional influence on people that may result in totally differing perceptions or overall impressions

concerning the size of areas occupied by individual ethnic groups or their mere "capacity to occupy certain areas." Cartographers have a way of determining where the colors should be tense, where they should attract or concentrate attention, or even where they should decrease the interest or the intentness of the viewer. Apart from the central use of red or gules, the application of colors in ethnic maps can only be interpreted *in relation to* that central color of red. Cartographers have made, and continue to make, their decisions concerning the representation of individual coloring codes in maps primarily on the basis of the *color effects* as related to the color red.

Imre Jakabffy (1915–2006), along with *Pál Teleki* and *András Rónai* (1906–91) one of the editors and producers of ethnic maps in the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century, revealed to me in an interview once that the color red was predominantly used in the above fashion, i.e., for demonstrating the "area-occupying" power of one's own ethnicity:

> Red is an attractive color. The color red has a magnifying effect. If that happens to be the case, let us then make it our single effect and concept that we appropriate red for ourselves. [This is] because no matter who produces an ethnographical map, he or she will invariably reserve red for his or her own ethnicity. If it is a Slovakian [cartographer], the Slovakians will be marked with red. […] Red is, so to speak, a color that irritates your neighbors. […] The color red produces an explosion. This is why your own nation is always red (Interview with Imre Jakabffy, December 27th, 2004).

The other method, employed less frequently, is when the color red marks an ethnicity that "endangers," "threatens" or "intrudes into" one's own territory. These latter, usually large-scale maps are normally prepared for detailed micro-examinations of settlements of disputed affiliation along ethnic borderlines. A plastic example for this sort of coloring would be the map bearing the title *A magyar–szlovák nyelvhatár vidékének …* [… of the Area of the Hungarian–Slovak Language Boundary], published in 1942 by *Államtudományi Intézet* [Institute of Political Sciences; verbatim: State Studies Institute]. In this map, the Slovak ethnic territory is marked with the color red (see the exposition of colors in Keményfi, 2007, 55–65). Although ethnic maps apply all of the various contrastive effects simultaneously, the population density map of Pál Teleki is of particular interest from the perspective of color choice. What we can observe in this map is the joint effect of quality and quantity of light and shade contrasts and the resulting pervasive energy of red. It is not by chance that this map of population density by Teleki is oftentimes unofficially dubbed the "Carte rouge" because of the striking dominance of the color red.[1] This map seems to achieve its most conspicuous effect through what is not really its primary objective. With scholarly

precision, Teleki uses red ("Hungarian") only to indicate the territories where the level of population density would demand it, thus embedding these ethnic Hungarian areas in narrower or broader white frames of unpopulated sections, a technique giving the impression that the larger red blocks seem to be *moving forward towards us in space* from the otherwise flat plane of the sheet.

In my view, ethnic maps do not essentially belong within the scope of academically strict cartographic scholarship. To use a concept coined by the Austrian social scientist and theoretician Otto Neurath, ethnic cartography is but a "method of pictorial statistics." It is a method of presentation "which we want to use when the pictorial demonstration for introducing our concept or ideology promises a lot more than words do" (Neurath, 1991, 423). A further characteristic feature of maps is that they provide a key or legend to the universally standardized codes. The cartographers are supposed to tell us what the shades, colors, and contours indicate, or what surface objects they represent. Thus, the interpretive processes of the makers of maps must correspond somehow to the interpretive processes of viewers (Gombrich, 2003, 98–100).

The branch of presenting cartographic practice according to Otto Neurath's school of picture education urges that, in the process of education, the universally valid codes used in maps should be introduced as early as possible. This is also assisted, for example, by the explicit and unambiguous color code, used consistently already in the early phases of education. As an example, he gives the green color of the Arab world, which immediately (as an acquired skill) facilitates the identification of the character of the given territory on the map. Ethnic maps in the efforts related to the nation-state status of Central European peoples have become "graphic icons" or symbols of national and territorial unity. Following in the footsteps of Umberto Eco, we could also say that we normally compare 'stored images" with data perceived at any given point in time. A correspondence between the two operates the iconic code, which triggers the process through which we can get to the level of proper recognition and identification, in our case of the map (Eco, 1976, 191–217).

In my view the ethnic map sequences prepared by the so-called civilized nations of Central Europe depend heavily on the specific situations in which they appear. In other words, we have to take into consideration the concrete *medium* in which they figure. Ethnic maps of the more comprehensive type, which cover larger individual areas, play a part in symbolic political/ethnic conflicts even today. One needs only think of the public administration transformation processes that have taken place in these countries. The question of *where* and *how* these maps are actually used should then be analyzed separately from this perspective. As a practicing ethnographer in the course of fieldwork, I have repeatedly stumbled across recently prepared Hungarian ethnic maps in the cultural venues or mayors' offices (where they are generally kept "sub rosa" and rolled up, but still

turn up every now and then) of small Hungarian villages of the region called *Felvidék* (present-day southern Slovakia).

A Hungarian cartographer producing ethnic maps has also told me that, in a number of cases, these maps were ordered explicitly by minority political organizations, and it was the "commissioner" who decided, for example, what color code to apply. Yet this is no secret at all, as the website of *MTA Földrajzi Kutatóintézet* [Geographical Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences] even lists the ethnic cartographical research projects supported directly by government and minority organizations (see http://www.mtafki.hu/projekt_tf.htm).

In other words, ethnic maps are the *pictorial channels* of symbolic ethnic conflicts, the instruments of *pictorial dialogues* or map-*like* coded messages between ethnicities, which sometimes have only symbolic and other times real and even grave consequences. Mostly, they represent a message either to the neighboring peoples or to the European political decision-makers and, of course, a message to the ethnic groups themselves (in this case the Hungarians) about their numbers and circumstances in the given regions. As an example of this "dialogue," let me cite a brochure written in German for international audiences edited by Imre Jakabffy and published in 1942 in order to refute the fabrications contained in Romanian ethnic maps. Once we get a chance to look into this publication, it becomes quite clear that a considerable amount of energy was put into the effort of adjusting or refuting the Romanian ethnic maps (Jakabffy, 1942). (Why does cartographic practice elicit such heated responses or move such a great extent of methodological apparatuses?) It is surely not by chance, then, that cartographer Ute Schneider mentions the power of maps in the title of a recently published volume (Schneider, 2004).

Furthermore, it might not sound too far-fetched on my part to suggest that, on the basis of military literature, it is quite apparent on the basis of how they operate (as special techniques) that ethnic maps also have their proper niche in the system of psychological warfare (Watson, 1985, 364–77).

Apart from the most imposing and widespread ethnic maps, Hungarian scholarship has also presented a *mythic system of arguments* (that could be illustrated with the following list of examples) for the purpose of proclaiming the magnitude and unity of the Hungarian national space.

1. In the 1920s, geographer Gyula Prinz came up with the so-called Tisia Theory. According to Prinz, the ancient crystalline block that had sunk to the bottom of the Alföld [Great Plains] is of a homogeneous structure, and the range of the Carpathian Mountains then was rolled up on and around this block as if on a (boot)last. Prinz reckoned that this uniform bedrock base also demarcated a unified state space. This means that Hungary, the state is nothing less than the "impact" of nature; consequently, only this state space can function or operate effectively in the Carpathian Basin (Figure 1).

'Even the bedrock demarcates the Hungarian state space'

Figure 1. The Tisia Block Myth

2. Prinz is responsible for the notion of *"Magyar Mezopotámia"* [Hungarian Mesopotamia], as well. The natural basis for this idea is that Hungarian culture developed on the surface of an alluvial plain. This sort of natural environment was the precondition of great civilizations based on agriculture. In other words, the intrinsic *Duna–Tisza* [Danubius–Tibiscus] river structure, which is similar to that of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, would elevate Hungary to the status of a Mesopotamian country (Figure 2). This is how the central Hungarian area could become the distributing core of culture and how this culture could be radiated towards the neighboring peoples, who also lived together with us in the Carpathian Basin. Our "cultural power" therefore "elevated" the cultural level of the other peoples who lived with us on the edges of the Carpathian Basin. Accordingly, the end or the borderline of the highbrow "core culture" is located where the territory populated by Hungarians ends, or where the plains shift into the Carpathian Mountains.
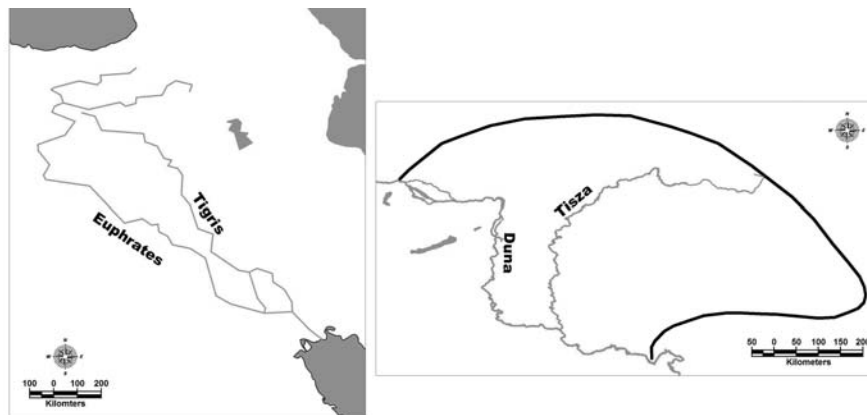

Figure 2. "Hungarian Mesopotamia"

3. The concept of *ethnic/national* landscape propounded and emphasized by Teleki is also worthy of mention in this context. The essential idea in it is that an ethnic landscape is "egy-egy nemzetiség tipikusan a saját etnikai jellegzetes-ségeiben felismerhető tájformáló erő által alakított térfelszín" [the space surface formed by a landscape-forming power recognizable in the typical ethnic features of individual nations]. The term that entered the Hungarian language from the relevant German literature assumed the ethnic quality to be a *primary* space-surface-forming force, as opposed to a simple way of life. Obviously, this piece of specific terminology, already refuted and discredited by current representatives of geography, was supposed to justify the historical continuity of the given group of people related to a concrete part of the landscape.

4. The notion of sacred/sacral landscape (szent táj), received with some degree of skepticism even by contemporary (first half of the 20th century) representatives in the field of the ethnography of religion, also belongs here. Their disbelief stemmed from their view that the definition of sacral landscape ignored the complexity of landscape.

5. The man who coined the term, the German Georg Schreiber, also included in the original definition the German life-force as that of a "gigantic great-family." He opined that there was a close connection between the "people" (Volkstum) and the "sacred quality." He believed that the relationship between religiousness and the people could be best recognized in sacral landscapes. In other words, it was its deep religiousness that had helped the German people (and protected them against other peoples) in their effort to preserve their life force and high level of culture and civilization and leave the impression of this culture in the landscape (Bausinger, 1965, 177–204). In Hungarian circles of geography, this notion took the form of the following characteristic sentence: "A katolicizmus a nyugatias lelkiséget biztosítja a magyarság számára, kiélezi a magyar műveltségi életteret" [Catholicism ensures the western spirituality for Hungarians; it puts an edge to the Hungarian educational life-space] (Prinz, 1942, 129).

6. The last item in this list, admittedly abbreviated in the interests of concision and brevity, could be the idea of *államhatár-tartósság* [state border continuity], developed to a level or remarkable subtlety by *András Rónai*. On the basis of the mythic principle according to which "time legitimizes," *Rónai* handles the Carpathian Basin as a natural state space unit, which is un-detachable and totally *independent* of ethnic or national processes and historical events. He does so because the range of the Carpathians has proven to be the most lasting state border in Europe. If this should be the case, we might safely assume that some sort of a natural (and not social) power prescribed this line of demarcation to function as a static state border (Figure 3).

Figure 3. 'Time legitimizes the state borders'

These concepts reflect the inner system of relationships between the three issues of territory, nation, and national minority. To wit, nation states in the central and south-eastern parts of Europe attempt to express the cultural and linguistic fault lines separating the peoples living here in spatial terms as well. The roots of the notion of ethnic space are to be found in the fundamental characteristic feature of nascent nationalism in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe: the effort to establish the maxim that state borders must correspond to ethnic borders. The reason for this is that those who live outside the legal framework of a given state but speak the same language and possess the same culture are also to be included in the "myth of common origin." The ideology of nationalism dawning in the process of the development of modern nation states gradually "discovered" the existence and the importance of "an ethnic space of one's own" after establishing national institutions and handling issues of language and culture. Therefore, the next step within the framework of nationalism was the *mythologization and sacralization* of this space.

The disciplines of statistics, cartography, and geography in the first half of the 20th century fulfilled expectations according to which geographers and cartographers should add the findings and achievements from their respective fields to the effort to prove the legitimacy of the notion of the leading role of the Hungarian nation in politics and culture in the Carpathian Basin. The arguments listed above represent the contemporary concepts of spatial studies that eventually combined into a unified network to serve a common goal.

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Note

1 See the Map: http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A1jl:Ethnographic_map_of_hungary_ 1910_by_teleki_carte_rouge.jpg

NATIONAL IDENTITY IN HUNGARIAN ARCHITECTURE AND THE SHAPING OF BUDAPEST

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Great cities are usually considered to be cites of modernity, so it may seem a bit bizarre to connect them with national identity. Indeed, the face of the Hungarian capital is rather international, reflecting well the universal tendencies of modernization and urbanization that occurred from the end of 18th century. There are, however, some key-buildings and a few other examples in Budapest that give evidence of a counter intention: to provide architecture with a distinctive character as an expression of Hungarian nationality in a modern sense. The 19th century was a high period of Nationalism, and the issue of national style in the arts was raised in many places in Europe and even in the Americas. How could it have been avoided in a multi-ethnic Hungary that tried in vain to regain its independence from the Habsburg Empire throughout the century? It is no wonder that the national character of the arts was the subject of a more or less permanent discussion from the 1850s to the outbreak of World War I. The following paper offers an overview of the urban development of Budapest, followed by presentation of the concepts of the national style with reference to the example of buildings erected in the capital city and a brief discussion of their antecedents.

Keywords: Budapest, architecture, national style, Imre Henszlmann, Frigyes Feszl, Ödön Lechner, Károly Kós, Béla Lajta

Budapest was once three separate towns each of which remained provincial until the end of the 18th century, at which time Emperor Joseph II made them the center of the Hungarian territory. While earlier Buda, essentially an enclosed bastion on castle hill, had been more significant, from the beginning of the 19th century the small civic community of Pest began to gain importance. The growth of the population began to increase in the 1820s, when industrialization and commerce attracted masses from the countryside to Pest. In this period, the pace of the assimilation of the German speaking population (mostly of German, Slovak and Jewish origin) started to accelerate. The Absolutist period following the defeat of the revolution of 1848 slightly hindered urbanization, but with the Compromise of 1867 urban development began at a pace comparable to that in the United States

as the unified capital city of Budapest turned into a real metropolis, with all infrastructure, public buildings and residential quarters. This process took place in the three decades before 1900. Models for urban development were first and foremost Paris and Vienna, while the style of public and private buildings mostly followed universal European trends: Classicism in the first half of 19th century and Historicism in the second (Preisich, 1964).

Dissatisfaction with the international manner of building in Pest was first expressed by enlightened aristocrats, such as Count István Széchenyi, and young intellectuals, like Bertalan Szemere, who traveled widely in Europe and discovered that our "Italianate" buildings did not differ from what was being built in the rest of the continent. Both men longed for the comfort of the English house and the practical construction in Britain, but did not call for the imitation of these structures (Sisa, 1999, 81–4, 86–7). On the contrary, they invited Hungarian architects to invent something new that could respond to local climatic conditions and at the same time express national character. However, this period, the so-called Age of Reform (1790–1848) was not able to formulate this peculiar character; its architecture followed the universal style of Classicism, due perhaps to the attraction of the cultured West.

The intention to establish a national style appeared first within the vocabulary of historic styles. The first record is a pamphlet written by Johannes Schauff, a German art teacher in Pressburg (today Bratislava), with the design of a Hungarian order (Bibó, 1989, 60–3). Classical orders had been regarded as the invention of the Greeks tribes and the essence of architecture. Hence, it seemed quite natural to continue the sequence of orders with new ones that expressed the characters of nations as the modern equivalent of tribes. However, like his French, German and British forefathers, Schauff used heraldic symbols (in his case the double cross and the horizontal bands of the flag) referring to a concept prior to nation-states, when the monarchy had been decisive and the ethnic origin, language and culture of the subjects had not mattered.

Even fifty years later, when criteria for the nation in the modern sense were defined, such as ethnicity, common language, religion, territory and common historical memories, the task of finding the appropriate means of expressing this content in the arts was the source of much debate. The art historian Imre Henszlmann, who insisted on the creation of a national style, believed that, given the lack of a native architectural tradition, Hungary was compelled to choose from existing styles. He proposed the Byzantine style first and later the Gothic, claiming that "heydays of our national history were related to the ogival style" (Széles, 1973–75, 45), and the Gothic was of French and not German origin. For the building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences he suggested using Gothic forms, but the jury was in favor of the Neo-Renaissance, which they felt more appropriate to express the universal idea of the sciences. Three decades later the House of Parliament was built

with a Gothic superstructure, but in this case the reference to the London Parliament was certainly more significant than any allusion to the glorious Hungarian kingdom of the Middle Ages (Sisa, 1998, 205–6).

The age of Romanticism made possible the birth of an architectural work deliberately national in style. Romanticism led everywhere to an interest in the national past and popular culture. This trend was amplified by particular historic events in Hungary. The defeat of the war of independence against Habsburg reign reinforced national emotions, either by encouraging escape into a romanticized past or resistance against the repression of Habsburg absolutism. The building of the Vigadó, erected on the Pest riverfront in this period, was therefore of considerable importance. Its architect, Frigyes Feszl who had been born in a German patrician family and whose mother tongue was German, decided to provide this stately cultural building with singularly Hungarian traits. At first glance, it does not differ much from the oriental-Islamic tradition of European Romantic architecture, but rather shows a striking originality in the use of Moorish, Byzantine and Romanesque motifs. The arcaded main façade was designed by the architect on the model of the 'porch,' the traditional archway of peasant houses and country mansions (Komárik, 2002, 177, 179). The national character, in tune with 19th century thinking, resides mostly in the sculptural and ornamental decoration of the building: sculptured heads of Hungarian kings and statesmen and the coat of arms crown the top of the façade, and the motifs borrowed from clothing, for instance the ceremonial knot of the Hungarian hussar's uniform, were used as an element of the decoration. This reflects a common belief that national taste was better preserved in the form of clothing than buildings (Moravánszky, 1998, 218). Feszl "dressed" (so to speak) his Assembly Hall in garb that contemporaries definitely felt to be Hungarian. This is not entirely evident now. When compared to a bank building in Vienna by Heinrich von Ferstel completed some years earlier (1856–60), the Vigadó shows embarrassing similarities. Feszl apparently borrowed a few architectural elements from this Vienna building, while Ferstel did the same with figures that have typical Hungarian faces and cloths. One should not forget that formalities like Hungarian dances, clothing, Gypsy music, and rhapsodies by Franz Liszt were in fashion at that time throughout the Empire and beyond. In the 1870s Feszl himself used romanticized elements of peasant life in bizarre ruined monuments (Moravánszky, 1998, 218–19), probably to the memory of the failed 1848–49 revolution, where the Caryatides are replaced by Hungarian shepherds wearing the *cifraszűr* (a traditional heavy woolen cloak).

While Feszl's attempt remained unique in his time, the 1890s saw the renaissance of national style in architecture. The most prominent figure of this shift was Ödön Lechner, an architect of German origin and a graduate of the Berlin Bauakademie. Lechner sacrificed his whole life to the creation of a Hungarian 'language of form.' His style was based on a collection of ornamental samples

published by József Huszka, a Transylvanian art teacher. Using formal analogies, Huszka had tried to prove the ancient Asian origin of these motifs. The richness, originality and the pedigree of folklore motifs induced Lechner to transpose this recently discovered treasure in his new style. The first example in Budapest is the Museum and School of Applied Arts. Like most 19th century artists and designers, he was convinced that the ornament was a language with its own grammar, as the title of Owen Jones' book suggested, and if there was Celtic, Persian, Moorish ornament, why could there not be a Hungarian one? First he applied these ornaments to a French Renaissance structure, but after a trip to London he realized that the Indian Mughal style could be a more organic bearer of the same decoration. The cross-fertilization of these cultures, he believed, would be useful. All the components that had a great effect on his architecture can be distinguished individually on the building: the French Renaissance distribution of volumes, the Moorish constructions in Andalusia as reflected in the large window over the entrance, the Persian influence at the entrance gate, the Indian at the cave-like open entrance-hall and the top-lit exhibition hall, and the colorful ornaments manufactured by the famous Zsolnay-factory (Moravánszky, 1998, 225). The idiosyncratic style of Lechner, though it did not manage to curry the favor of politicians, became very popular among a band of younger architects at the turn-of-the-century, who brought it into fashion in private constructions.

Lechner's program to establish an architecture that is modern and has a national character was acceptable for the next generation of architects, as well. The so-called 'Young Architects', however, rejected Lechner's style, as is clearly visible on the Main Square of the Wekerle Garden City, as overly imbued with individualism and speculation about ornaments. They did not want to draw from pattern books and other secondary sources, but rather directly from village buildings. The Arts and Crafts movement and Finnish National Romanticism directed their attention to the unspoiled world of peasant culture. Not only their style, but also their whole worldview differed from that of the previous generation. While the art of Lechner and his pupils had been deeply anchored in urban culture and liberalism, the younger generation was anti-liberal and against the metropolis (Ferkai, 1993, 13). The romantic anti-capitalism of Pre-Raphaelites drove them to the villages, where they hoped to find a remedy to the artistic poverty of the mass culture of the cities in organic peasant culture. They preferred to build in the countryside and, when compelled to erect buildings in the capital, they used the same romantically exaggerated roofs, wooden structures, and stonework, in other words elements typical of the Transylvanian medieval churches and old mountain houses of which they were fond.

The Wekerle Garden City, with its four thousand apartments in small semi-detached houses, was the most ambitious housing scheme at the beginning of 20th century. The central square designed by Károly Kós, who was twenty-nine years

old at the time, differs from the rest of the village-like colony. Since he had been born in Transylvania (again to a family of German origin), he found inspiration in the main squares of medieval Transylvanian towns, such as Hermannstadt (or Nagyszeben in Hungarian and Sibiu in Romanian) and Klausenburg (Kolozsvár in Hungarian and Cluj-Napoca in Romanian), where terraces of two-storey houses surround the central park (Gall, 2002, 252). In order to avoid breaking the closed composition, he bridged over the streets on the longer sides. Façades designed by Kós and his friends followed the detailing of national romanticism which was appropriate in this suburban environment. Kós never built in the city center of Pest, and all of his designs in the capital city are situated in a garden or park, where he was able to use his favorite picturesque rural structures, even in the case of larger public buildings. These can be regarded as a critique not only of Historicism and Jugendstil, but the whole metropolitan context, which previously had not been called in question.

Parallel to the architecture of Kós and the Young Architects, another loosely affiliated group appeared before World War I with Béla Lajta as its most outstanding representative. His Municipal Commercial School (1909–12) was built in the dense 8th district of Budapest. As a student Lajta (originally Leitersdorfer), who had been born to an assimilated Jewish family, became enthusiastic about the architecture of Lechner. He even worked together with his master, but apart from a few common projects and early independent works his oeuvre bears witness to other influences. He traveled a great deal in Western Europe and was familiar with contemporary tendencies, which are evident in his Commercial School. The brickwork recalls industrial buildings by Peter Behrens, the verticality of the façade and the Mansard roof Messel's department store in Berlin, so one may wonder why this building is considered part of the Hungarian national tendency. The explanation may lie in the ornaments borrowed from Hungarian folklore. Yet it is not easy to recognize the Hungarian origin of these geometric patterns. Sculpted stone boards on both sides of the entrances seem closer to Pre-Columbian friezes or the ornaments used by Frank Lloyd Wright, and interior wall paintings seem to bear more affinity with the patterns of Josef Hoffmann and the Wiener Werstätte. One may well agree with the comment of a contemporary, who stated in 1919 that by the eve of World War I the program of national style in architecture had lost its validity (Ligeti, 1919, 27).

The war did indeed put an end to this tendency. Pre-war nationalistic aspirations, represented by Lechner and his followers, including Béla Lajta, did not continue, while the Young Architects had to adapt their style to new conditions. Lechner and Lajta died and others emigrated. In addition, the conservative regime of the 1920s applied the 'national' label to its own constructions, which reflected a renewed Historicism and primarily Neo-Baroque style (Ferkai, 1998, 245–50). Little mention is made of the fact that the very reason for the pursuit of a national

style had vanished. With the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy, Hungary became an independent nation-state and lost most of its ethnic minorities, along with two-thirds of its former territory. Neither the struggle for independence nor the assimilation of minorities justified a national style. Followers of Lechner were blamed for distorting their master's style with their Jewish character and preference for individuality and excesses. The official cultural policy and the gentry mentality was similarly adverse to everything related to peasantry and folklore, and even architects who refreshed their National Romantic style with Turanian ideology (Ede Thoroczkai Wigand and István Medgyaszay) found themselves on the periphery. The issue of national style was raised again in discussions of the late 1920s, when the International Modern Movement suddenly conquered Hungarian architecture. Those who claimed in the mid-1930s that modern architecture should be assimilated to conditions in Hungary did not want to create an overall national style. Instead, they were in favor of regional styles based on local traditions. This did not affect the architecture of Budapest; it remained basically modern until the Stalinist cultural policy designated 19th century Neo-Classicism as a 'progressive tradition.' In the late 1960s and 70s, monolithic housing projects provoked a harsh reaction on behalf of the Hungarian organic movement, which in many respects was a continuation of previous national tendencies. As was the case with National Romanticism, the typical sphere of action of the organic movement was the countryside; they only rarely built in the capital.

Thus the image of Budapest has essentially been defined by international influences, whether they arrived from the West or East. The diversity of influences notwithstanding, its architecture has nonetheless coalesced into a unique, recognizable cityscape. While the city has been labeled cosmopolitan from time to time, or, in worse periods, the 'wicked city', most of its architecture apparently has a particular character which visitors are able to distinguish.

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CATHOLIC IDENTITY IN HUNGARY
– THE MINDSZENTY CASE

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At first glance, the Catholic identity of a Cardinal should not be a complicated topic, particularly if we are dealing with a person who became one of the most famous symbols of Catholic resistance against communism during the Cold War Era. In the 1950s Cardinal József Mindszenty was regarded as one of the most prominent martyrs of the Catholic Church. This reputation emerged again in the early 1970s all over the world, particularly in North and South America, but also in Western Europe, Austria, and Germany. He was arrested, put on trial in 1949, imprisoned, allegedly tortured, was freed during the revolution of 1956, and spent the next 15 years of his life as an exile in the U. S. Embassy in Budapest. He died only four years later, in 1975, in his last exile in Vienna. But József Mindszenty, born József Pehm in 1892, stood also for a very specific understanding of Hungarian Catholicism: a particularly conservative, anti-liberal, legitimist, pre-Vatican II, reactionary, traditionalist and nationalist Catholicism. In my paper, I look at the case of Cardinal Mindszenty in order to explore the most important aspects and changes of Hungarian Catholic identity during the 20th century. I want to show that, contrary to the common view, most questions regarding Mindszenty and Hungarian Catholicism are still open and require further research.

Keywords: Hungarian National identity, Catholicism, Cardinal Mindszenty, Cold War

Introduction: The Complexities of "Catholic identities"

We should first address the general notion of "identity," which is a concept that is constantly debated and therefore needs to be defined. It derives from the Latin "idem" and basically means that a person, group, or thing stays "the same" over time. "Identity" is here understood as a system of references used to describe the relationship between a person and a group as a constant set of attributes (for a critique of the concept see Geulen, 1999; Niethammer, 2000, and Niethammer, 2003). These references or points of reference consist of spatial and temporal representations. Personal as well as collective identities are constructed around local

and national master narratives, and these are related to wider and deeper spatial and temporal, social and cultural representations. Identity, therefore, describes a process of attempts to create a coherent, continuous narrative about the self based on the idea of continuity in space and time, on differences and boundaries with regard to other identities, but also on communalities with regard to other identities. Each group is part of other, larger groups on a higher territorial and cultural level: European nations always define their place with regard to "Europe" as a whole, whereby "Europe" is also constructed in a way that fits the necessities of this particular group identity (af Malmborg and Stråth, 2002, 1–25). Identities "function" if there are enough people who believe in their existence, even if the ideas related to these constructs are self-contradictory.

"Catholic identity" is particularly difficult to define. Many, but not all, Catholics identify with their church and with some basic elements of the church's teachings and institutions, particularly the extraordinary role the clergy plays, from the parish priest and the local bishop to the very top of the hierarchy, the bishop of Rome, as head of the universal church. Very often the cult of Saint Mary and/or of other saints, often local or regional saints, or of saints related to certain professions or occupations or saints that help in specific difficult situations are equally part of "Catholic identities." The major problem with all these aspects of Catholicism and Catholic life is that they can differ strongly depending on the various local, regional, national or continental conditions and contexts. There are so many different ways of defining Catholic manners of thinking and acting that we have to begin with specific cases before we can reach more general conclusions regarding the question of a Catholic identity.

According to Ian Linden, Catholicism consists of at least four different churches. The first is the community of 1.3 billion Catholics in the world, the second is a theological construct of a church led by the Holy Spirit, which exists inside the world and history and at the same time transcends them both; the third is a hierarchical institution lead by the Roman bureaucracy around the Pope and the Curia; and, finally, the fourth is the church as it is seen from outside the church (Linden, 2009, 1–2).

When looking at Hungarian Catholic identities in the 20th century, we must keep in mind this complexity. Being a Hungarian Catholic can mean totally different things to believers in a small village, a provincial town, or Budapest, not to mention to a bishop or a cardinal. These different meanings are produced by their encounters, conflicts and experiences with their environment.

Catholic Identity and Christian Nationalism in Provincial Hungary: Mindszenty (Pehm) in Zalaegerszeg, 1919–41

József Pehm was born in the small village Csehimindszent (which means "Czech Mindszent") to a Catholic peasant family in the south-western part of Hungary, only about 40 km east of the Austrian border. He himself related his family and his village of birth to spatial and temporal representations of much larger entities, such as the history of the Hungarian nation and the history of Europe as a continent shaped by Latin Christianity.

In his memoirs, Mindszenty refers to the close relationship between his own personal fate and that of the Hungarian nation. This identification is related to a well established historical narrative of Hungary's victimization, starting in the 19th century and renewed after the Trianon Treaty of 1920 and the anti-Stalinist Uprising of 1956. According to this narrative, Hungarians are a suffering people, a martyred nation. Correspondingly, German Nazism and anti-Semitism and "Russian" Communism are represented as forces foreign to "Hungarianness." All negative aspects of Hungarian history and society are externalized. Mindszenty would often refer to this narrative in his speeches, appending his view, according to which Hungarians have nothing to fear as long as they stay loyal to the Catholic Church and the Holy Virgin, the Patron Saint of the country.

Mindszenty's concept of Hungarian history also resembles some of the ideas developed by Hungarian Catholic historian Gyula Szekfű in his very influential book *Three Generations.* This work is considered to be one of the major intellectual contributions to Hungarian Christian nationalism of the interwar period. It narrates the history of Hungary between 1848 and 1918 as a period of decline, blaming "foreign" liberalism as the main cause for Hungary's difficult situation in the years after 1919 (Szekfű, 1920). Many Catholics hoped that Christian nationalism could become the instrument that would overcome the legacy of 19th century liberalism in Hungary, which was regarded as the driving force behind secular modernity (Hanebrink, 2009). Like Catholics in other countries in Europe and the USA, however, they were still caught inside the fortress mentality they had adopted in the 19th century, when liberalism and other modern ideologies succeeded in diminishing the influence of the Church in many fields, particularly regarding the family (the introduction of civil marriage, for instance) and the role of religion in society (emancipation of Protestantism and Judaism). On the other hand, the Catholic renaissance, the successes of Catholic parties and trade unions, the thriving of religious orders and Catholic associations nourished the hope for a re-Christianization of society.

From this perspective, Mindszenty drew a parallel between the interwar-year situation and the end of Turkish occupation. In 1934 he wrote a biography of Bishop Márton Biró of Veszprem who, in the mid-18th century, had restructured

the diocese after the end of the Turkish invasion. When Mindszenty became parish priest of the town of Zalaegerszeg, he had to connect himself with the legacy of Biró:

> During the following one hundred and fifty years up to the time I took office in 1919, there had been only slight changes in the parish. My aim was to create a contemporary parish life. […] What I learned in the course of my research about the reconstruction after the Turkish occupation proved highly suggestive to me in my own work. I felt I had been summoned, after one hundred and fifty years, to launch a comparable campaign of reconstruction, first in Zalaegerszeg; and then, after 1927, in Zala County; and still later throughout the large diocese of Veszprém (Mindszenty, 1974, 10f.).

The name of his native village points to another important aspect: the ethnic complexity of his regional background, where Hungarians lived alongside Germans (often referred to as "Swabians"), Croats, Slovenes, Serbs and others without any clear ethnic selfunderstanding. Beginning in the late 18th century, when the Habsburg Empire underwent a radical shift and national movements developed, these ethnic options, which for the most part had not been clearly formulated or articulated, became strongly politicized. The region itself (Vas county) remained overwhelmingly Catholic, because it had fallen within the realm of the Habsburgs in the 16th century, a time when other parts of Hungary had either been occupied by the Turkish forces and transformed into a part of the Ottoman Empire or had been independent, as in the case of the Principality of Transylvania. In both these regions, which were outside the reach of the Habsburg Empire for some 150 years, Protestantism thrived and challenged Catholic hegemony. When the Hungarian national movement became very strong around the middle of the 19th century, many Protestants combined the struggle for national independence with the emancipation of their denomination from Habsburg and Catholic domination. Like Prussia, Switzerland or the Netherlands, the modern idea of the nation related liberalism to Protestantism and excluded Catholics. Catholicism was constructed as the Other in this modern Hungarian national master narrative. Catholicism as the Other combined four different dimensions:

(1) Political dimension: the Catholic Church was identified with the Habsburg monarchy as the "foreign" ruling house, particularly during and after the revolution of 1848/49. One "proof" of this was the pro-Habsburg loyalty shown by some bishops, including the archbishop of Esztergom, János Hám. Protestants also seemed to be overrepresented among the leading revolutionaries of 1848. This simplified view ignored the fact that many Catholics, including some bishops and priests, were persecuted by the Austrian military authorities because of their revolutionary activities.

(2) Social dimension: the Catholic Church was identified with the upper, more European and cosmopolitan aristocracy of Hungary, while Calvinists were overrepresented among the lower nobility, the Gentry (dzsentri). The latter understood itself as the very essence of Hungarianness.

(3) Ethnic dimension: as a confessional group, Catholics consisted of the highest number of different ethnic groups in the Hungarian Kingdom, including Croats, Germans, Romanians (Uniates), Slovaks, Slovenes, and Ukrainians (Catholic Orthodox or Uniates), while the members of the Reformed church were roughly 90 per cent ethnic Magyars. This argument gathered strength towards the end of the 19th century, when racist ideas began to spread ever more quickly in Central Europe.

(4) Cultural dimension: The denominational differences in Hungary were also connected to ways of living, dress, music, food, etc. The Hungarian language has even two different words for "Christian": the Catholic word *keresztény* and the word *keresztyén*, used by Protestants.

Mindszenty offers a good case study for exploration of the complexities of Hungarian Catholic identity not only because of his background, but also because of the political prominence he achieved. He himself rejected the role of a "political priest" who would act within a political party or in institutions such as parliament but he was definitely a "politicizing priest." Mindszenty tried to characterize his political engagement in a manner that would make it acceptable to the ideas of Pope Pius XI, who condemned the politically active priest and favored activities of laymen controlled and directed by priests according to the ideal of Catholic Action (*Ubi Arcano Dei,* 1922):

> I became a member of the County and Town Council, and as a result, I naturally became more involved in public life. […] Although I fully supported the political activities of Bishop Ottokár Prohászka and other clerics under exceptional circumstances, I myself firmly refused when my friends wanted to nominate me, because I had never thought very highly of the role of the priest-politician. I was all the more determined to fight the enemies of my country and Church with the written and spoken word, and to support all Christian politicians by giving clear and decisive directives to the faithful. But I myself wanted simply to remain a pastor. I regarded politics as a necessary evil in the life of a priest. […] It would certainly be a sign of great weakness if a priest were to leave vital political and moral decisions solely to the often misled consciences of the laity (Mindszenty, 1974, 10–11).

Mindszenty's career did not suffer from his strong standpoints in political conflicts. Indeed it may well have profited from them. Twice he was promoted after

having been imprisoned. The first arrest happened immediately after the end of the First World War and the breakdown of the Habsburg Empire. As a young priest and teacher in the small town of Zalaegerszeg he began to write articles criticizing the new liberal-democratic regime of Mihály Károlyi, which came to power in November 1918. A provincial representative of the new government who seemed not to be used to a free press had József Pehm arrested. The radical socialist regime of the "Councils Republic" which rose to power in the wake of the fall of the Károlyi government detained the young priest again, but could not enforce his imprisonment. Shortly after this incident, József Pehm was appointed to parish priest of Zalaegerszeg. It seems as if his engagement against the new order was appreciated by his church superiors. With him, the church could also present a priest who had openly resisted both revolutions, which in the context of the nationalist Horthy regime were interpreted as the most horrible incidents of Hungarian history. Fifteen years later, József Mindszenty, then bishop of Veszprém, was arrested by Arrow Cross representatives. After he was released from prison, he was again seen as a courageous fighter for the church and someone who had resisted a terrible regime. He became head of the Catholic Church in Hungary and Pius XII made him a cardinal.

József Pehm supported the Horthy regime and "Christian nationalism" only to a certain extent. He remained loyal to King Charles IV, which was also a characteristic common to his native region in south western Hungary. Until at least 1937 Pehm backed the legitimist Catholic People's Party against the National Unity Party, which was supported with all means by the central government in Budapest. It would be too simple to understand Pehm/Mindszenty only as a conservative, anti-modern, anti-liberal, legitimist priest who was politically active. As parish priest of Zalaegerszeg and as bishop of Veszprém in 1943–45 he was engaged in numerous social and educational reforms. In his district Catholic Action, the new centralized association of various Catholic lay organizations (though strongly controlled by the clergy) founded in Hungary in 1932, was thriving, and many new schools were built. Pehm/Mindszenty belonged to a new generation of active priests who engaged in various reforms and in the modernization of Catholicism in different fields. Although he didn't officially belong to a party, he was active in support of "his" Christian People's Party from his position as a priest who hoped for a re-Christianization of Hungarian society.

Difficult Questions Concerning War and Genocide: József Mindszenty (Pehm), 1941–45

Hungarian Catholicism was not well prepared for what was to follow the interwar years, which included a focus on re-Christianization, the fortress mentality,

and cultural antisemitism (I use this spelling deliberately, as I feel it makes little sense to hyphenate the term; there is no such thing as "Semitism," Antisemitism exists as an ideology and way of thinking on its own terms, not in relation to something else). Antisemitism was inherent in Christian nationalism and had been a part of Catholic anti-liberalism since the 1890s, preventing the church from becoming a strong antifascist force and instead contributed to making antisemitism socially acceptable in Hungary (Hanebrink, 2009). The fine distinction between "cultural" and "racial" antisemitism drawn by the Church did not seem to be clear to many people.

Many scholars talk about the "failure" of the Pope and the Catholic Church during World War II and the Holocaust, but I think we should speak rather about the weakness of the Church, which became obvious during these years. The Pope tried to prevent the war and he deplored the atrocities that took place between 1939 and 1945, including the Holocaust. Instead of a re-Christianized society in Europe there were millions of Catholics who did not follow the Pope, but rather remained helpless or trapped in their own nationalisms. Catholics still lived in their ghettos, though they had gained some ground in society. Even in France, where the Catholics were to a certain extent reintegrated into the nation under the promises of summer 1914, into the "Union Sacrée," the integration came at a high price: Catholics had to embrace modern nationalism. Some Catholics used antisemitism to express their rejection of modern society. In Hungary they were trapped in "Christian nationalism," which was created under the influence of some eminent Catholic intellectuals after 1919, including Ottokár Prohászka, Béla Bangha, and others.

What was Jozsef Pehm/Mindszenty's role during the most horrible period of Hungarian and European history in the 20th century? This is a question that still awaits further research (Hóbor, 1997). We know very little about the newspaper ("Zalamegyei Újság") he owned as head of the local church: was it antisemitic, like other Catholic papers? If so, was it more or less antisemitic than other papers? In 1935 the paper and Pehm himself supported the candidate of the Catholic People's Party, which was also Mindszenty's party (Paksy, 2004). Tibor Boldogfai Farkas (1883–1940), an aristocratic landowner and a legitimist member of parliament since 1922, criticized the antisemitic propaganda of the Arrow Cross and other right-wing movements. Pehm/Mindszenty was also active in the field of revisionism regarding the Trianon treaty, particularly after the defeat of Yugoslavia in 1941, when some formerly Hungarian territories were reintegrated to the county of Zala (Göncz, 2005).

But Pehm's standpoint regarding Nazism, antisemitism, and the Arrow Cross movement, and the standpoint of Hungarian Catholicism in general, was more ambivalent. A document from 1938, which was used during the Communist show trial, indicates that Pehm convoked a meeting of priests in Budapest which dis-

cussed not only the possibilities of connecting social reforms with the "Jewish question," but also the option of reducing the distance of the church from the Arrow Cross party (Hanebrink, 2009, 156). The meeting does not seem to have had any major consequences.

Two years later, in 1940, József Pehm was asked by Prime Minister Pál Teleki to organize the "National-political Service" in the Transdanubian region in south-western Hungary. The goal of this movement was to counterbalance Nazi influence, which was gaining momentum at the time among members of the Hungarian German population. In 1942, after Teleki had committed suicide in the wake of Horthy's decision to go to war against Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union on the side of Germany, József Pehm changed his German sounding name to Mindszenty. Some of his supporters have argued that the magyarization of his name was a protest against the Germans (Csonka, 1976, 9). In his memoirs he does not even mention the changing of his family name, which is astonishing. He even insists on the "Hungarianness" of his whole family, as if he wanted to defend himself against accusations of not being a "real" Hungarian:

> We all come from ancient Hungarian families and all our relations bear genuine Hungarian family names. Their occupations were extremely varied: artisans, farmers, shepherds, churchmen, businessmen, army officers, civil magistrates, parish priests, bank clerks (Mindszenty 1974, 1).

Looking back and narrating his life, the 82-year old Cardinal considered it important to begin with a clear definition of his national identity, referring to his family background. Why was it so important for him to emphasize his and his family's Hungarianness? As long as Joseph Pehm had been active in the little town of Zalaegerszeg, where he spent 25 years as priest of the town church, he seemed not to have had to concern himself much with the question of his family name. Zalaegerszeg was over 90 per cent Catholic, but ethnically mixed. As soon as he became more and more involved in nationwide conflicts, he might have considered it better to magyarize his name. His family name Pehm could have been used to denounce him as someone who was not "really" Hungarian. Whatever his motives, his decision, taken at a time of violent national conflicts, clearly indicated that he wanted to be identified with the Magyars and not with the German minority, which was sizeable in the south-western part of the country.

At the time, it was hardly rare to magyarize a family name, especially one that sounded German or Slovak. Between 1815 and 1956 some 300,000 Hungarians applied to change their family names, 95 per cent of them from a foreign sounding name to a Hungarian one (Kozma, 2000). There is even a Hungarian word for the magyarization of names: *névmagyarosítás*. This affected almost 500,000 people, mostly of whom were Jewish. Other groups included Catholic Slavs and German

Catholics or Lutherans. Many Hungarian Germans (and Slovaks) had magyarized their names in the second half of the 1930s, but the bulk of them – unlike József Pehm – did it *after* the end of the Second World War, when the notion of the collective guilt of the Germans was internationally accepted.

But Pehm was the only higher Catholic cleric to magyarize his family name. Other bishops did not seem to have cared about their non-Hungarian names. During the interwar period, out of the forty-three Catholic bishops in Hungary, six had Czech or Slovak family names and eight had German names. The Archbishop of Esztergom and Primas Csernoch (1912–27) had a Slovak or Czech name, as did the bishops Smrecsányi (1912–43 Eger), Czapik (Eger 1943–56), Prohászka (Székesfehérvár 1905–27), and Shvoy (Székesfehérvár 1927–68). German names included Breyer (Győr 1933–40), Hanauer (Vác, 1919–42), Glattfelder (Csanád 1911–42), Lindenberger (Nagyvárad 1919–21), Brém (1921–23 ibid.), Scheffler (Szatmár 1942–48), Pájer (Rozsnyó 1928–37), and Fischer-Colbrie (Kassa 1939–48).

Mindszenty's decision to change his name may not have been an attempt to magyarize it so much as an attempt to aristocratize it. In his memoirs he claims that in 1733 one of his forefathers was granted the status of Hungarian nobility (Mindszenty, 1974; the Hungarian original refers to the "class of freemen," but the German edition explicitly says "Adelstand"). Pehm does not sound like the name of a Hungarian noble family, while Mindszenty does, especially with the suffix "y" (von) at the end. With the aristocratization of his name he might have wanted to emphasize his legitimism.

When Mindszenty was appointed bishop of Veszprém in March 1944, German troops occupied the territory of their 'last ally.' With the efficient help of the Hungarian bureaucracy, police, and Arrow Cross, the Germans soon started the deportation of about 400,000 Hungarian Jews, and the so-called "Holocaust after the Holocaust" began (Gerlach and Aly, 2002). In December 1948 Mindszenty wrote that as bishop of Veszprém he had intervened several times at the offices of the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior with regard to the "Jewish question" (Közi Horváth, 2002, 30). In his memoirs he states that the Hungarian Catholic bishops protested vehemently in June 1944 in a letter and that this letter helped to save the lives of most of the Jews who were in the Budapest Ghetto at the time (Mindszenty, 1974, 14–15). Whether this is true or not is another question. We know that several Catholic nuns (including Margit Slachta and Sára Salkaházi) and priests, as well as bishop Apor rescued Hungarian Jews, and also that the activities of Nuncio Angelo Rotta and a letter written by Pope Pius XII to Admiral Horthy influenced the Regent to bring the deportations to a halt. But we still know very little about Mindszenty's role in these actions. We know that on October 31st, 1944 he personally handed over a memorandum, signed by him and the other bishops of Western Hungary, to Szálasi's deputy. In this memorandum

the bishops asked the leader of the Arrow Cross "not to turn the Western part of Hungary into a battleground" (Mindszenty, 1974, Doc 2, 252–3). A few days later, the bishop, together with seminarians and priests, was arrested by a local Arrow Cross leader. This imprisonment, his second after 1919, contributed considerably to Mindszenty's moral reputation after 1945 and might have been one of the reasons why some months later Pius XII appointed him to head the Catholic Church of Hungary.

In the last months of the war, the Churches also profited from the fact that they were the only remaining public institutions offering shelter, food and help to thousands of refugees or providing precious information to people who were searching for their relatives. Churches were overcrowded, and for many people the church symbolized the only sign of hope in a time of chaos and destruction. The image of the church as a bastion of peace and reconciliation, a stable "rock" in a sea of uncertainty, was communicated by the Christmas addresses of the Pope and the bishops in 1944, but this image was not to last for long.

What impact did the events of the Second World War and the Holocaust have on Catholic identity in Hungary? The discussion about the responsibility of the Catholic Church for the Holocaust is long and complex (Becker, 2005; Rubinstein, 2001; Sánchez, 2001; Zuccotti, 2000). The official standpoint of the Vatican and the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the bishops in Europe at the end of the war came in the context of a religious explanation of World War II and its consequences, including the murder of six million Jews, as the terrible outcome of the secularization of European societies. Mindszenty used this interpretation in a pastoral letter of May, 1945 (Mindszenty, 1974, 254):

> We have suffered one of the most dreadful catastrophes in the history of this land. […] We are all laboring to rebuild the ruins. But let us never forget that the ruin of our souls is far more tragic than the ruined cities we see all around us. Our people have lost respect for the laws of God. They have also lost that respect for authority which is a cornerstone of all civilized society. Our sufferings resulted from the failure of our leaders to observe our traditions and our ancient faith. There are many who believe that human beings, and in particular the government, have the right to violate divine laws whenever it seems expedient to do so. This kind of thinking caused innocent people to be interned in concentration camps, robbed of all their possessions, exiled or murdered outright. Those who issued and carried out such orders, or merely approved of them, all forgot one thing: whenever a conflict arises between human and divine law, we must obey God rather than men.

As in 1919, after the catastrophe re-Christianization, the "return to Christ," was seen as necessary for the sake of humanity, an opinion shared by many conserva-

tive Protestants (Giers, 1977, 285; Klimó, 1998). The self-imposed mission of the defenders of the "Abendland" (Occident) had a double meaning. Particularly in Central Europe, it was not only an explanation of the past catastrophe, but also included a message addressed to the present and the future, an anti-totalitarian, and in the new constellation anti-communist appeal (Schildt, 1999). This ideological framework facilitated the white-washing of historical guilt of many ex-Fascists and ex-Nazis , which had the impact of integrating hundreds of thousands of former enemies of democracy into the new postwar systems, contributing to a reconciliation which did not took place after World War I (Mazower, 2000, 288).

The record of church representatives during the interwar years and during the war was ambivalent: a small minority of Catholic clergy saved Jewish lives, some sacrificing even their own. A smaller minority supported the Arrow Cross and other "race defending" movements and ideas, while most Catholics were bystanders. Even if, after the war, the Church would always refer to the small minority who saved the lives of Jews, it is clear that the horrors of the war cast a long shadow on European Catholicism and on Christianity in Europe in general. What was the long-lasting effect on Catholic identity? We still do not know.

Cold War Catholicism: Cardinal Mindszenty the Martyr and Catholic Militancy, 1945–56

1948 decisively changed the world in which Catholics lived. In Hungary the political struggle between Communists and Catholics dominated politics and everyday life more than in other countries. This is one reason why the case of József Mindszenty gained so much international media attention. But his personality and the support he received from Pius XII also contributed to him becoming a martyr and symbol of Cold War Catholicism. Before 1945 the Hungarian Catholic church had thrived, and Catholic Action had been a huge organization with around 1,000,000 people within its ranks, almost a tenth of the population. Equally important was the strong Catholic influence on higher and basic education (university faculties, schools) and on the press. All this changed dramatically between 1946 and 1948.

With only 22 percent of the votes, the Hungarian Communists became the strongest party in the elections in September 1947. But even this very modest victory rested on repressive means against their opponents, as well as fraud and the help of the Soviet Army. During the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the national-liberal revolution of 1848 the Communist Party of Hungary passionately propagated new historical interpretations and representations of the revolutions, which they depicted as the expression of one-hundred years of fighting for the freedom of their nation. Lajos Kossuth and Sándor Petőfi became central figures

for their Stalinist national history narratives. Apart from this "genealogical appropriation" (Verdery, 1997), the Communists also reinvented existing folk traditions for their own propaganda, a strategy they adopted from Soviet Stalinism (Klimó, 2003; Klimó, 2007a).

The campaigns propagating a national communist understanding of Hungary's past were directly linked to aggressive attacks on Catholicism, the church, and its representatives in general, leading to the staged trial against Cardinal Mindszenty in the beginning of 1949. In December 1948 the Communist leaders arrested the Cardinal and staged a show trail against him. After he was interrogated and tortured, Mindszenty was sentenced to life imprisonment on the basis of accusations that he had planned to reestablish the Habsburg Empire with U. S. and British help (Mindszenty 1989, 123). He was in prison until the fall of 1956, when, shortly after the uprising against the Stalinist system, a group of revolutionary officers and soldiers freed him and brought him to Budapest. On November 3, 1956 the Cardinal delivered a short speech which was broadcasted by the Hungarian national radio. When Soviet troops returned and took control of Budapest and the rest of the country again, Mindszenty found asylum in the U. S. Embassy in the Hungarian capital, where he was to spend the next fifteen years.

One of the main accusations of the People's Court in Budapest against Mindszenty during the show trial of 1949 was that he "was engaged in the resurrection of Habsburg rule in Hungary" (Mindszenty, 1989, 123; Mindszenty, 1949). At the same time, the leading Stalinist historian Erzsébet Andics "unmasked" the primate of 1848/49, János Hám, as a national "traitor" and "enemy of the Hungarian people" (Andics, 1948). Stalinist ideology divided past, present and future into unchangeable "progressive" and "reactionary" tendencies, and in this schematic view the higher clergy obviously belonged to "reaction" (Klimó, 2007a).

Already during the years before the trial against Mindszenty, the strong Catholic Action of Hungary was partly destroyed and had to endure numerous discriminating measures enforced by the communist controlled police and Soviet military administration. Thousands of Catholic schools were nationalized and hundreds of Catholic youth, women's, men's, and agrarian workers' and other associations were dissolved. The Catholic press and publications were censored and reduced to a minimum. Active priests and laymen were arrested and Church property was confiscated. This massive campaign, aiming to destroy the economic and social basis of Hungarian Catholicism, began with the Land Reform Act of 1945, which targeted the Church as the richest land owner and was brought to an end only in 1989.

In these years, Pius XII began to condemn communism explicitly. A true Catholic, as defined by the Pope, could no longer be neutral in this struggle between the Church and its enemies. The appointment of Mindszenty indicated that the

Pope wanted a "pugnacious Church leader" (Kent, 2002, 98). With the excommunication decree of 1949, which banned all members and even sympathizers of Communism from the sacraments, Pius XII enforced this identification of Catholicism with anticommunism. It should be stressed, however, that this decree was not used against thousands of Catholic members or sympathizers of Communist parties worldwide, but almost exclusively against priests who collaborated with the Stalinist regimes. The few examples include the leaders of the so-called "priests of peace" movement (which was controlled by the Hungarian secret police), who were excommunicated in 1950 and 1958 (Bottoni, 2008, 151, 163).

The Pope was aware not only of the possibilities offered by film and radio for mass communication, but also of the power of the images of mass gatherings (Valli, 1999). The new image of the Catholic layman was that of a loyal and disciplined soldier who would unite with other Catholics on the street to fight against the red threat. Pius XII and other Church leaders, like Cardinal Mindszenty, successfully mobilized Catholic Action and hundreds of thousands of believers. St. Peters square in Rome became a sea of green berets, the caps of Catholic Action, when hundreds of thousands of members celebrated the historic victory of the Democrazia Cristiana in April 1948 against the parties of the left (Piva, 2003). The mass gatherings had a strong emotional impact on some Catholic activists. As one of them later recalled, "I don't remember what Pius XII was talking about, but I remember well the enthusiasm with which we listened to his speech" (Piva, 2003, 29).

The image of a disciplined unified front of Catholic lay organizations under the balcony of Pius XII was appealing to Catholics all over the world. Cardinal Mindszenty followed this example. In 1947 he declared a year of celebrations dedicated to the Virgin Mary as Patroness of the Hungarian nation. The Cardinal referred to the great success of mobilization during the Eucharistic World Congress of 1938 in Budapest, when Eugenio Pacelli, the Vatican legate who became Pope Pius XII one year later, was celebrated by hundreds of thousands of Catholics from all over Europe (Gergely, 1988). On August 20th, 1947, in a speech addressed to the some 500,000 people who had followed the procession of the Holy Right (Hand relic) of King Saint Stephen, Cardinal Mindszenty declared:

> Saint Stephen is the best symbol of our one thousand year old past. From him our nation received the greatest and eternal values: the holy mother church, the veneration for St. Mary and a Christian education. Let us proudly protect the tradition of Saint Stephen in the family and in society, so that it will help us to resurrect the dying Hungary (EPL).

Another important aspect of the re-invention of Catholic identity in the Cold War campaign was the characterization of the Church as a bulwark of traditional

family values and certain gender roles in a "battle for purity" (Tonnelli, 2003). In short, Catholic identity, as constructed by Church leaders immediately after 1945, focused on unity, discipline, authority, and tradition.

As the head of the Catholic Church in Hungary, Mindszenty was a prominent figure of international media. Media attention concerning the Cardinal reached its peak in 1949 during the show trial. TIME Magazine dedicated a cover to him in the February 14th issue of that year (see below). In 1956 and 1974 he was again in the spotlight for a short time. He himself was aware of the fact that he had become a media personality. The Preface to his Memoirs (1974) begins with a short description of the British movie, "The Prisoner" (1955). In this film, Alec Guinness, who after the film converted to Catholicism, played a Cardinal who had been imprisoned and tortured, a figure modeled on Mindszenty. József Mindszenty commented,

> This film was given a friendly reception by the critics and the public and was shown throughout the world. But I am sorry to say that the well-meaning script writer did not know Hungary's communist prisons, and so the movie failed to give any picture of reality. […] In retrospect events often tend to be given quite a fantastic cast in yellow, white, and black books, or in films. […] In my memoirs I want to show the reality as it was (Mindszenty, 1974, xxvii–xxviii).
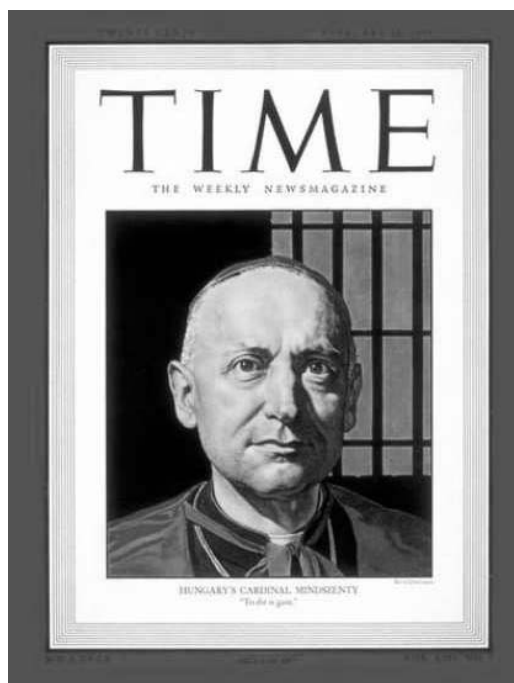
The Cardinal made no mention of "Guilty of Treason" (USA, Felix E. Feist, 1950), the first motion picture, a kind of Cold War B-movie, to borrow its plot from the story of his trials. In this first Mindszenty-movie a Soviet advisor convinces the Hungarian communists that they should allege that the straightforward bishop, who had been active in the resistance against the Nazis, was in reality an antisemite. This referred to the propaganda campaign launched by the Communists in an attempt to blame Mindszenty not only for planning a coup against the Hungarian republic with the aim of restoring Habsburg rule, but also of being antisemitic, trying to relate him closely to the Horthy regime and its Christian national ideas.
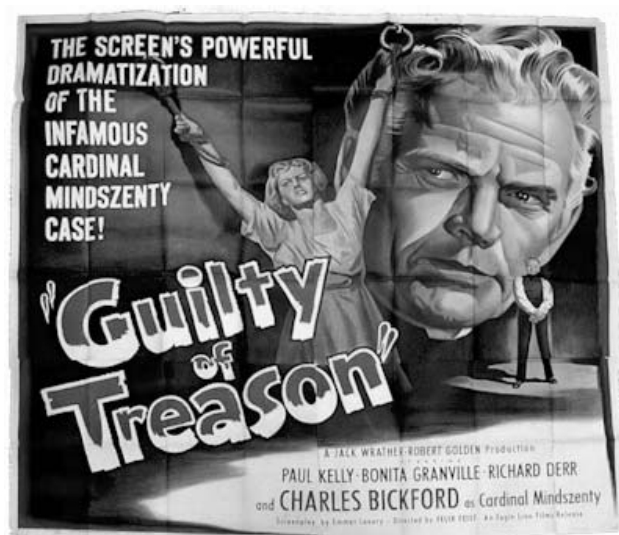
What impact did persecution and later the State control over the church have on Catholic identities in Hungary? After the imprisonment of Cardinal Mindszenty and of other high ranking clergy in the early 1950s, the Catholic Church hierarchy in Hungary was forced to sign an "agreement." In this the Church leaders had to declare publicly their political loyalty to the Communist State and renounce the continuation of youth education outside the very restricted limits defined by the law. All this aimed at the removal and marginalization of religious life from the public sphere. Pius XII was outraged, because he considered the signing of the "agreement" a violation of Canon law, damaging the unanimity of the Catholic Church (Riccardi, 1992, 149). In fact, the communists put Mindszenty on trial specifically as an attempt to remove a stubborn and intransigent follower of the Vatican who had not proven at all willing to negotiate with the Communists. Before Stalin's death in 1953 repression in Hungary reached a peak. Most of the

male and female orders were dissolved in 1951. Hundreds, if not thousands of priests, nuns and monks were arrested, imprisoned, or sent to labor camps. Catholic discourse lost a great deal of its institutional space. The only Catholic newspaper left, *Új Ember* (New Man), was reduced from a daily to a weekly paper and was controlled, censored and marginalized. The State security tried to build up the afore-mentioned "peace movement" of priests (Orbán, 1996). In the turbulent weeks of late October and early November 1956, most of the "peace priests" were chased away by their communities. Even if it could not be discussed in public, polarization between the Catholic clergy who remained loyal to Rome and the (few) priests who were compromised by their cooperation with the Communists was visible. The framework in which Catholic identities were developing during the 19th and 20th centuries had changed dramatically during the first decade after the end of World War II.

A New Catholicism in Hungary? The Case of Regnum Marianum during the 1960s

The dissolution of monasteries and other Catholic institutions, as well as the "production" of martyrs by the repressive State, seems to have strengthened religious identities and devotion to the intransigent, ultramontane orientation in Communist Hungary of a minority of believers. People became more devout than they had been before, particularly children from déclassé families (former elite and middle class background). When reading the impressive book by writer Péter Esterházy on his father, who worked as a secret informer for the state security forces, the important role of Catholic belief and practice in this aristocratic family, with its almost mythical history, becomes vivid (Esterházy, 2002). An excellent oral history study on Catholic believers was recently published by sociologist Zsuzsanna Bögre (Bögre, 2004). Bögre found out that not only former elite or former clergy, but also members of the marginalized low social strata, such as agrarian workers, tended to stick to their Catholic identity much more often than those who experienced the radical social changes of the 1950s as a social advancement. Those who profited from the new socialist order were more willing to adapt to the new values and ideals propagated by the State. Bögre also distinguishes between different generations.

More specific and less generalizable is the case of Regnum Marianum, a small group of priests belonging to a community, an oratory, founded around 1896 to live according to the social reform ideas of bishop Ottokár Prohászka (Dobszay, 1991). In the fall of 1951 the movement was suppressed and its college in Budapest dissolved. Despite persecution by the police and state security forces, work in the field of Catholic education of young people, mostly from middle or working

class background, continued. Regnum Marianum was a result of Catholic intellectual renewal and a reaction to 19th century anti-Catholic liberalism. Its activities focused mostly on the higher education of talented boys from poorer families. According to the chronicler of the movement, János Dobszay, Regnum priests, while they also liked excursions and hiking in the woods and hills around Budapest, distanced themselves from the "militarist" spirit that had dominated the Catholic Scout movement in the first half of the 20th century. In the 1930s they dissolved their youth groups because they did not want them to be united with the semi-fascist "Levente" (ABTL, Regnum 91). After the dissolution of the movement in 1951, Regnum priests continued with excursions. These activities turned out to be a very successful way of maintaining and even expanding a network of small Catholic youth groups. Although the secret police observed their activities and arrested some of the priests in 1960, 1963–64 and 1970, this work was continued until 1989. Hungarian secret police could never trace all of these hundreds of illegal youth groups, as later turned out. The priests of Regnum Marianum also tried to modernize their work permanently. Their communities consisted of non-hierarchical small units which acted with the silent approval of the church. Bishop Endrey, president of the small remaining Catholic Action, supported a range of different youth group networks without calling the attention of the regime to his endeavors (ABTL, Endrey, 23f.). Within these groups, a renewal of Hungarian Catholicism was vividly discussed. In February 1960, a group of "Regnumists" met to discuss the current situation of the church and possible alternatives (ABTL Regnum, 100–1). They heavily critized Church discipline, it having "always [been] an illusion" (ibid. 101). The paper proposed a renovation, a looking forward to the future: "We should not fall behind the intellectual development of our time" (ibid.) Priests should know much more about contemporary science, art, literature. We know from the reports of the secret police that the Regnum priests went to considerable effort to realize these goals. They read and exchanged all kinds of books and articles on Catholic reform, such as the books by Jacques Maritain, the influential *La France, pays de mission,* and books on intellectual trends in general, including translated and copied texts which seemed important to them. They also organized talks and little seminars on an array of subjects.

Can this self-critical mood among a tiny minority of young and active priests be understood as a reaction to the state controlled media and public sphere in communist Hungary? They may have had an influence, but one finds similar changes in the attitudes of many priests and Catholic activists as well, in many other countries in Europe and Latin America since the 1950s (Linden, 2009). Until 1956, Pius XII stressed the importance of the firmness of the anticommunist block as a second „antemurale christianorum" against the Soviet danger, celebrating masses for the martyrs of Poland and Hungary. When the Hungarian uprising, praised by the Pope, was crushed by Soviet troops, Pius seemed to become disillusioned with

the Western world, which failed to intervene. After his death, many Catholics were tired of the permanent political mobilization. The concept of triumphalism seemed to have lost its strength. Pius XII himself warned in 1953 that Catholic education had to be more profound and be based on a deeper and voluntarily acquired knowledge (Piva, 2003, 142).

The example of Regnum Marianum and the changing historical background of the 1950s and 1960s indicate that the renewal of Catholicism and Catholic identities was not restricted to Western countries alone, although the situation of Catholics and Christians in Eastern Europe remained different.

Vatican Ostpolitik, Vatican II, and Catholic Beat Masses: Mindszenty Surpassed by History? (1964–75)

In 1971, the Vatican, the Hungarian and the U. S. governments agreed on a way to make possible the Cardinal's exile to the West. It was a humiliating process, because Casaroli, the Vatican emissary, made promises to Mindszenty he was unable to keep, and the Cardinal found himself helpless regarding the pressure from the Vatican, the Hungarian government, and the State Department. He spent the last years of his life in Austria, after having traveled extensively to the U. S., Latin America and Western Europe. Mindszenty and his very conservative and anti-liberal ideas and loyalty to the Habsburgs did not seem to fit into the radically changing world of the 1960s and 1970s. Industrialization, migration, urbanization, and the dissolution of agrarian structures and ways of life which had helped to conserve a certain traditional Catholicism accelerated over the course of these decades, both in Hungary and beyond its borders. But interpreted as an opening up of the church to modern life, Catholic doctrine and practice, as decided by the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), further contributed to the dissolution of the old Catholic self-understanding as a bulwark against modernity. Under John XXIII and Paul VI Vatican policy towards communism also changed, especially with regard to "Pacem in Terris" and the first agreement of the Vatican with a communist state, which was Hungary, in 1964. The agreement came at a very high price, excommunicated priests, who collaborated with the Communist dictatorship, were elevated to bishops and the Hungarian bishops' conference was more and more taken over by agents of the Hungarian state security, as were Catholic seminaries, the Catholic press, etc.

Cardinal Mindszenty aged over the course of his fifteen year exile inside the Budapest Embassy of the U. S. He did not participate in the radical changes of Catholicism, but focused more and more on his own personal fate. Changes in Vatican strategy towards communism added to the isolation of the Hungarian Primate.

According to Stefano Bottoni, Paul VI focused more on Poland, which made sense, because the Polish Catholic Church was much stronger than the Hungarian.

But it was not so much Catholic diplomacy or Communist control of the church that contributed to the changes in Catholic identities and the isolation of Cardinal Mindszenty, but rather the radical cultural and social changes which took place in society. One sign of these changes was the introduction of pop music into the Catholic mass, which occurred in the late 1960s.

On 28 April 1966, hundreds of people, mostly youths, gathered in the Sala Borromini in the Oratorio S. Filippo Neri in Rome to attend a concert which very soon became a sensational news story in other countries: the "Missa Iuventutis," for vocals, electric guitar, bass, piano and drums, arranged by film music composer Marcello Giombini and the beat band "The Barritas" (Matteucci, 1966). Two weeks later, the Hungarian illustrated weekly *Tükör* (Mirror) informed its readers in detail about this "Jé-jé mass" in Rome, adopting the term Walter Ulbricht had used with regard to beat music in the German Democratic Republic (Rauhhut, 1993). The article tried to depict the event as scandalous. Some teenagers had started to dance the "shake" and applaud "in an American way" by clapping their hands and whistling shrilly. "Youngsters rampaged and yelled as if at a boxing fight. [...] A window was broken" (*Új Ember* June 5th, 1966, 3). Beat masses in Catholic churches soon became hip. Beat, "teenage", or youth masses were celebrated in many parishes in Italy, Germany, the United States, and other countries. The first Hungarian beat mass was composed by 16-year old Imre Szilas and performed for the first time in the small town of Abony at Easter 1967. In May 1968 his beat version of Latin liturgical texts was even broadcast by Hungarian and Austrian state television (Kenyeres, 2002, *Népszabadság,* May 28th, 1968).

The history of beat masses of the 1960s and 1970s still remains to be written. It was a very popular movement in West and East Germany, Poland, Italy, France, The Netherlands, and probably other parts of Europe as well. Particularly fascinating is the extreme change in the image of the Catholic Church represented by this movement. Even if many Catholic conservatives protested and some bishops found ways to prevent similar performances of "night club music" in "the sacred house of God," the very fact that electric guitars were being played by long haired "hippies" inside church buildings signified a new spirit and attitude of many (not always younger) priests and communities all over the Catholic world, which only a few years earlier would have appeared absolutely impossible, especially if one keeps in mind that Cardinal Mindszenty himself regarded young people dancing as an invitation to sin. There was a huge gap between the representations of the body in the 1940s, Catholic scouts with their "militarist" discipline, and the body of the individualist, hedonistic physicality of the teenager in the 1960s (Rónay, 2). The vicar of Rome was also infuriated about the "orgiastic shouting" which was

heard during the performance in the Oratory of S. Filippo Neri in April 1966 (Sansoni, 2002, 225–6).

A second aspect worth mentioning regarding beat masses is that of all the Catholic churches in the world, the conservative Hungarian church seemed to have promoted beat masses with some enthusiasm. This may well be because some police and communist party officials had been shocked by the images of hundreds, if not thousands, of young people flocking into churches on Sunday. They arranged big beat concerts at the same time when beat masses had been planned, and they started a major propaganda campaign in the official media. Even Péter Nádas, one of Hungary's greatest contemporary writers, participated in this campaign, writing articles about beat masses in which he wanted to show that the teenagers were not really interested in the Catholic faith, but rather in the music. He also sought to demonstrate that the staging of big concerts such as the one held in May 1968 in the Mátyás-Church in Budapest was "dangerous and irresponsible" on the part of the organizers (Nádas, 1968a; Nádas 1968b).

Új Ember, the Catholic weekly, reported and commented on beat masses in a much more positive way. On June 5th, 1966 a commentator, writing about the first beat mass in Rome, contended that "this performance, which almost degenerated into a scandal, should, however, be seen from the perspective that the interpreters and the fans of modern music – also in the field of entertaining music – are looking for a meeting with faith and the church" (*Új Ember,* June 5th, 1966, 3). At the same time the possibilities offered by the church were very attractive to young beat fans in Hungary because they knew that "the state surely didn't appreciate it" (Szigeti interview). In Hungary, the beat movement had far more support from middle-class youth than it did in Western Europe. These youths were mostly students in grammar schools, especially in the few Catholic schools still allowed by the communist state to function. In these middle-class circles, Western influences and fashions enjoyed a much higher value than they did in the West itself, because they were also, along with religion, regarded as something the communists did not like. In May 1968, in an interview with *Új Ember,* Imre Szilas, the composer of the first Hungarian beat mass, a man who later escaped to the West and settled in California, where he continued his studies in music and also became an active member of a Catholic church community, explained his motivations:

> The goal of my mass was to translate the message into the language of beat music speaking to the beat fans. I showed the joy of faith God's mercy signifies for me. This is also devotional music, but of course a totally different devotional music than what my parents listen to. (*Új Ember,* May 12th, 1968, 3.)

This was the voice of a new generation of individualistic, self-confident, and modern young Hungarian Catholics. Some of them found their way to the youth

groups organized by the Regnumist fathers (ABTL, Hagemann file). The World of Catholicism and world Catholicism seemed to explode in thousands of different directions.

Epilogue: József Cardinal Mindszenty as Lieu de Mémoire after 1989

Cardinal József Mindszenty was forced to resign officially on December 18th, 1973. He died less than two years later in Vienna, on May 6th, 1975. Mindszenty was buried in Mariazell, an old pilgrimage site, supported and frequented by the Habsburg family, about one hour's train ride west of Vienna. His wish to be buried there confirmed his enduring loyalty to the house of Habsburg. On the other hand, Mariazell was also considered a holy site of the Catholic branch of the Hungarian national movement (as well as of other national movements) in the 19th century. In 1856, while the 700th anniversary of the pilgrimage site of Mariazell was being celebrated, one of Mindszenty's predecessors welcomed 30,000 Hungarian pilgrims, all dressed in red, white, and green (Frank, 2009). It was a place that represented not only the traditions of the Habsburgs, but also the traditions of the Hungarian movement for national independence. Ten years after Mindszenty's death, U. S. President Ronald Reagan, who was born to a Catholic family but baptized a Disciple of Christ in 1922, referred to Mindszenty as "a symbol of courage and faith" (OSA). The Cardinal had already become an icon when the wall came down. After 1978, Pope Paul VI and the people who had complained about the stubbornness and unwillingness of the Cardinal to adapt to the changes of the times were now themselves regarded as relics of times past. During the Second Cold War, which started with the election of a Polish Pope and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, anti-Communist heroes like Mindszenty were re-evaluated. In Hungary, Catholicism, like nationalism, underwent another transformation and became attractive for many social groups and people who wanted to express their distance from the declining Communist regime and everything related to it.

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A COFFEEHOUSE ON THE LINGUISTIC FRONTIER

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A century ago, Bihar/Bihor County was a rather unremarkable corner of the Hungarian Kingdom, one situated far from international boundaries. The population of Bihar/Bihor was almost equally split between ethnic Hungarians and ethnic Romanians, a fact of little consequence until the last decades of the nineteenth century, when a number of middle-class national activists began to emphasize the region's status as a national borderland and worked to define and defend the Hungarian–Romanian border they saw running through it. This essay explores the nationalists' efforts through a local cultural association, *A Biharvármegyei Népnevelési Egyesület* (Bihar County Society for Popular Education). Its aim is to show that the sharp lines that appeared on maps of "the nationalities of Austria-Hungary" emerged in a particular historical context, and also that these lines were much more blurry than many mapmakers and historians would have us believe.

Keywords: associations, nationalism, linguistic frontiers, borderlands, Bihar county, Transylvania, Partium

This project started with a coffeehouse. The EMKE coffeehouse opened in 1902 in Nagyvárad/Oradea, a provincial town in what was then Austria-Hungary, but is today Romania. From the start, the EMKE coffeehouse was celebrated for its luxurious Secessionist interior, excellent wait staff, four large billiard tables, and wide selection of foreign and domestic newspapers (Péter, 2002, 94). Most scholars today know the EMKE for its connection with Endre Ady, then working as a journalist in Nagyvárad/Oradea and soon to become Hungary's foremost modernist poet. Sitting on the EMKE's terrace, Ady wrote some of his earliest poems, as well as theater reviews, sharp-tongued editorials, and postcards to a married woman with whom he had fallen desperately in love. Ady was not alone at EMKE: the mayor and other notables gathered there in the afternoon to smoke pipes, drink coffee, and decide town affairs; the local literati also had their own table, where they were joined by doctors, lawyers, and teachers. The EMKE coffeehouse, in short, fulfilled all the functions of a classic coffeehouse: it offered strong coffee, well-lit tables, and assorted newspapers to a diverse public, and in

the process, it created a space for the exchange of ideas, the integration of different social groups, and the ferment of literary activity.

What originally drew me to this coffeehouse, however, was its name. "EMKE" is an acronym for *Erdélyrészi Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület* (Hungarian Cultural Association of Transylvania), which we would call a nationalist pressure group, the Hungarian equivalent of the Austrian *Deutsche Schulverein* or the German *Alldeutscher Verband*. Ostensibly dedicated to the cultural and economic development of the countryside, in reality the association was preoccupied with national self-defense and committed to the propagation of the Hungarian language among the polyglot population of the Kingdom of Hungary (the first language of roughly half of the total population was something other than Hungarian). To publicize its cause and fund its efforts, EMKE licensed its name to a handful of coffeehouses across Hungary, including the one in Nagyvárad/Oradea (Figure 1). In return for use of the name, coffeehouse owners made an annual donation to the society. Every cup of coffee drunk in an EMKE coffeehouse, it was said, meant a few pennies more for the Hungarian national cause. For real enthusiasts, there was also EMKE writing paper, EMKE soap, EMKE calendars, and of course, EMKE paprika (Sándor, 1910, 368–70). Our classic coffee house, then, turns out to have a very direct link to an intolerant form of nationalism rooted in everyday practices.

Figure 1. On the right, the EMKE coffeehouse in Nagyvárad/Oradea. c. 1910. Undated postcard

What are we to make of this curious coffeehouse, at once liberal and illiberal, inclusive and exclusive? It is important to recall that the EMKE was only one of nearly two dozen "cultural associations" that operated in Hungary in the decades around 1900. Their names present a welter of forgotten acronyms – AMKE, DKE, DMKE, FMKE, VMKE – whose shared letters signaled the associations' common educational goals, middle-class memberships, and close relations with the Hungarian state. Both contemporaries and historians have sharply criticized these organizations. Writing in 1886, the politician Lajos Mocsáry decried their dishonest language and bullying tactics (Mocsáry, 1886). Nearly three decades later the sociologist Viktor Aradi asserted that their goals were "antediluvian and wrapped in empty slogans," and that their activities amounted to little more than empty posturing before "chauvinist elements of the public" (Aradi, 1914, 24). Historians have been equally dismissive, long describing the cultural associations as agents of the Hungarian state's campaign of Magyarization – that is, its attempts to expand the use of the Hungarian language in schools, courts, local administration, and everyday life. In recent decades, scholars have begun to look at the process of nationalization in new ways, emphasizing the importance of sociological factors such as urbanization and social mobility. They have also situated the Hungarian case alongside similar nation-building projects in Imperial Germany, Tsarist Russia, and France under the Third Republic. Even with these promising developments, however, we still know comparatively little about how nationalist politics played out at the local level.

This article looks closely at one Hungarian cultural association: *A Biharvármegyei Népnevelési Egyesület* (Bihar County Society for Popular Education), or BNE for short. The BNE was founded in Nagyvárad/Oradea in 1884, operated in the surrounding Bihar/Bihor County for the next two decades, and acted as a sister organization to the larger EMKE. In examining the BNE, I am less interested in exploring its connections to other cultural associations or to the Hungarian state than in situating it in its local context. In particular, I seek to illuminate the BNE's highly symbolic understanding of local geography and its assertion that a contested "national borderland" ran through Bihar/Bihor County. In this I draw upon scholarly literature that has emphasized the "social construction of boundaries," with its focus on imagined geographies and collective identities. When viewed from this perspective, cultural associations such as the BNE appear much more interesting – and less effective – than is often recognized in the existing scholarship. Their importance, I argue, lies less in their limited influence on the linguistic practices of the wider population than in what they reveal to us about the "mental maps" of national-minded elites. To develop this argument more fully, the following sections outline the many obstacles that nationalists faced on the ground, their inventiveness and tireless agitation, and the indifference and opposition they frequently encountered.

To understand the origins and activities of nationalist organizations such as the BNE, one must understand the mindset of its most active members. The BNE's moving force and long-time secretary was an official named Orbán Sipos, who had earlier worked as a teacher, lawyer, and MP, and from 1879 onward served as a royal school inspector in Bihar/Bihor County. Like much of the Hungarian elite, Sipos was a committed political liberal and staunch Hungarian nationalist, and he saw no contradictions between these two ideologies. Thus Sipos wrote despairingly about the poverty and illiteracy he encountered the countryside and hoped that the BNE could bring progress and civilization to the region's many poor villages. But Sipos's hopes were tinged with fear, and in Bihar/Bihor County, Sipos saw a ceaseless struggle between ethnic Hungarians and ethnic Romanians, both of whom comprised roughly half the population. Sipos sometime described this contest in elemental terms, describing the encroaching "flood" of Romanians and the stranded "islands" of Hungarians in need of rescue. More commonly, however, Sipos used the language of cartography: the mission of the BNE, he wrote, was to strengthen ethnic Hungarians living on the "contiguous borders" with Romanians (Sipos, 1909, 4).

Sipos's fears of Romanians were not directed at an abstract "other." Rather, they reflected a very specific understanding of local conditions. The contours of Sipos's map of Bihar/Bihor County can be seen in the following passage:

> What beauty, rarities, and treasures lie hidden in Bihar County's plains, vast lowlands, and golden fields; how valuable for the homeland is the spiritual and moral worth of the vigorous people of the plains. But dear to us also is the place, where unexplored and unexploited mountains, wilderness, and forests cast their shadows, and where the population, spiritually and materially neglected, wallows in misery before the eyes of civilization. This population does not understand or feel their higher human and purely patriotic destiny (Sipos, 1889, 3).

The key to unlocking this passage lies in the unspoken equation of the plains with Hungarians and the highlands with Romanians. In demographic terms, this equation had some merit, and one could in fact trace a broad linguistic frontier separating Hungarian-speakers and Romanian-speakers and meandering north-south through Bihar/Bihor County. What stands out in Sipos's account is the way it superimposes nationality, civilization, and morality onto the linguistic frontier. In this symbolic geography, the imprecise linguistic frontier becomes a clearly demarcated national borderland.

Sipos and the leaders of the BNE were not the first to discover this borderland. For decades, cartographers had produced maps of Austria-Hungary's different peoples, who were usually defined as nationalities or races, as in William

Shepherd's influential 1911 *Historical Atlas* (Figure 2). Mapmakers drew upon the results of the decennial censuses conducted in both Austria and Hungary. These censuses included questions about language use and religious affiliation, which were widely understood to be key markers of national belonging. Where Sipos broke new ground was not in mapping and counting the different ethnic groups in Bihar/Bihor County, but in seeing the lines on the map as a source of national anxiety and using them as a spur to political mobilization.

Figure 2. "Distribution of Races in Austria-Hungary." Nagyvárad/Oradea is shown here with its German name (Grosswardein) and appears just below the "A" in Hungary.
Reprinted from William R. Shepherd, *Historical Atlas* (New York: H. Holt, 1911), 168.

It is important to recall, however, the many obstacles that Sipos and the BNE faced in convincing their neighbors that Bihar/Bihor County contained a threatened borderland. Nationalist ideology, with its clear separation of "us" and "them," sat uneasily with the messy facts on the ground in Bihar/Bihor County. Centuries of immigration, conversions, and mixed marriages had created a state of permanent flux, especially in the towns and villages to the east of Nagyvárad/Oradea. There were, moreover, many locals who did not fit easily into a single national category, including the villagers and townsmen who spoke two languages or those who belonged to a "Romanian" religion (Greek Catholicism and

Eastern Orthodoxy) but spoke Hungarian. The populist writer Pál Szabó has elo-
quently described his wife's family, which used two languages (Hungarian and
Romanian) and celebrated two Christmases – the Calvinist on December 25 and
the Eastern Orthodox on January 7. According to Szabó, official religions "did not
live the in hearts" of the peasants of Bihar/Bihor, but "only in the state registers
and in the village parsonages" (Szabó, 1973, 7). The same might be said of na-
tional categories. Sipos's national borderland, moreover, did not traverse the
heavily populated plains but instead ran through thinly populated, highland re-
gions. Writing about these remote areas, the local geographer and folklorist
Sándor K. Nagy despaired that "travelers and intellectuals know less about them
than they do about foreign lands" (Nagy, 1884, 3).

Even the Hungarian state proved to be a fitful ally to the BNE. Although state
officials were broadly committed both to economic modernization and to linguis-
tic Magyarization, in practice they had little interest in disturbing the status quo.
This caution extended to Hungary's internal borders. A large number of internal
administrative boundaries crisscrossed Hungary, dividing it into, among other
things, separate confessional, electoral, military, customs, and forestry districts.
The building block of these regions was the Hungarian county *(vármegye)*. Bal-
ancing the needs of rationalization with the claims of Hungarian nationalism, the
government had redrawn a number of county lines in 1876, leaving Hungary with
71 counties (including Croatia-Slavonia, 63 without it). But the state would not go
further, and it had little incentive to lend legitimacy to Sipos's national border-
land. And even if it had, the state could devote only limited resources to the re-
mote regions that so worried Sipos.

These obstacles help explain the founding of cultural associations like the
BNE. In the absence of decisive state action, local activists turned toward the in-
stitutions of civil society. Nineteenth-century liberals were used to working
through voluntary associations and newspapers; only the BNE's goals set it apart
from dozens of other associations in Bihar/Bihor County (the one it most closely
resembled was ASTRA, the leading Romanian cultural association in prewar
Transylvania, which had four branches in Bihar/Bihor County). The BNE's stated
mission, to offer financial and pedagogical support to kindergartens, poor stu-
dents, and underpaid teachers across the county, was largely a smokescreen. Its
main goal was to promote the use of the Hungarian language among Romanian
villagers and to rescue "de-nationalized" Hungarians. To this end, the BNE agi-
tated for Hungarian-language kindergartens in Romanian villages and rewarded
village teachers whose instruction spread "the spirit of Hungarian patriotism."
The BNE also published a weekly newspaper, which bore the title *Népnevelési
Közlöny* (The Popular Education Gazette) and was aimed not at the lower classes
(the targets of the BNE's educational initiatives) but at the higher social classes

that comprised the membership of the BNE: urban professionals, gentry landowners, and a large number of village schoolteachers and clergymen.

The BNE proved to be both inventive and resourceful in taking its campaign into the villages of Bihar/Bihor County. In addition to the educational initiatives already mentioned (kindergartens, prizes, and stipends for teachers), the BNE sponsored essay contests, held fund-raising balls, and encouraged the observance of important national holidays (with March 15 first among them). To instruct locals about their immediate surrounding, the BNE also helped Sándor K. Nagy publish his three-volume travel guide to Bihar/Bihor County and distributed a large wall map of the county to local schools. Crucially, the map used only Hungarian names (and not Romanian or German ones) for settlements and topographical features. Sipos attached great importance to names, which he saw as an outward indication of national belonging. Sipos thus declared in the BNE's newspaper that "the Magyarization of family names is unimpeachable evidence that one will venture to shoulder openly and determinedly the requirements of belonging to the Hungarian state" (*Népnevelési Közlöny,* June 1897, 69). By this logic, people and communities with non-Hungarian-sounding names were either ignorant of the duties of citizenship or potentially disloyal.

Two patterns stand out in this whirlwind of activity. First, in taking its campaign into the villages, the BNE attempted to attach political meanings to features of everyday life (places names, kindergartens, and travel) that many locals had not previously defined in political terms. In prewar Hungary, the strict limits on formal political life (around six per cent of the population had the vote) often had the curious effect of allowing "politics" to shape a wide range of institutions, spaces, and behaviors (Nemes, 2005, 186). This is related to the second point, the highly symbolic and highly performative nature of the BNE's activities. This point was not lost on the BNE's opponents. In denouncing local Romanians in Bihar/Bihor County who supported the BNE, a Romanian-language newspaper singled out those teachers whose Romanian students greeted one another in Hungarian in the street (*Tribuna,* April 1/13, 1887, 1). Nationalists on both sides took seriously the premise of the EMKE coffeehouse: namely, that one could demonstrate one's national belonging not just in grand gestures (for example, by changing one's name), but in smaller, more prosaic acts (by drinking a cup of coffee, greeting someone in the street).

But how much success did the BNE really have? There are many indications that the BNE failed to mobilize the population of Bihar/Bihor County. Its membership, which surpassed 1,750 within a year of its founding, fell by nearly 50 per cent in the following decade. Because many remaining members neglected to pay their dues, the BNE had to cut back on its activities even further. By the late 1890s, the BNE had lost momentum, leading one of its members to write bitterly

that the BNE "had always scraped along under unfavorable circumstances, obtaining only negligible support from the wider public and barely counting enough members to secure its existence" (*Népnevelési Közlöny,* May 15, 1898, 9–11). The BNE survived into the twentieth century, but in a different form: the bulk of its membership (and teachers in particular) wanted to focus more on pedagogical and professional issues than on the loud but often ineffective national agitation of its early years.

Why did things not go as planned for the BNE? Sipos laid much of the blame at the feet of the Romanian nationalist press, which, he claimed, had relentlessly attacked the BNE and poisoned relations between Hungarians and Romanians in Bihar/Bihor. But Sipos also acknowledged that the indifference of many Hungarians had also undermined the BNE. This indifference encompassed both urban dwellers as well as the residents of the highlands. An anecdote reported by Sipos sheds light on the latter's behavior, and it is worth quoting in full:

> We were waiting for a long time for horses in the mayor's office of a mixed-language village in the Tenke district. The Hungarians here are still a majority. As we waited, an impressive looking man entered, greeted in Romanian the Hungarian-born mayor, who returned the greeting and began their discussion – in the Romanian language. Presently understanding that the man there on business was also a Hungarian, we interrupted the conversation with a gentle reproach, to which the man replied, "Why shouldn't I speak Romanian, when I know it just as well as Hungarian?" The mayor in turn offered as an excuse that he had orders that are different from our principles. This justification certainly did not correspond with the truth, but the mayor still lives and serves today, and if he deems to read these lines, he will recognize himself (Sipos, 1903, 79).

Most obviously, Sipos's account shows the refusal of locals to attach wider meanings to everyday language use. It also shows Sipos as a man of national principles, willing to intervene in other people's affairs and to shame them when necessary. At the same time, the episode reveals strategies employed by local elites in the face of Sipos' nationalism: the first man's pragmatic defense of bilingualism, and the mayor's more shrewd reference to unspecified "orders" that seemingly forced him to speak Romanian. In this small drama we can see what the anthropologist James Scott has called the "arts of resistance," in which ordinary people use ignorance, disguise, and other strategies to subvert the arguments of outside authorities (Scott, 1990).

Let me conclude with two points about the wider meanings of the BNE's attempt to create "national borderlands." First, it mattered. Writing about similar events in the Austrian half of the Monarchy, Pieter Judson concluded that "nationalists succeeded brilliantly in nationalizing perceptions of the rural language fron-

tier by 1914," even as they "largely failed to nationalize its populations" (Judson, 2006, 5). Over the long term, nationalists popularized a set of images in which the Hungarian–Romanian linguistic frontier appeared as a site of anxiety, conflict, uncertainty, and loss. Such images would prove enduring, and they took on new meanings when a state border was drawn through Bihar/Bihor County in 1919. In the space of just a few decades, nationalists in Bihar/Bihor, as well as in other regions of the Hungarian Kingdom, succeeded in superimposing national borderlands onto the historic borders of Hungary. Many locals may not have taken notice, but officials, scholars, and mapmakers did.

But the local indifference described here also mattered. To be sure, the townsmen who ignored the BNE and the villagers who used customary names and a mix of languages did not openly challenge the dominant political and socioeconomic structures of prewar Hungary. Yet their everyday practices held the potential to redefine what it meant to call Bihar/Bihor a borderland, in which the region is defined not by conflict and tension, but by cultural contact and mutual recognition. In this telling, Bihar/Bihor is a bridge, not a battle zone. Some residents of Bihar/Bihor County embraced this alternate meaning of the borderland at key moments during the twentieth century, and the bridge metaphor has gained new currency again today with the establishment of several Euroregions across Bihar/Bihor. Although regional cooperation has a poor track record in Eastern Europe, the larger point here is the continued existence of multiple, competing symbolic geographies, even in unexceptional places like Bihar/Bihor.

This brings us back to the EMKE coffeehouse. The peace treaties following World War I gave Nagyvárad/Oradea to Romania. Although the Romanian rulers were eager to demonstrate the Romanian national character of their new city, they also wanted to demonstrate their connections to the wider world. It was in this spirit, perhaps, that the name of the EMKE coffeehouse was eventually changed to the Hotel Astoria. Some hard-core Romanian nationalists may have heard echoes of "ASTRA" in the new name, but more worldly visitors would have known that "Astoria" had been borrowed from the famous hotel of the same name in New York City. Once again, nationalism did not tell the entire story.

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ALEAS OF HISTORY AND FRONTIERS OF MODERNITY

LÁSZLÓ RAVASZ (1882–1975) AND THE INTERWAR CATHOLIC–PROTESTANT RAPPROCHEMENT IN HUNGARY

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Liberal academics and enthusiastic lay audiences hailed the public debuts of the Calvinist theologian and acclaimed orator László Ravasz as the leading representative of a new generation of modernist clergymen in the early 1910s. Much to the regret of his liberal critics, in the wake of the collapse of historic Hungary following World War I his message stemmed from a modern cult and culture of defeat and was in no way a continuation of the old school liberals of the *belle époque* of the Dual Monarchy. In his memoires, which were written during the 1960s, Ravasz described his erstwhile political views as "fetishes," but defended his theological motives. This raises questions concerning a central problem of modern religious experience: how can one map the constantly evolving frontiers between rampant secularization and the no less permanent and certainly insatiable nostalgia for the sacred order of things in modern societies? By redefining what is religious, the currents of Protestant and Catholic thought in interwar Hungary presented in the following article established intellectual contexts on both sides that make not only the historical description of Christian identity but also the very notion of modernity a function of multi-layered readings. At the same time, the Catholic and Protestant rapprochement may be interpreted as a symptom of the decline of religious explanations of the world and history, because they testify to the fact that the dialectics of historical interpretation are no longer defined by the particular approaches of Catholic or Protestant theology or the differences between the two, but rather by the state of competition between universalist utopias and religious world explanations forced into the conservative camp, which necessarily bleaches the emphatic elements of Christian teachings as well.

Keywords: László Ravasz, Ottokár Prohászka, Béla Bangha, religion, history, theology, Catholic–Protestant rapprochement, Hungary, modernity

Ever since anticipation of the last days predicted by Christianity ceased to determine European history and political action, religious indifference has been the unifying force on which the integration of the political community has been built. Nonetheless, as the development of modern historiography clearly demonstrates,

the separation of religion and politics is a much more complex issue than one might customarily assume it to be. As Arnaldo Momigliano once said,

> Paradoxically, Christian ideas penetrated into modern historical books only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when faith in Christianity was at its lowest. […] When that happened, modern historical methods had already been shaped upon their ancient models. Modern philosophy of history – on a Christian basis – and modern historical methods – on a classical basis – have never quite agreed with each other (Momigliano, 1990, 156).

This insoluble dilemma was responsible in the Enlightenment tradition of the secularization thesis that the history of religious questions in a large part has been transformed into an operation of uncovering ideological instrumentalization. Similarly, the semantically pregnant language offered by the Christian tradition has also been metamorphosed into a historical storehouse of symbols to be suppressed or, failing suppression, constantly reinterpreted, that is, secularized. Nevertheless, the existential vertigo felt over choices between alternative actions and articulated in the language of religion has a strong political relevance which is structurally present in modern history as well.

It is generally understood that as a metahistorical concept modernity can be interpreted as discontinuity, the unfolding of the Promethean myths of the revolution, a rich and ever renewing production of the philosophies of progress and emancipation. But from the onset it also displays an equally important other side in the forms of nostalgia and reaction (Starobinski, 1966, 81–103; Boym, 2001, 3–32). Modernity in more than one aspect is the culture of defeat. The bold earthly desires of the prophets of modernity arose less and less from the experiential horizon of the past, while the increasingly radical paradigms of progress, treading on one another, are at the very moment of their realization crushed by the barren experience of unfulfilled expectations and the malaise bred from insatiable desires. Since the mainstream rationalist tale of the secularist thesis suffers from serious deficiencies, an alternative is needed. When speaking of the modern situation of the religious experience, one alternative lies in the historical exploration of a cultivated sense of victimhood, deception and defeat as a basis for overcoming the ontological consequences of the failure of the Promethean enterprise.

In this sense, the issue of the religious revival of the Christian churches in the interwar period has yet to enter the professional literature of mainstream Hungarian intellectual and political history. The role of the denominational factor has long been a problem of Hungarian historiography, though mostly treated as and restricted mainly to the institutional and power conflicts of the different churches. Through an examination of interwar Protestantism's leading figure and dominant theologian Calvinist Bishop László Ravasz, as well as of the stances of prominent

representatives of political Catholicism (such as Ottokár Prohászka and Béla Bangha) on the denominational issue and Christian union, I will attempt to seek an explanation as to how the existential motivations, above all a deep-seated spiritual condition of insecurity originating in the respective theological and historical situations of their Churches, formed Protestant and Catholic religious-denominational identities in 20th century Hungary.

The Intellectual Legacy of Liberal Protestantism

Following the Kantian and Schleiermacherian currents of West European Protestant theology, 19th century Hungarian Protestantism was receptive to the "horizontal universalism" (to use Benedict Anderson's phrase) present in the national idea (Anderson, 1991, 7). It was more closed, however, to any radically questioning of the historically evolved hierarchy of the social order. It was liberal *and* national, rather than liberal *and* democratic, and it felt a greater kinship with conservative liberalism of the Macaulay type than with freethinking radicalism. In one respect liberal Protestantism kept in sight the moral ideal found in the neo-Kantian philosophy of cultural conservatism, which at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries assumed a peculiar balancing role that moderated the increasingly radicalized intellectual movements. At the same time, it wished to continue to implement consistently the Hegelian principle of progress. Of course, in the long run this was untenable, especially since behind the fecund discourse and artificial activism of liberal Protestantism lurked two suppressed basic problems – or *non-dits,* to use French historian Michel de Certeau's expression: the embarrassing radicalism of the question of God and the Protestant resentment of Roman Catholicism's much-envied organizational success (Michel de Certeau, 1975, 71). The latter remained an insoluble problem and lent to the liberal discourse an unmistakably melancholic tone even in the heydays of the liberal century. Nevertheless, by around 1900 the most important menace became the fact that the chief characteristic of Protestant liberalism, the individualistic basic principle of freedom of conscience, was also espoused by the radical ideologies and militant social democracy. In this respect, Protestantism's ostensibly liberal alliance with patriotic ideals, seen as an aim both conservative and apologetic, was especially burdensome. The debate in *Nyugat* [West], the leading progressive literary and social review of the 1910s, forcefully illustrated the lost magic of the erstwhile "progressive religion." Members of the new generation of intellectuals represented by *Nyugat,* such as writers and essayists Dezső Szabó (1879–1945), Endre Ady (1877–1919) and Zsigmond Móricz (1879–1942), all of whom had a Protestant background, saw the religious and patriotic potential of contemporary Protestantism exhausted: "The problem of Hungarian Protestantism […] is that

the time is fast approaching when this living organization becomes an exhibit in a museum" (Móricz Zsigmond, 1913, 217). Thus these challenges put this fine tuned regime on the defensive vis-à-vis the new, class-based definition of progress and modernity as articulated by socialism. Thus, by the eve of the First World War the intellectual state of liberal Protestantism had been permanently shaken in Hungary.

Religion as Life and Instinct in the Early Writings of László Ravasz

A new generation of Hungarian Reformed theologians, first and foremost László Ravasz (1882–1975), came to the forefront of church life after the lost war and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Liberal academics and enthusiastic lay audiences both hailed his public debuts not only as a theologian but also as an acclaimed orator. At the start of his career in the first decades of the 20th century Ravasz was considered the leading representative of a new generation of modernist clergymen in the first decades of the 20th century. Also a prolific author and a tireless organizer, Ravasz had an innate talent to transmit his message and gain the acceptance both of his peers and large and varied congregations of Protestant circles. He had a synthetic and approachable personality and never hesitated to use the different means of modern media of his time to make his voice heard by many, far more than his predecessors could ever have imagined. His name is rightly associated with the cultural and intellectual appeal of the revival of Protestant religiosity in interwar Hungary while he was elevated to high church offices and decorated by numerous and distinguished official honors. In 1907, at age 25 he became full professor of his *alma mater,* the Kolozsvár Academy of Reformed Theology, where he taught until 1921. In that year he was invited to serve as pastor of the leading Calvinist congregation of Budapest and was also elected bishop of the Danubian District of the Hungarian Reformed Church. Between 1921 and 1948 (until his forced resignation by the Communist regime), he was one of Hungary's most influential and powerful clergymen. He became also a member of the Upper House of Parliament in 1927 and later of the Royal Gubernatorial Council of Governor Miklós Horthy (1869–1957).

But László Ravasz was not only an outstanding organizer and a perspicacious church politician, he was an innovative theologian as well. Trained in the school of neo-Kantian historicism, the young Ravasz, also a Freemason, was thought by many observers to be a liberal theologian of the left in the first decade of the 1910s. In his early years he argued for a supra-dogmatic religiosity which overcomes the rigidity and the historical aleas of the religious and denominational orthodoxies. In his inaugural lecture as the holder of the Practical Theology Chair of the Kolozsvár Academy of Reformed Theology in 1907 he declared

> all the dogmas, habits and traditional views that have had a great im-
> pact on every kind of advancement lost their magic in our eyes. We
> know that these are only the temporal necessities of the Christian pi-
> ety, historically accumulated like the time-worn formations of
> coral-reefs [in the sea] and becoming life-threatening barren cays
> (Ravasz, 1907, 52).

In an honorary tribute to his ecclesiastical mentor, the liberal theologian and superintendent of the Transylvanian District of the Hungarian Reformed Church, György Bartók (1845–1907), he asserted that, "the theology that disrespects criticism will sink into scholasticism," and expressed a rationalist credo by repeating the apology of 19th century liberal German theology that "we can make the world believer only by the cost of critique" (Ravasz, 1908, 645–52).

But Ravasz was always more than a mere follower of neo-Kantian rationalism. Although he wanted to be "modern and constructive," his critic also targeted the deistic deviations of the contemporary Calvinist preachings, which bypassed the core-teachings of Christianity and Jesus himself and failed to offer an authentic religious *Erlebnis* beyond the customary "empty phrases" on conventional topics and nationalistic commonplaces. In order to find alternatives to and transcend the dried-out resources of contemporary Calvinist homiletics, Ravasz enthusiastically embraced a vitalist reassessment of the religious experience inspired by the Dionysian cult of the instinct as put forward by the post-Nietzschean atmosphere of his school years in the first decade of the 20th century:

> It will be the business of future historians of the coming age to dis-
> cover the ties between the assaulting anti-Christianism of Nietzsche
> and the revolutionary transformation of modern theology, ties that
> provide a bridge across the abyss now stretching between the theo-
> logical and scientific worldviews, but as for me with thanksgiving I
> bless the name of the Lord who even in the words of the fools bears
> witness of Himself…Indeed all should agree that the concept of life
> cannot be limited to vegetative existence (Ravasz, 1907, 20–1).

The young Ravasz reinterpreted Christianity as life, as *more life,* and as an impulse and an instinct ("vallásösztön," Ravasz, 1918, 7). In 1910, in the first collection of his sermons, a genre he cultivated from his time on with huge success, he affirmed that,

> the higher and purer the growing life is the nobler, more spiritual and
> more valuable the joy is (Ravasz, 1910, 113).

These were not the conventional elements of Calvinist preaching, and Ravasz's fresh new discourse attracted a number of modernist scholars who were overtly discontent with the predominantly historicist Hungarian intellectual tradition.

The art theorist Lajos Fülep (1885–1970), member of the so-called *Sunday Circle* [Vasárnapi Kör], an intellectual group including such personalities as Georg Lukács, Karl Mannheim, and Karl Polányi, particularly welcomed Ravasz's growing influence and urged him to cooperate with left-wing-progressist periodicals like the *Twentieth Century* [Huszadik Század] of the radical sociologist and politician Oszkár Jászi (1875–1957) and *World* [Világ] of the Marxist theorist Ervin Szabó (Fülep, 1918, 367).

The Trauma of Defeat: The Making of a Conservative Theology

In the crucial years of the First World War, however, Ravasz moved in the opposite direction, and from 1921 on he definitely made his name famous as one of the most important spokespersons of the conservative turn of the interwar period. This turn indeed was not without prior experiences in the earlier career of Ravasz. His most important intellectual encounter was a Schopenhauerian reading of the *mal-de-siècle,* which he thought to be a legitimate reaction to the advance of the materialism of the industrial revolution and the coming of the age of class society and its socialist challenge (Ravasz, 1907). This *par excellence* aesthetical approach and Ravasz's appropriation of such prophets of the despair as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche already pointed out the potentiality of an anti-liberal theology. In a short essay written in 1914 he defined life as a "sublime and permanent fight of self-defense" (Ravasz, 1914[2], 202). This essay was published in the *Protestant Review,* the editorship of which Ravasz took over in January 1914, quickly making it an important and much read forum of intellectual debate on religion and Protestantism (Szegedy-Maszák, 1995, 57–9). In his first editorial note he characterized the contemporary situation of Hungarian Protestantism as "unaware of itself" (Ravasz, 1914, 1). He rejected the remaining illusion of the liberal protestant alliance and also dismissed the inward looking pietism as escapism, warning that

> a new social order is under construction without Protestantism being among the foremen, the modern man has arrived on his long journey from the Renaissance but is not accompanied by Protestantism, so we would be like the bark in the poem of Thomas Moore which moved gloriously on when morning was shining, but the waters were gone by night and the bark was still there, run aground (Ravasz, 1914[1], 3).

As previously mentioned, Ravasz's transformation was accelerated during World War I. He emphasized with increasing clarity that the objective of his much appreciated sermons was, "to show how the old truth can be dressed in modern literary forms" (Ravasz, 1917, Foreword). This also drove him to prefer practice to

theory. He finished his treatise on the axiology of Károly Böhm in 1913 and published his voluminous *Homiletics* in 1916. These were his last scholarly syntheses for decades. From 1914 he became more and more involved in the government of the Church and he constantly preached. His lecture tours aimed to give a modern meaning to missionary efforts, especially for the cultured middle classes, and to reconcile institutional Christianity with the revival spiritual movements, domesticating the non-conformist tendencies of the *inner mission* by integrating them into a new offensive pastoral strategy of the official Church.

Recently, Dutch psychologist and historian Eelco Runia forcefully argued that, "it is the degree of discontinuity rather than the amount of death and destruction that makes an event traumatic" (Runia, 2010, 6). This makes intelligible the fact that Hungary's trauma of the *Great War* fed mainly from the humiliating defeat and dismemberment of the country *after* the war and not from the troublesome memory of the trench-fight and the colossal losses Hungary paid in human life and blood. Like many of his contemporaries, Ravasz also wanted to sublimate the historical experience of the national catastrophe that took place between 1918 and 1920, as well as the sense of threat felt in the shadow of the increasing influence of totalitarian ideologies. According to his reminiscences,

> The situation developed in such a way that it was necessary to choose between two extreme either-or oppositions. In vain did someone approve of social reform, the inflexibility of ideological necessity drove him into the opposite camp. Everything that attacked the old was good, even if it upset the eternal laws of morality, and nothing that sought to preserve the old was good, even if that old was called the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount… In this fight it was necessary to defend protective, inoculating factors such as religion, church, morals, nation, history and tradition. They had to be defended in such a way that we preserved the reformist legacy and kept the Roman leaven at bay, while feeling ourselves to be one with it in Christ; to go as far as possible along the path of radical progress, but without supporting the diabolical calamity of godlessness anywhere. Looking back today [1960], when a great many things confront us in a completely different light, it is clear to us that a radical social policy should have been pursued based on a strong evangelical inspiration. We who defended Hungary's historical integrity, who proclaimed the primacy of the spiritual, who espoused the truth of Revelation, who raised our voices in favor of the absolute value of morality, in a world that had slowly begun to unravel and crumble, could not have done anything else than what we did: to try to preserve the good (Ravasz, 1992, 122–3).

This text captures the sense of a combination of threats to religious, national and historical existence. Despite the retrospective documentation (1960), the authen-

ticity of the intensity of the experience is reinforced by the fact that the author of these memoirs looks back at his years of change critically and acknowledges that in more than one case the ideals under attack were "fetishes." Back in the 1920s the narcissistic frustration and the rhetoric of shame can be amply documented in such declarations as his memorial speech on Count István Tisza, a Protestant magnate and leading figure of the liberal-nationalist politics of the pre-1914 period:

> We put down our arms and Rákóczi's nation did not make a single sword-cut to protect the Hungary that she at last proclaimed independent. […] The nation lost everything like the donkey surprised to be stripped off his stolen tiger fur (Ravasz, 1924, 15).

In the dreadful perspective of revolutionary totalitarianism offered by the short-lived Hungarian Commune in the spring of 1919 many erstwhile liberals sought refuge in the idea of a Christian Hungary with strong ethnic and many times overtly expressed anti-Semitic overtones. Christian churches, both Catholic and Protestant, experienced a renewal of their impact on society in the interwar period. They were able to count on the continuous good will of the Horthy regime, which shifted between liberal conservative and marked authoritarian tendencies throughout the whole period. But the spectacular religious upheaval was seen by quite a few observers with strong reservations. For the philosopher and essayist Béla Hamvas (1897–1968) the "Heideggerian condition" of contemporary religiosity bode ill. As he wrote with prescience in the *Catholic Review* in 1937,

> Some words need to be added about this modern religiosity. It has to be admitted that part of the religiosity that has been spread after the past war does not offer much for the man of the intellect. All signs point to our being just after one worldwide man-slaughter and facing a new one: an intermezzo between two mass massacres. We are facing hunger, epidemics, disability, ruined existence, privation and poverty, and it may well be that some years later all repeats itself at an even greater degree. People are threatened and the way they live today – poor living conditions, social problems, economic and moral depression – cannot dismiss this fear. All these circumstances made man conscious of his being a creature, namely that he is living in the state of throwness – *Geworfenheit* to use Heidegger's word – : his concerns about living, subsistence, the mother country and the family are like thick, heavy, depressing clouds. And religiosity, which is the reason for today's overcrowded churches and the many prayers, often springs from these concerns. Certainly, the majority of the crowd cannot see the divine reality. Which moment is the moment when man can touch and recognize it? Which is the step that leads someone beyond concerns, fear and intimidation into the real gate of religion? This is the moment when one learns about eternity (Hamvas, 1937, 611–12).

Little wonder that the "pagan temptation" to instrumentalize Christianity has in numerous cases been explored by the prophets of violence. As in most parts of Europe, these voices echoing the experience of defeat and broken confidence were amplified by the receptive mood of their many followers. In this respect the widely shared self-perception of a nation defending itself against its internal and external foes, the craving for continuous political preeminence, and first and foremost the underlying "great fear" of being out-distanced and relegated to the position of an inferior sect were at least as prevalent as genuine religious factors in shaping the confessional policy and behavior of the Christian Churches in interwar Hungary.

What distinguishes Ravasz from this pattern is that in his case an enthusiastic embrace of new forms of propagating and reinforcing religious observance was accompanied by a sincere return to the reformatory teachings of Predestination. The anxious awareness of an all-encompassing menace pushed him to the reformulation of the primordiality of the religious roots of Protestantism in the Calvinist doctrine of election and predestination. The obligation to stand one's ground firmly in the face of the threat defines Ravasz's preaching between the two world wars. The sense of threat finds an active resolution in the belief in Predestination. Ever since he read Calvin his exegesis focused on the idea of a sovereign God:

> Calvin's exclusive idea was the glory of God. All the other religious ideologies revolved around one central problem: the happiness of man, that is why all the other religions are fundamentally eudaemonistic.[…] Calvin cut the artery of this way of thinking by his axiom *not* that God is for us, but *we* are for *Him* (Ravasz, 1909, 36).

This standpoint is reminiscent of the functional explanation of the doctrine of predestination by Heiko A. Oberman (Oberman, 2003, 148–9). Oberman recognizes the attractiveness of this grim vision of the world in the existential situation of the defeated. Predestination is the core teaching of the Reformation of the Refugees. The dynamics of an imminent destruction found a tremendous assurance in the absoluteness of divine sovereignty:

> God has redeemed us in a way similar to how the grains are included in a granite block, we cannot be separated from Him as you cannot remove the grains even after smashing the granite block (Ravasz, 1922, 101).

As might be expected, this doctrine concedes almost nothing to human endeavors and consequently deprives the concept of progress of whatever positive value it might hold: "in God there is no temporal difference or difference whatsoever between intention and result." On the other hand, he fosters a highly dichotomic an-

thropology of history and social interactions: "God has created our world so that the small number of the chosen few necessarily points to the great number of the rejected" (Ravasz, 1922, 100). One of the main characteristics of this existential-predestinatory attitude is the marked relativization of man's freedom of action, as a result of which the thought-pattern of progress necessarily becomes devalued.

Towards a New Appraisal of Catholicism

The existential situation that affected the theological stance of Ravasz was also reflected in a new kind of appraisal of contemporary Catholicism. Ravasz's interwar image of the Reformation anticipates the conclusion reached by most of the mid-century church historiography that the centuries-long preparation for religious renewal led not only to the birth of Protestantism but to the "Tridentine renewal" of Catholicism as well:

> The Cluniac reform of the medieval church should be called a reformation, just like the Council of Trent, which carried out the greatest and most characteristic reformation from a Catholic viewpoint (Ravasz, 1935, 503).

The significance of the Reformation thus becomes integrated into an approach justifying the historical pluralism of the modern era on religious grounds:

Here two historical forces, two types of Christian world view and life practice confront each other. This is not just a theoretical or theological difference, but a development of cultural history as well, and as such, it is a basic factor of the human spirit itself (Ravasz, 1934, 497).

In another lecture Ravasz evaluates the significance of the Protestant-Catholic divide in contrast to the tradition of the Enlightenment:

> Since the creation of the world every spiritual question has been transformed into a political and economic question… we cannot imagine a greater betrayal, a graver sin against the Holy Spirit than if someone were to keep silent about a spiritual truth which he feels to be God's holiest cause simply because espousing and proclaiming it would have unpleasant consequences on account of rotten human nature. This would excise the history-shaping power of the prophetical from the living organism of humanity (Ravasz, 1936, 511).

The highlighting of the prophetical and the acceptance of religious pluralism expresses not merely the experience of crisis but also "today's apocalyptic times," when Christianity "is threatened in its entirety" by Communism and Nazism:

> Christianity has hidden common bases which are greater, more es-
> sential and more important than the torn or divided superstructure
> (Ravasz, 1937, 161–5).

It is of no small importance that, through the interpretation of predestination, the most particularly Calvinist idea of reformatory identity, Ravasz found the current duties of Protestant conduct in an image of society and a strategy of action kindred to those of contemporary Catholicism. This may appear paradoxical at first glance, because the rapprochement represented a problem even more difficult for its Catholic proponents than for the Protestant side. The Catholic–Protestant relation was far from being an unambiguous issue. But behind the spectacular instances of conflicts and the sometimes comical rivalry over preeminence a new commencement was at work.

"And after all, What Do Our Faiths Have in Common?" The Catholic Motivations of the Rapprochement

The trauma experienced by the Roman Catholic Church in 19th century Europe was first and foremost the seemingly triumphant march of the triangular synthesis of liberalism, nationalism and progress. This story is known from various angles, and narratives of decadence and reactionary opposition prevail in most of the scholarly literature. Much less has been written about how Catholicism overcame the modernist crisis with a successful adaptation of the very same semantic instruments that liberalism and nationalism established in the political language. By setting up frontiers and crystallizing distinctively modern confessional attitudes (a Catholic *mentalité*) in the wake of the 19th century *Kulturkampfs,* the Roman Catholic Church found ways to take possession of some of the very inventions of modern times, such as the concept of the nation and the democratic politics of emancipation (Blaschke, 2000, 35–75). The lasting impact of the Hungarian "Catholic Renaissance" (1894–1948) also comes from the reappraisal of "universal brotherhood" (Benedict Anderson) implicit in all nationalism and the appropriation of such fundamentally modern ideas as universal suffrage and the defense of religious liberty, both in the name of the democratic majority (i.e. the Catholics who made up statistically more than two-thirds of Hungary's population after 1920). From the Christian-socialism of the charismatic bishop and controversial theologian Ottokár Prohászka (1858–1927), initiator of the "Catholic Renaissance," to the popular Marian nationalism of Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty (1892–1975), many inspired leading Catholic churchmen appealed successfully to the synthesis of Catholicism and Hungarian national identity by exploiting the various instruments and media of modern mass democracy and the politics of the

"majority." And in the case of Cardinal Mindszenty, in the dichotomy of the Cold War his unswerving anticommunism was seen through his trials by many, especially in the United States, as the authentic testimony of the idea of religious liberty (Mojzes, 1992, 241; O'Connor, 37–66).

This historical metamorphosis can also be tracked by exploring the sinuous intellectual paths of some of the most significant protagonists of the "Catholic Renaissance." The difficulty of the matter is well characterized by the attitude of Ottokár Prohászka (1858–1927), Bishop of Székesfehérvár, towards the Protestant churches. By dint of his intellectual abilities and influence, Prohászka was by far the preeminent theologian among Catholic clerical leaders and initiators of the "Catholic Renaissance." In contrast to the denominational conflicts of the first decades of the twentieth century and the interwar period, Prohászka's biographers refer to the universality of the bishop's thinking, which shielded him from denominational bias. In connection with this, they often cite Prohászka's metaphor of a "rainbow-bridge" as well: "I would like a rainbow-bridge of love to stretch between [Catholic] Pannonhalma and [Calvinist] Debrecen, on which the angels of understanding would tread, and this bridge would be a new Hungarian meridian" (Gergely, 1994, 126). However, Prohászka, who died in 1927, made statements of another character as well. In one of his diary entries for 1922 he writes as follows:

> It is completely clear to me that in our country one should not think of the struggling sides in terms of Catholic or Protestant, but rather as world historical, and from a theoretical standpoint only thusly: Catholicism or socialism, because revolution, the ancient schism, was in fact an attack against Catholicism, against Christianity. One must not lose sight of this; this does not mean that Protestants are not Christians individually, but the Christian principle is not Protestantism, and indeed, Protestantism denies that. The contrast between Catholic and Protestant is practically anachronistic, a somewhat delayed and artificial and insincere distinction. He who makes it honestly, I mean in good faith, has not reached back to the actual principle: the nature of revolution. I, too, usually proclaim the cooperation between Catholic and Protestant, in as much as … by this I consider one or two positions as defensible. *But not for one moment do I rely on this cooperation. And after all, what do our faiths have in common?* [emphasis in the original] (Prohászka, 1997, 185).

What is important in the citation is not primarily the statement relativizing his calls for denominational reconciliation, but rather that the mistrust of Protestantism expressed in raw form in his diary stems from the historicization that compares Protantism's founding event, the Reformation, to the revolutionary principle, socialism. According to the modern history of the concept of revolution,

revolution is a political slogan that recreates itself incessantly in various positive and negative definitions, but one that also carries within itself the original meaning of the word, the concept of "eternal return," taken from nature (Koselleck, 1985). In this semantic framework Prohászka's historicization links Protestantism and socialism with the "ancient schism," the origin myth, because in this way he can interpret both as a revolt against the divine order, according to the dialectic of the struggle between the true and the false, between good and evil. This exposition reveals the homogenous time of waiting for salvation and the end of days. Like any apocalyptic reading, it does not establish a developmental or qualitative ranking among historical movements, but only their chronological sequence, and it classifies events and processes simply according to whether they build the "city of God" or attack it.

However, the citation also reveals that the above explanatory principle could not have completely satisfied Prohászka, who dealt with the problem of temporality in depth throughout his career and was also familiar with the Bergsonian philosophy of "creative evolution." Behind the statement may lurk the worrisome realization that the dialectic of history is increasingly pushing the theological debate between Catholicism and Protestantism into the background, because the asymmetrical relationship between the revolutionary and utopian mode of thought emerging time and again from the traditions of the Enlightenment and the religions forced onto the defensive questions the very right of religion itself to exist. In another diary entry, he reveals his doubts about whether the professed and represented redemptive truth can be carried to victory in the pluralist maelstrom of truth-demands:

> It is extraordinarily difficult for the church to find its place and its way, and namely to reform – as they say – its position vis-à-vis human freedoms in a timely and correct manner. Even now the church holds the view that it should restrict the freedom of evil by force as well, or to break it if this is possible. This is proper if we believe that truth is the exclusive domain of the church; but today's era does not accept this, and thus it arrives at a disadvantaged position vis-à-vis modern culture. But in any case the spirit of the times has changed, in as much as it is considered impermissible to interfere in the moral world by force. And somehow this is true. But this feeling once again may have become general when it became clear with the passage of time that one cannot cope with violence. Now Constantines the Great are of no use to the church, nor are Charlemagnes; and Saint Stephens [here the author is referring to the Hungarian king Stephen I (972–1038), founder of the medieval Hungarian state] only to the extent that they promote morality, and not with the bluster of legalities. I know that in this way, too, we reach a dead-end, but this is perhaps the lesser evil. I am dumbfounded (Prohászka, 1997, 87–8).

The difficulty of accepting religious freedom as the "lesser of two evils" emerges unmistakably from the lines penned by Prohászka immediately following the collapse of the communist dictatorship of 1919. It is common knowledge that the Catholic Church accepted the principle of religious freedom only with great difficulty, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. This difficulty arises from the understandable fear that the consistent representation of genuine tolerance may not only relativize our own most sacred convictions, but in the end may even eliminate the objective existence of truth from thought. The price that had to be paid for religious neutrality and for tolerance, as well as for the emancipatory hopes born of the Enlightenment and spilling into revolutionary violence, established the permanent crisis of the European intellect and the culture of crisis in the Western history of ideas of the past two hundred years. At the same time Prohászka was also forced to recognize – and the disparaging reference to the founding father King Stephen, the "Hungarian Catholic" saint *par excellence,* also expresses this – that religious hopes were suited only to a limited extent to function as the direct source for the formation of political or national will, because their past validity in this regard represented a dubious and always ephemeral solution. In that respect another leading conservative thinker of the period, the historian and devoutly Catholic Gyula Szekfű (1883–1955) found the roots of the aggressive and omnipresent modern-day nationalisms in the chaotic conflicts of the primitive tribal societies. He could not assign the national idea anything more than a mimetic calling: "to try to invoke the unequalled classical ideal of the Greco-roman civilization in the heart of all nations" (Szekfű, 1934, 441; Szekfű, 1936, 149).

"Christians of the World, Unite!"

An article about the possibilities of a Christian union written by the famous (and infamous) standard-bearer of political Catholicism, the Jesuit Béla Bangha (1880–1940), and appearing in 1937 with the astonishing paraphrase of the slogan of the Communist Manifesto, "Christians of the World, Unite!" was influenced to a great degree by these realizations. The study, which in any case surprised his contemporaries as well, was a radical departure from his earlier polemical and militant stance. This was first of all because of the fact that it expressed the uncomfortable realization of the discontinuity of history, as well as acknowledgement that the desire for the unification of Christians and the possible realization of Christian unity must come about not simply as the restoration of some natural order of things, but as a response to a new historical situation undeniably bearing its own uniqueness:

> The age of denominational wars and polemics has long passed; in their place, however, the far-reaching secularization of life and culture is striking, the cause of which is partially the divide among Christians. In families, companies, associations or community houses of mixed faith, out of sheer tact alone no one really raises questions of religion anymore; the result of which later is that the most beautiful, noblest ideals, those that most profoundly interest human life and are called upon to elevate it, are increasingly excluded from public thought and public attention (Bangha, 1937, 15).

This statement does not dispense with a profound sense of nostalgia either, which is fueled by melancholy stemming from the radical change in the historical situation:

> Only by rising not to historic but almost metaphysical heights can we truly comprehend the great need for a revision of the denominational situation. What a blissful and, we might even say, blissfully simple age it was when everyone still stood on the basis of Christian ideology, so much so that the debate was about whether Christ had decreed seven sacraments, or only two, or three! So much has today's skepticism chewed away and undermined the flooring and soil of our life of faith that today we must now ponder whether we can save for the masses of the coming centuries faith in the personal God himself and the basic tenets of Christianity (Bangha, 1942, 494).

The final phrase in the above passage is in no way a sociological diagnosis, since like Protestant observers, Bangha himself noted the postwar religious upswing, which was not limited to Catholicism. This religious dynamism uniting denominations did not invalidate, but rather confirmed the bitter prognosis, which Bangha applied primarily to religious communities, and which takes as its point of departure the determination that, parallel to the inevitable weakening of the binding force of traditions and customs, religious communities in the future

> will undergo enormous crises. Anti-church agitation, anti-religious movements, doubt and indifference, the materialization and sensualization of life, the advancing self-consciousness and individualization of the masses will likely lead to the practical de-Christianization of broad strata, eventually leading to the loss among religious communities of a great share of their members (Bangha, 1942, 411–12).

As can be seen, at the end of the 1930s and start of the 1940s the chief motivating force of Catholic–Protestant rapprochement, emerging on the initiative of Bangha, was precisely Christianity's sense of being "threatened in its entirety," as another Catholic participant in the debate, the Benedictine monk and abbot of

Pannonhalma Krizosztom Kelemen, put it a few years later. Kelemen, who nurtured warm relations with Protestant leaders like László Ravasz, articulated this idea in apocalyptic images in 1942, in the very middle of the war:

> This meeting will have practical significance only if it is able to prevent mutual collapse… Today the Lord once again speaks to us amidst thunder and lightning. This raises the question: shall we continue to wait for more dangerous earthquakes and more terrible storms to destroy our planet, like those which have attacked our blood-soaked land, afflicted by discord, pettiness, selfishness, envy and hatred, and for frighteningly organized forces to be raised to destroy the country of God, to exterminate his followers, so that they might chase God himself from his throne and permanently expunge once and for all the notion of God from the consciousness of the people? (Kelemen, 1942, 116)

In the end, the troubling international situation, the pressure of the National Socialist and Bolshevik menace, and progressing secularization tore asunder the harmonious relationship between religion and culture as contained in the rational conceptual systems of thought, neo-Thomism on the Catholic side and neo-Kantianism on the Protestant side. Imre Révész (1889–1967), the leading Protestant historian of the period and an erstwhile disciple and close ally of László Ravasz, arrived at the conclusion that religious pluralism is only vital if it does not come into contradiction with the calling of the prophets of Christianity. At the same time, this prophetic calling again and again caused the tension between culture and history, as well as eschatological message of Christianity, to appear:

> The Scriptures teach us that human history has no imminent final goal at all, and that the ideals of culture are not absolute values (Révész, 1941, 199).

The Catholic Bangha likewise could only maintain his earlier conviction concerning the stubborn presence of religious concerns if he placed them in an eschatological interpretation of the theology of history that superseded the old dichotomy of the *Kulturkampf*. By doing so Bangha, under the influence of Gyula Szekfű and incidentally representing views similar to those of his Protestant counterparts László Ravasz and Imre Révész, rejected critically the view that instrumentalized Christianity in the service of the national idea:

> The Lord God as a national staffage, religious truths as separate Romanian, Turkish or Russian revelations, the gospel as a Hungarian or Armenian or Bulgarian national specialty – these are bizarre conceptual formations (Bangha, 1942, 235).

In his search for the meaning of centuries-long religious wars in his later writings, Bangha no longer saw in the Reformation the illegal methods of the revolutionary path (which he, too, had condemned previously) and the historical catastrophe of Christianity, but rather the promotion of a Christian existence and mode of action of a new quality:

> Cruelty, faithfulness and impatience melted together here to form a peculiar concoction, and perhaps the Lord God permitted this horrible fraternal extermination in the name of faith so that through it the Church might be cleansed and educated, and learn that there is no room for hatred in the defense of a religious ideal (Bangha, 1942, 497).

His predecessor and in part inspiration, Prohászka, when he came to this realization, had written, "I am dumbfounded!" However, in his final studies, Bangha, who on his deathbed in 1940 treaded the interpretational borderline of dogma and also espoused a cautious revision of the image of the church articulated by the Council of Trent, examined the Catholic possibilities for distinguishing between the notions of the visible and invisible church:

> But however much we Catholics recognize the correctness and necessity of the position of the Council of Trent, that is, however much we affirm that Christ our Lord founded not only an invisible but a visible church as well, and wanted not only an abstract unity among his followers but an organizational unity as well, nevertheless we still cannot deny, and the Council of Trent did not wish to deny either, that outside of the community of the church organization we should recognize the community of faith as well (Bangha, 1942, 465).

In fact, in his late, posthumously published writings Bangha, quoting the writings of the French Dominican monk Yves Congar, the spiritual progenitor of the Second Vatican Council, wrote of the partial fulfillment of the universality of Catholicization taking place within the Catholic Church, and in doing so even arrived at the concept of a *votum baptismi implicitum,* which later served as the basis for Karl Rahner's all-inclusive conception of Christianity:

> We can comprehend the ecumenical idea in another way too: based on the complete, even if only desired, unity and life of faith that can be found in every kind of Christian denomination, we can regard as one all those who until now failed to carry out their solidification into the complete and organic unity only because they had not yet recognized the proper way to do so and God's will regarding this. They may rightly be regarded, to a certain degree unconsciously, as children of the Catholic Church, mainly if, by virtue of a life of faith, they

> too are undoubtedly living members of that mysterious body that is
> the Church (Bangha, 1942, 460).

Outside of their specific content, all of these statements have significance from a historical perspective, primarily on account of their chronology, because the temporal dimension of the statements quoted testifies to the profundity of existential involvement, especially considering that while a large part of their authors' lifework, when viewed from the present day, can be classified as an extremely problematic, and in many respects irrelevant, mode of thought, in one of their conclusions the writings quoted above anticipate the attitude and image of the church held by a theological-intellectual movement still emergent in many respects today, the Second Vatican Council. The late and radical turnabout in the career of the Jesuit Bangha – from the exclusivity of the political Catholicism he himself militantly represented to the existential experience of an ecumenicalism that moved beyond denominational and national conflicts – is also interesting with regard to the connections between the history of ideas and biography. As in the case of Ravasz, his turnabout was undoubtedly a conservative one, attempting to reconcile conflicting identities defined on a dogmatic basis rather than – in contrast to the intellectual traditions of the Enlightenment – relativize them. By redefining what is religious, and thus partially re-articulating the religious attitude, the currents of Protestant and Catholic thought in interwar Hungary presented above established on both the Protestant and Catholic sides intellectual contexts which make not only the historical description of Christian identity but also the very notion of modernity a function of multi-layered readings that are dynamic and pluralistic on the individual level as well.

But at the same time the rapprochement of Catholic and Protestant interpretations of history may be interpreted as a symptom of the decline of religious explanations of the world and history. They testify to the fact that the dialectics of historical interpretation are no longer defined by the particular approaches of Catholic or Protestant theology or the differences between them, but rather by the state of competition between universalist utopias and religious world explanations forced into the conservative camp, which necessarily bleaches the emphatic elements of Christian teachings as well.

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THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS LIMITS

DISCOURSES OF BORDER AND ETHNICITY IN TWO INTERWAR *VÖLKISCH* NOVELS

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This paper attempts to explore the identity politics component of two völkisch novels from the 1920s that grapple with the question of the identity of Germans from the old Austrian empire. The two authors, Bruno Brehm and Emil Lucka, were popular prose writers of the interwar period who partook of the general questioning, criticism and rethinking of the 19th century ideologies that occurred after the Great War. Their work – from the vantage point of the history of ideologies – may be interpreted as embedded in the language game of the German conservative revolution, especially in the currents that emphasized the permanent and essential characteristics associated with belonging to an ethnic group and the ethical consequences for individuals of this belonging. For this reason, this paper first briefly introduces post-1918 German völkisch ideology and proceeds to interpret the identity politics of the novels by making use of the key concepts of this strand of "young conservative" [jungkonservativ] thought. The key concept for interpreting the ambiguous experience of "being Austrian", i.e., belonging to the greater community of Germans, yet having had to suffer through centuries of living in a separate state became that of the borderland [Grenzland], a complex notion that dialectically united the experiences of heroically struggling to "remain German," while being threatened with loss of ethnic character through exposure to cosmopolitanism or assimilation. By showing how the discourse of *Grenzland* structures the narratives, the paper seeks to provide a reminder that the discourses of identity in early 20th century Austria were more complex than is often remembered: alongside late modernity, as represented and reflected by authors like Robert Musil and Elias Canetti, a different, more popular and more political trend also existed, which narrated the break-up of the Dual Monarchy and its aftermath in the context of the threatened existence of the Germans of the borderland.

Keywords: Volk, völkisch, Grenzland, Austrian identity, Austrian history, Bruno Brehm, Emil Lucka, conservative revolution, interwar literature

The Emergence of *Völkisch* Ideology and the Discourse about Austrian Identity

Germany in the 1920s was, as contemporary observers noted, undergoing a vast process of intellectual and ideological fermentation. The meanings of (political) phrases and strategic concepts such as "people", "nation" and "state" were changing, while associations, periodicals and institutions were taking shape, ceasing to exist, undergoing transformations or falling into decline or insignificance. It was through this complex set of processes that an ideology reinterpreting the relationship between state and nation crystallized around the essential, ahistorical character of ethnic groups. Whereas before 1914 the dual Prussian and Austrian heritage, in other words the cult of the state, had marked public discourse in the German states, after 1919 a new actor gained increasing prominence in German history and the vision of a brighter German future: the *Volk*.

The *Volk,* the subject of the new cult, brought with it a reassessment of the past and a newly formed image of the future. The most intellectually active forces of the German right wing (both in Weimar Germany and the new Austrian republic) inquired into the question of the nature and substance of the (alleged) peculiar German quality, the core and character of the people's "soul" *(Volkstum)* that, independent of history, distinguished Germans from all other nations. In the history of ideas the products of this conception and the perspectives to which it gave shape are denoted with the expression *völkischer Gedanke,* or *völkisch* idea.

This thinking thrived on the disillusionment of many who saw how the Wilhelmine state had cracked and almost crumbled in 1918 and 1919, how Old Austria had vanished from the maps, and felt that history had "forsaken" the nation. New ideas proving that other, more enduring, forces would counterbalance political failure were keenly accepted by these same groups and individuals. Thus for many the notion according to which the German *Volk* was an eternal force, independent of the state and capable of defying history, was appealing. More so than ever, the prevailing winds of the new era were "German winds."

The *völkisch* idea, which became the canon of the new right under the Weimar Republic and was linked to notions of order and empire under the Third Reich while also penetrating the slightly "provincial" Austrian fora of political discussion, bore peculiarly German, anti-liberal and often anti-modern ideological connotations. The political divisions in the newly republican German societies, which represented an experience unfamiliar for public opinion, created a situation easily exploited by certain groups, as a consequence of which the *völkisch* idea exercised a significant influence as an ethical point of reference emphasizing organic unity (Koselleck, 1992, 389). In the conceptual system founded on the notion of the *Volk,* the individual was considered to be a "link in the chain" of a higher "*völkisch* unity," the task of which was the fulfillment of the mission derived from

the "collective mentality" [*Allgeist*]. The body of the *Volk,* conceived as a collective subject, did not yield to precise description, although it was considered to be accessible to those that it "captured and conquered in their essence." After 1919 the peculiarity [*Eigenart*] of the *Volk* became the basis of interpretations of German destiny, defeat and greatness (Meyers, 1925, 820).[1] Within the context of this discourse, the community of the *Volk* [*Volksgemeinschaft*] denoted the "core *Volk*" [*Kernvolk*] and all of the groups of peoples belonging to it, referring to "the spiritual affinity nurtured by common fate and common political conviction"(Brockhaus, 1934, 641, 658). In its final and most propagandistic incarnation under National Socialism the term eventually became a strategic ideologeme expressing transcendence of social disparities and differences of worldview and signifying bonds more general even than the state.

Most contributors to the völkisch language game, public intellectuals of highly varied backgrounds, also realized that making sense of the functions of geographical space and history were both necessary to produce coherent narrations about the life of the *Volk*. Both could carry positive and negative connotations alike, as they could equally be "conquered" by the *Volk* and "triumph" over its efforts and self-realization in the form of an ideal state. (Keyser 1933; Brocke, 1998, 82–3, 106–10). As Erich Keyser, a *völkisch* historian who gained fame primarily through his theoretical interests, put it,

> The distinctiveness of the German people can only be understood through its history, and its history can only be unraveled through analysis of the changes of the German *Volk* and the space that served as the scene of its development. Space is the expression of the force of the *Volk* to form history. Its extension and division into discrete segments mirror the prevailing life-force and direction of the German *Volk* (1931, 353–4).

This conception has roots stretching back to the human geography of Friedrich Ratzel. Ratzel, who was in close professional contact with other forerunners of the conservative revolution (such as psychologists Wilhelm Wundt and Karl Lamprecht), "was never entirely able to overcome the influence of biological evolutionism in human history, particularly in his appraisal of states" (Faber, 1982, 391). On this basis he formulated his thesis concerning "growing political spaces," which served as a foundation for the explanatory mythology of the battle for territory. According to this thesis, states and peoples strive to achieve spatial realization, which at the same time is the proof of their vital force. Ratzel's conceptions of space and *Volk* therefore reciprocally presupposed and implied each other. On the one hand, the "roots of the *Volk* constitute a part of nature and reflect the characteristics of nature," while on the other they project this trait, inherited from nature, on the space that they occupy (Mosse, 1991, 27). The Ratzelian dic-

tum, which from many points of view became a kind of mantra of *Volkstums-forschung,* offers a terse summary of this mutual implication: "All motion is a conquering of space [*Raumüberwindung*]." Accordingly, "the struggle over space is a life-or-death struggle" and the locations of peoples in space is from the outset a matter of conflict. According to the title of a novel popular at the time, however, the German people was a "*Volk* without Space" [*Volk ohne Raum*], so following Ratzel's dictum it was both logical and necessary for it to begin to expand to new territories (Schultz, 1989, 8). Both before and during the First World War scholars such as Joseph Partsch (1893) and Robert Sieger (1918) pursued work on the basis of similar premises. Their conclusions quite unsurprisingly urged the harmonization of the territory of the German language and the German *Kulturboden* (or "cultural soil," implying the territories of the influence of German culture) through the construction of a German *Mitteleuropa,* or in other words through an expansionist political platform.

Austria figured in the highly geography-conscious *völkisch* ideology first and foremost as a German space, if one existing constantly under threat due to its peripheral position. With regard to the earliest period, the myth of the German unity of late antiquity, which appears in the texts of the era as an indisputable article of faith, strengthened this interpretation. According to this conception, "[t]he appearance of the Germans and the evolution of the destiny of the German *Volk* in the eastern march [*Ostmark*] demonstrate the eternal and enduring unity of the German *Volk* across time. The central leadership … gave commands that our ancestors executed and secured resources that they used." According to this conception, the Austrian "*Stamm* … [was] a branch on the tree of the German *Volk*," which "as a consequence of its advanced position to the south and east … acquired its character as a result of the forces of history and fate" (Beninger, 1939, 124; Brieger, 1935, 1; Andreas, 1927, 17).

There was consensus within the discourse that Austria was a part of the *Volk* that had taken the path of separate statehood [*vereigenstaatlichtes Deutschtum*]. In other words, the Germans of Austria were invariably and essentially German in every respect. The existence of a specific term for this concept, however, reflects not merely the propensity of the German language for compound words, but rather the extent to which the paradox of political separation and *völkisch* unity constituted a serious challenge to the (German) interpretations of (German) history, a paradox that was resolved in the discourse through the concept of *Vereigenstaatlichung*, a term that bore negative connotations. This constituted an *ab ovo* value laden rejection of this path of development as a form of particularism, adhering to the mythos of the unified *Volk* state and presenting this historical change as a tragic episode in the loss of identity, the solution to which (the restoration of the unity of the Stauf era through the *Anschluss*) it saw as the

conclusion to the romance-like narrative of the history of the *Volk* (Albert, 1934, 27–32).

The willingness of some authors to analyze the Austrian development within its own framework can be seen in the use of the terminological pair *Österreich* and *Ostmark*. While historicists tended to prefer the former, National Socialism and more radical scholarship and journalism used the latter. Most authors, however, made use of both, marking the dichotomy that derived from the notion of the autonomy of Austrian development on the one hand and the fundamental "unity" thesis of *grossdeutsch* ideology on the other. Among the latter one finds statements such as, "for one thousand years [Austria] has defended Germans by the Danube" and "a mere fifty years ago" it was excluded from being a part of the imperial German political framework. The former, however, found some validation in the generally accepted opposition of the characters of the "Prussian" and "Austrian" peoples, which had been formed by "a strong mixture of blood, Habsburg politics … in brief history and fate," in spite of the fact that the Austrian Germans nonetheless "remained a branch on the tree of the German *Volk,*" even if they had been transformed into a peculiar "pure, noble, and enchanting species." The decisive argument in the final interpretation and classification of the nature of Austrian character was the notion that "the German *Volk* is the soil from which Austrian culture sprang," and this culture therefore necessarily remained German, "apart from its international aristocracy and a few specific Viennese types" (Andreas, 1927, 16–17; Brieger, 1935, 3).

Within the context of this line of thinking, it became increasingly clear how one could (or should) grasp the monumental transgressions and failures of history. The *Volkstumskampf,* in other words the defense and expansion of the *Volksboden* and the preservation of the attachment and loyalty of the borderlands and their communities to the *Volk,* was established as an unambiguous measure of value. As the membership of the German communities of the borderlands to the *Volk* was considered to be a biological and social fact, it became a condition of the self-realization and self-fulfillment of the *Volk* as well. The preeminent political transgression had been and continued to be the denial of this fact and the resulting weakening of the *Grenzvolk,* a people always under threat in its defense, preservation and expansion of the borders. The recent past (displacement from the imperial German structure, totally separate statehood) was therefore thought of as an exception of history, and any return to it was seen as a vain delusion (Andreas, 1927, 18–19).

As is apparent, the *völkisch* discourses did not aim to disregard or deny entirely the differences between Austrian Germans and the Germans of the Empire, but rather merely to relegate these differences to a plane of lesser significance within the category of the concept of the *Volk,* and they accepted the existence of distinctive group characteristics (as in the case of other *Stämme*) given shape over the course of history. At the same time, however, these discourses made no allowance

for the possibility that such characteristics might overshadow the power of the unity of the *Volk,* and they consequently vehemently rejected the cultural and historical concept of Austrian identity that sought through invocation of the notion of the "baroque man" (i.e., the Austrian as a product of Catholicism and Latinized civilization) to legitimize a heterogeneity within the broader German identity (this constitutes one of Brehm's chief points of contention, as will by analyzed below). This is explained by the fact that the figure of the autonomous "Austrian" constituted a challenge to the thesis of *völkisch* unity, appearing on the stage of history at the intersection of Latin and German cultural spheres as an autotelic and independent figure no longer interpretable in its totality within the cultural and semantic universe of *Deutschtum*.

The rejection of the mythos of the "Austrian man" and the subordination of the notion of Austrian identity to German völkisch history were paired with the minutely wrought concept of historical function, according to which "the faith of the southeastern strand of the German *Volk* in itself and its mission … to form and guard the border … has been an integral component of the Austrian state for a millennium" (Andreas, 1927, 18; Schumacher, 1934, 474). The concept of the border Germans constituted an essential element of the discourse through which the *völkisch* interpretation of Austrian identity was fashioned. Leading geographer Albrecht Penck situated the achievements of the culturally mixed communities of the borderlands in the foreground, and contrasted this idealized image with the pure culture and security of the core regions. In doing so, he elevated the dual battle for the preservation of *völkisch* character and the defense of the *Volksboden* to a factor determining the quality of membership in the *Volk*. As he observes,

> the people of the borderlands were the first to call themselves Germans, and also within the borders of the old Holy Roman Empire, at the borders of the German and non-German territories, the opposition between the two was experienced before anywhere else (1934, 8).

The concept of *Volkstumskampf,* which emerged as dominant in the discourse of the 1930s, became the most concise expression of the essence of this experience. In this interpretation, Austria figured as the scene of the perpetual *Volkstumskampf,* where it was necessary (in accordance with the dual nature of the *Volkstumskampf*) to fight for the *Volkssiedelboden* within the borders and defend the borders themselves (Schumacher, 1934, 455).

The canonical synthesis of "belonging" and "separation" that configured the image of the "Austrian man" emerged in the 1920s in the wake of innumerable treatises and articles, and was most famously summed up by Max Hildeber Boehm, a key figure of völkisch historiography. According to Boehm,

> *Grenzland* is not a racially pure territory. The peoples of the border-
> lands are almost an independent race, a race that is continuously un-
> certain about its own racial belonging, and is capable of rising if it
> catches the *völkisch* rhythm that keeps it in motion, swells its
> strength, and inspires it to acts of heroism (1930, 17).

One finds an example of the use of this general conceptual construct in the di-
chotomy established by Boehm, according to which the opposition between
Germanization and the descent into a Central European, or Austrian, identity is
the main thread of Austrian history. Their successive alternation corresponds to
the "*völkisch* rhythm" and determines the direction of cultural transfer. Expansion
belongs to the great eras of ascent, while the "Slavic influence" as well as all other
forms of foreign penetration is synonymous with decline (Boehm, 1935, 135–7).

The Austrian segment of the German *Volk,* which had "dynamically lived" the
experience of the border, assuming "its duty and fate" was thus assured a place of
special significance (Boehm, 1932, 105). This undertaking constituted both "de-
fense of the Empire" and "the southeastward expansion of the *Volksboden*"
(Eschmann, 1933, 5). The logical conclusion of this line of thought was the view
that the relationship of responsibility and service between border and core were
reciprocal: the communities of the borderlands, which fought for the Empire and
the *Volk,* justifiably expected the unconditional solidarity of the core territory.
The interpretation according to which the Germans who had been born into the
role of "Greater Germans" (in other words the Germans of the borderlands) were
as in need of support as they were deserving it had been widespread before 1918,
but following the First World War it quickly became dominant in *völkisch* think-
ing (Rapp, 1920, 176). Various forms of this solidarity were alleged to have ex-
isted in various historical periods, from the auxiliary forces provided by the Em-
pire to support the Habsburgs in the wars against the Ottoman Turks to the masses
of settlers and the dual alliance (Schüssler, 1937, 11). In the period following
1918, however, support first and foremost meant *Anschluss,* which was regarded
as "rescue" of the abandoned and plundered Germans of Austria. In the
worldview of the *völkisch* idea, "blood, race and the voice of the soul" all urged
"the ideal of the *grossdeutsch* community," which had been strengthened again
and again by the historical fate of the German *Stamm.* There could be no more fit-
ting realization of this community than the recapture and recovery of the severed
bloc of Germans of Austria as part of the emergent *Volk* state (Kamp, 1930, 19).
Thus the task imposed by the events of 1918 was the reintegration of Austria
(shorn of its *völkisch* character and consigned, in the wake of a long period of de-
cline, to a separate fate as an after-effect of a repeatedly failed experiment of his-
tory) into German space, as well as its liberation from new economic and cultural
pressures and constraints. All this would herald a new era of expansion and "the
rising tide of the *Volk*" (Thalheim, 1931).

In contrast to the ambiguous images of Vienna and Baroque greatness, rural Austria and the figure of the peasant both represent examples of concepts that bore exclusively positive connotations. While in the case of the former the dynamics of struggle, expansion and incursion proved decisive, the latter were connected first and foremost to the mythos of permanence and the preservation of *völkisch* character. The Austrian landscape and the figure of the ploughman became unambiguous themes of the concept of "pure" German ethnic character and *Volkssiedelboden,* symbolizing the enormous strength of the *Volk* untouched by the whims and commotion of history. As a representative of this mentality, the conservative revolutionary Viktor von Geramb urged a distinction in 1926 between the "original" culture of the Austrian peasant and the crucible of Vienna, contrasting the culture of the capital with the *Volk* consciousness of Tyrol and Styria (1926, 81–6). Like almost every other author contributing to the völkisch strands of the conservative revolution, Boehm too placed emphasis on Tyrol as the region that had preserved the character of the German *Volk* in its purest form. Others contrasted the culture of the Court and Church with the unspoiled life of the peasantry. The foundation of the latter, they felt, was "temperance, reason and sense of truth," and it "remained independent of Viennese clericalism," creating a culture "bound to the soil … and German to the bone" (Andreas, 1927, 3, 18–19).

The *völkisch* literature on Austria gave form to the figure of the genuine Austrian through the concept of the peasant, abandoned by his own leaders, driven from the sphere of high politics, and forced to "practice" his *Deutschtum* through his everyday work of the land. This mytheme safeguarded the relationship between Austria and the German people, presupposing a society and *Volk* community too authentic for the politics of the dynasty, itself distant from the *Volk,* to be able to eliminate. Existing parallel to the decaying Austria of the Habsburgs, this peasant utopia represented a second Austria with more reality and substance, which in many cases took upon itself the tasks that, according to the authors, had been neglected by the Habsburgs.

Thus the Tyroleans came to figure as the most important defenders of the German areas of settlement, who assumed this task not simply on a regional level, but in a universal sense as well, first and foremost in 1809, when they had risen up against French troops with no support from the Habsburgs, and in the First World War, when they had distinguished themselves on every front (Stolz, 1926). This mythos of the *Alpenland* functioned as a metaphor of identity: it figured as a territory the history of which was one of heroic acts of self-defense and defense of the *Volk*. In a manner characteristic of *völkisch* ideology, this transformation became possible through the totalization of the concept of struggle: the effacement of the distinction between concrete and enduring, non-military threat, and its subordination to the concept of struggle, presented farming the land as being every bit as much a fight for the *Volk* as armed combat. The border conflicts of 1919, stylized

by the *grossdeutsch* movement of Austria as symbolic initiation rituals of return to the *Volk*, made up the last chapter of this narrative. On the one hand these emphasized the cowardliness of the Habsburgs (and social democrats), who had abandoned their people, while on the other as "the first victorious acts of battle" they offered new affirmation of the topos according to which the *Volk* of the borderlands always fought the most heroically and unflinchingly in defense of its *Volkstum* (Brieger, 1935, 5–6; Nitschke, 1938, 7–9).

The mythos of the Austrian peasant was understandably intertwined with the defense of German territory. The second task, in contrast with the "intra-*völkisch*" [*innervölkisch*] calling, concerned the role in the "world of the peoples [*Völkerwelt*] of the southeast." As the expression *Völkerwelt* itself signifies, from the point of view of the "Empire of the Middle" [*Reich der Mitte*] created by the German people this territory was seen as one of chaos, backwardness, disorganization, in short political and cultural formlessness. It logically followed that German penetration in general was viewed as legitimate and indeed from the German point of view figured as an obligation and duty, as it would mean both the advancement of the populations of the region and the reinforcement of the geographical position of the German *Volk,* which was always considered to be under threat. In other words it would have constituted fulfillment of both "consciousness of mission" and "vital interest" (Böhm, 1932, 21). If Brehm's text offers an example of the dangers awaiting the individual who fails to firmly anchor his existence in the protective framework of the Volk, Lucka's novel demonstrates this, the second great *völkisch* observation about the *Grenzland* and its inhabitants. It seeks to provide testimony about those peasants who in the *völkisch* view engage in daily struggle to preserve or reclaim the old *Volksboden* for the German *Volk,* becoming truly mythical, and hence ahistorical, figures in the process.

The *Völkisch* Novel as a Vehicle of Ideological Dissemination

A discussion of the *völkisch* novel with the aim to illustrate a chapter in the history of ideologies understood as part of the *histoire des mentalités* calls for some justification. The novels discussed below were among those that constituted one of the most important channels through which the *grossdeutsch* idea came to permeate society in Germany and Austria. The novels in question, which belonged to the popular literature of the time, were often published in 20,000 or 30,000 copies. Several works by the perhaps best-known author, Bruno Brehm, sold more than 50,000 copies. It is thus difficult to overestimate their influence on society, and their significance is augmented by the fact that they applied the terminology of *völkisch* scholarship and ideology with remarkable precision, exemplifying and bringing it into close association with everyday life and experience. These novels

can therefore be considered as instances of political writing, in that they functioned first as acts of identity politics and only then as works of fictitious literature (Barthes, 1972, 20–2). Their aim was not to prompt reflection or to give nuance to or throw into question the reader's conception of the world, but on the contrary to present a closed conceptual-poetic interpretive framework.

In narrative literature the classic genres of the *völkisch* tradition were the historical novel and the *Heimatsroman,* a narrative set in rural surroundings on the theme of love of hearth and homeland. They ensured the author an opportunity to present the genuine *völkisch* essence in the context of a utopian rural idyll or a recollection and evocation of the heroes of a "better" time. Prominent figures of *völkisch* literature typically thought of themselves as the narrators of a timeless *Gemeinschaft,* the harmonious, traditional community of the *Volk,* whose primary task was the presentation and propagation of "genuine" *völkisch* (in other words not cosmopolitan) culture (Geissler, 1964, 11–12). Of the Austrian representatives of this trend, Brehm,[2] who later became a highly productive pamphleteer as a supporter of National Socialism, enjoyed particular success, and Emil Lucka, who renounced his Jewish ancestry and chose to become thoroughly German, was one of the most esteemed authors of (admittedly hard to read) *völkisch* novels, as well as a friend and later biographer of the turn of the century radical philosopher Otto Weininger.[3] In the 1920s and 1930s both were increasingly preoccupied with questions of national identity and the "German fate," subjects that they addressed in several of their novels.

For the Austrian German *völkisch* novelists these questions entered into a complex and fruitful relationship of reciprocal influence with the experience of *völkisch* identity (which constituted the foundation of their works), first and foremost in connection with the conflict-ridden memory of the multinational empire. The dogmas of the *eigenständige Volk* and the *Volksgemeinschaft* excluded from the outset the possibility of assimilation, even if in the case of Lucka the life of the author itself represented an extreme example of conversion. Lucka considered assimilation to be possible at most at the level of the individual, while regarding communities as self-sustaining and timeless. In his novel *The Bleeding Mountain* [*Der blutende Berg*] he turned to the theme of the Italian–Austrian conflict, which was continuously a topic of discussion between the two World Wars in Austrian public discourse, and Brehm dealt with the same theme in his novella *The Border through the Middle of the Heart* [*Die Grenze mitten durch das Herz*]. While the two works are substantially different (Brehm examines the psychology of identity, while Lucka considers the potential for independent agency on the part of the individual shaped by the community), their works both engaged in parallel discussions of conflicts between peoples, the *Volkstumskampf* itself. In spite of the different locales, the stylistic divergences, and the different plots, the two narratives are similar in their sociological poetics inasmuch as the frames of reference they

mobilize to interpret their stories and the reinforcement they offer through the stories to these frameworks are parallel. Both consider the quality of ethnic affiliation to be absolute and both champion the moral imperative of attachment to *völkisch* character.

Similarly, both works have a bearing on the question of the *Grenzlanddeutschtum,* which was considered to be of central importance at the time. Significantly, in this case the word *Grenze* did not denote a political (state) border (for the borders of countries shift), but rather the fringes of the *Volksboden*.

After 1918 the popular *völkisch* novel brought about a radical subversion, in the context of the memory of the Habsburg Empire, of the theme of assimilation, familiar in the literatures of Central Europe. The dilemma of identity, which functioned as a strategic metaphor giving structure to narratives, and the return to *völkisch* character following the collapse of the multinational empire were the decisive motifs of this tendency and can be thought of as the literary reaction to the events of 1918 (Veiter, 1977, 165; Steinacher, 1934; Boehm, 1935, 73). The half-literary, half-political manner of writing defined itself as a memento and the imperial past as unnatural and beyond revival. It had two ideological functions: it endeavored to locate the German elements in the Habsburg past and organized the fundamental contradiction of this past, which lay in the tension between the *Volk* and the multinational empire, into a narrative plot. Each of the two novels under discussion here adopts one of these two interpretative possibilities, therefore giving apparently contradictory treatments of this past, which nonetheless converge in their anchoring of Austrian identity as unalterably and organically German.

This contradiction, therefore, exists only on the level of the *sujet*. The sociological poetics of the two works are essentially identical. Assimilation, a key question of the theory of identity underlying the texts, from this shared perspective is not a transgression; rather, it is an impossibility. Furthermore, as a struggle to preserve *völkisch* character, the *Volkstumskampf* is fate and condition, a yearning that stems from the nature of man, and rebellion against foreign influence. Thus identity can be betrayed at most, but never abandoned, as its fundamental site and substance do not reside in the freely chosen nation of a state, but rather in the *Volk,* an affiliation determined by birth. This radically collectivist utopia is the poetic core that constitutes the common distinguishing characteristic of the *völkisch* social and psychological novel. The varying approaches to the interweaving of the Habsburg past into the plot demonstrate that the Austrian *grossdeutsch* memory was itself ambivalent in its assessments of this legacy, as indeed was evident from the earlier discussion of historiography and journalism. On the one hand it assumed the unviability of the multi-ethnic or multinational state, while on the other it evinced some nostalgia for this political unity, attempting to establish a positive role for it in the master narrative of *grossdeutsch* historiography.

**The Individual and His Limits:
The Border through the Middle of the Heart**

The plot of Brehm's novella can be briefly summarized, as the functions of the events are exhausted in providing the background to the psychological inquiry (1938). Rudolph, the hero who hails from an old military family, visits Vienna as a child, where he reacts with jealousy to the discovery that his nephew, Francesco Perlini, is the favorite in his uncle's household, while he adapts with difficulty to the whims of his boorish although rich relative. They meet again more than ten years later, after the First World War, and the two veterans form an unusual friendship. Rudolph and Francesco have endless debates concerning the merits of southern culture and German culture, while the former pursues his legal studies and the latter, although also a student at the faculty of law, plans to write a description of the natural and human geography of the Karst mountains, which he loves passionately. Upon return from a one-year trip to Sweden, however, Rudolph discovers to his astonishment that his friend is terminally ill. During his second visit he hangs a Renaissance portrait of a woman on the wall of the hospital room and then takes leave of Francesco, who dies the following day. As this is happening, Rudolph discovers genuine love and prepares for his marriage to a ruddy-cheeked German girl.

The structure of the novel is relatively simple: the first chapter contains the story of Rudolph's trip to Vienna and the following three tell the story of the friendship that evolved between 1919 and 1921 (to the extent that one can determine the time frame with any precision). In this second segment of fictive time the narrative is essentially continuous and uninterrupted. We learn little about the year that Rudolph spends in Sweden, but this period has little more than a dramaturgical function as the period during which Francesco falls terminally ill. The personalities of the two protagonists and the world around them remain unchanged.

The configuration of settings is similarly simple, although it has a significant symbolic function. Before the war Rudolph lives in an unnamed town in Moravia, where the national struggle between Germans and Czechs is already raging at its height (Brehm, 1938, 22). Francesco lives in Trieste, under apparently agreeable circumstances. Although his parents are estranged from each other, his Italian father, an esteemed official in the bureaucracy of the Monarchy, sends him to a German school, while at home the two speak Italian (Brehm, 1938, 6–7). During the war his father flees to Italy, while Francesco (as a result of his father's defection) serves in a penal battalion in the Ukraine and Rudolph fights on the Italian front (Brehm, 1938, 29, 35, 51–5). It is significant, however, that the war only figures in the recollections of the characters, primarily in the form of allusion. It is a symbol and a faultline in history, falling between the era of the Monarchy and the new age

of the nation state. After 1918 both protagonists live in Vienna, Rudolph as an Austrian German proud of his identity and Francesco as an Old Austrian who cherishes yearnings for the past, a refugee who is ashamed and afraid to go to the inner city of the capital of the new republic, which is shaped now by German culture (Brehm, 1938, 62, 67, 71–2).

The duality (or even contradiction) of the German and imperial past of Vienna (as the setting of the novella) offers a geographical backdrop rich with implications concerning the psychological questions and the dilemmas of identity. Rudolph is at home in Vienna, a German-speaking city in which one finds a splendid monument to the German Gothic, the *Stephansdom,* on the main square. For Francesco, however, Vienna is the last trace of the imperial identity and the only site in rump Austria that preserves something of the legacy of the Monarchy. At the same time, for the republic, which is embroiled in its quest for *Anschluss,* the capital is a new heart in which Francesco feels that there is no place for him. He expresses his sense of the simultaneous presence and irretrievability of the past in a dialogue with Rudolph: "This is a city of ghosts. It seems as if nothing were alive here, although that which died does not want to stay dead" (Brehm, 1938, 62).

Francesco's tattered K.u.K. uniform, which he wears both in protest and because of his poverty, seems increasingly strange in the slowly renascent city, from which he gradually feels himself to be physically excluded. He only dares go to *Stephansplatz* with Rudolph, preferring otherwise to withdraw to the symbolic space of the past, the library, where he studies the natural symbol of the one-time unity of the Empire, the Karst mountains, ground consecrated by the blood of soldiers of the Monarchy, and to relax he reads about the life of prince of Reichstadt (Brehm, 1938, 56–7, 68–70).

Francesco seeks his place in the space between cultures, but according to *völkisch* ideology as illustrated by Brehm this can only be a space of exile, a non-space outside identity which alone could offer some refuge to the individual.[4] This is the source of the attraction to the pre-human, which offers an escape from the world circumscribed by the impenetrable borders drawn by the autochthonous characters of peoples. The symbol of the pre-human world in the novella is the Karst mountain range, which is Italian, Slavic and German, but perhaps first and foremost merely itself, an eternity that preceded nations. The soldiers' tombs, which in Francesco's view "consecrate" (Brehm, 1938, 56) the ground, are themselves testimony to the "pre-national." In death, the fallen, who have escaped the *Volkstumskampf,* are no longer Germans or Italians. Rather, they have returned to the soil of the Karst mountains, which knows no nations.

There is no similar escape in life, however. Taking refuge in the library, Francesco only figuratively leaves the divided world of nations. As mentioned, he finds his archetype in the figure of the prince of Reichstadt: living in the Imperial Court of Vienna, the son of Napoleon and Marie Louise suffered the same spiri-

tual exile that Francesco is compelled to endure. In addition to finding refuge in his study of the Karst mountain range and the figure of the prince, Francesco resolves (or attempts to resolve) his crisis of consciousness in the memory of the Monarchy. By wearing his fraying uniform of a K.u.K. ensign, he continues to express his attachment to the old empire, but the novella implies that the Monarchy is not a historical edifice of an earlier era in which Francesco might find his place, but rather itself an undefined or amorphous formation, that was perhaps able for a time to lift the Germans within its border to new heights of history, but was nonetheless eventually doomed to fall.

Francesco served for years in a penal battalion to which he was transferred for no other reason than his father's voluntary exile. After the war he does everything to "reinterpret" those years, striving not to see them as punishment, but rather simply as military service. The novella, however, undermines the credibility of his attempts. The reader learns that almost all the other members of the battalion considered themselves to be Romanian, Czech, Ruthenian or Serb, and they all sang their own folk songs during the long nights in the Ukraine, awaiting all the while the eagerly anticipated fall of the Empire. A Romanian ensign turns to him at one point and says (and Francesco remembers his exact words years later), "you would have made the best Austrian of any of us, and you are now the most sad among us, but this Austria has not existed for some time now" (Brehm, 1938, 84).

This, according to Brehm, was the Monarchy: the penal battalion of the awakening nations, whose desire for secession was entirely understandable from the *völkisch* perspective. What remained of the legacy of the Empire, Brehm suggests elsewhere, was the work of the German *Volk,* in other words not the product of the meeting of peoples. In the long run the autochthonous character of each *Volk* and the imperative of a national homeland would inevitably assert itself. This, however, constitutes a judgment of the attempt of the protagonist to fashion an alternative "inter-national" identity for himself. Just as the Empire was destined to collapse, so Francesco's attempt was sure to fail, for it went against the fundamental laws of nature.

The psychological plot of the novella, which has a simple temporal structure and setting and very few characters, illustrates a single tenet (and from this point of view one may speak with some justification of the novella as the illustration of a thesis). As an anti-*Heimatsroman,* it depicts the desperate struggle of a young man who lives in denial of the primordial feeling of *Gemeinschaft,* trying to forget the "call of blood," which in Brehm's view is the only bearer of the promise of home. Francesco's fate is therefore tragic: his "homelessness" (understood as a kind of spiritual exile) in his chosen homeland exemplifies the impossibility of assimilation, the "terminal illness" of *völkisch Lebensphilosophie,* from which the only refuge is indeed death itself.

According to the novella, ethnic identity can neither be cast aside nor transcended. It is connected to the timeless and the sphere beyond the individual, fundamentally influencing the psyche, tastes and desires of the individual. The *Volk* is eternal, the individual powerless. The bizarre and unnatural botchwork of the Monarchy had been a deceptive mirage of history (understood as the total of the discrete narratives of the fates of peoples closed within their own *Volksgemeinschaft*), and the last victim of this mirage, the last martyr of the multinational empire, was none other than Francesco Perlini.

The Individual and His Potential: The Bleeding Mountain

In his novel *The Bleeding Mountain,* Emil Lucka tells the story of a peasant family from South Tyrol (1931). In accordance with the tradition of the *Heimatsroman,* the novel has a simple structure but numerous characters, several of whom serve merely to illustrate a single idea on the part of the author. From this point of view, the plot-centric tale is in diametric opposition to Brehm's psychological novella. In this case too, however, the essence of the story can be briefly summarized. As a consequence of a series of coincidences, the Tscholl family awakens the suspicions of the Italian authorities.[5] The father and his two sons, Dietrich and Valentin, come into conflict with the authorities. The daughter, Irma, kills an Italian gendarme officer and because of the many fines levied against the family, they lose their house. Eventually abandoning their home of some 300 years, the proud peasant family is compelled, following Dietrich's death, to leave the ancestral German lands.

The chronology of the novel is linear, with a single caesura of uncertain duration. The two halves of the novel tell the story of roughly one year in the mid-1920s. As the plot unravels, however, the parallel mythical plane comes to figure with increasing prominence, recalling the battle of Dietrich of Berne and the evil dwarf king Laurin (Lucka, 1931, 122, 198). The myth does not disrupt the linearity of the narrative, but rather reiterates and interprets the increasingly complex story by giving the trials of the Tyrolean peasant family the aura of an eternal struggle, in other words investing the simple tale with the attributes of eternal return. The mythic dimension does not figure in an independent chapter, nor even in subsections of chapters, but rather always in connection with the plot itself, and correspondingly fragmentarily, and with sudden transitions between the planes of myth and the present.

The story takes place in a rural mountainous district and a small town, settings that are clearly separated from each other by the structure of the narrative. This separation, however, implies similarity, not opposition. Both settings are sites of German culture that bear a common identity more profound than the differences

in lifestyles: the German spirit, able and willing to adapt to circumstances, remains essentially unchanged. Similarly, the Italian incursions affect both settings and are identical in their character, their implements, and their aims: they seek to eliminate the distinctive culture that arose through many centuries of German work and assimilate the region (Lucka, 1931, 12, 36–41, 84–5).

At the same time, the symbolic site for the Germans of South Tyrol is unambiguously the mountain, as the title of the novel makes clear. The mountain, however, figures as an actual setting only in moments of particular significance in the narrative, precisely because of its symbolic importance. Everyday life takes place at its foot, in the village or the small town. The trade in smuggled goods, however, which is the only means of preserving relations with Austria and Germany, straddles the mountain, while the deliberate deforestation denudes it, exemplifying ruthless Italian exploitation of the land, in contrast with the harmonious German lifestyle in close proximity to nature. In the end Dietrich's confrontation with the Italian gendarme officer takes place on the mountain as well, as did the struggle between Dietrich of Berne and the dwarf king, and his beloved flings herself from its heights with his dead body in her arms (Lucka, 1931, 201–4).

The key to the symbolic significance of the mountain is the well on its slope, the water of which turned to blood in 1809, at the time of the Hofer uprising. At a dramatic moment in the unraveling of the plot, when the youths swear their allegiance to the German and Austrian flags with the priest, the waters again are bloodied (Lucka, 1931, 46–7, 169–71). Thus the mountain to which they have retreated to take their oath is the site of memory and identity. It is a central metaphor the basis of which, however, is not some sort of atmospheric correspondence, but rather the signification of the mythical battle of Dietrich of Berne on the one hand and the traditions of several centuries of life in the Alps on the other. The bloody water is both a reminder and a warning: it alludes to the dangers threatening the Tyroleans, symbolically calling for individual sacrifice.

As the many threads of the plot unravel, no doubt remains concerning the epic nature of the struggle. The school inspector Buttazeoni rapes Philomena, the daughter of the teacher Eisenstecken, thereby weaving another mythical element into the tale. Following the dismissal of Eisenstecken there is a spontaneous gathering of villagers at the home of the Tscholl family, where the Tyrolean, imperial (Habsburg) and German flags are brought out from their secret hiding place. Eisenstecken finds a church painting of the 1809 uprising, which he had hidden in 1918, and just before the arrival of the gendarmerie the villagers assembled sing a folk song about Andreas Hofer (Lucka, 1931, 51–8).

The various events all bear the semes of *Volktstumskampf,* referring in this case to the struggle fought in the cause of preserving the identity of the communities of Germans severed from the body of the German *Volk* (Haar, 2000, 49). In and of itself, however, the interpretation of the novel as a whole as a narrative of

Volktstumskampf would not be adequate. The text is structured into narrative through the function of the individual in this struggle (as a combination of duty and opportunity), or rather the parallel articulation of this function in the accounts of the fates of Dietrich and his father. This characteristically collectivist ethics creates the system of morals, both dissolving and strengthening the individual, who can only exist authentically as part of the *Volk,* but who finds and even creates himself through this existence. In this interpretative framework the memory of the "German" Monarchy was naturally integrated into the history of *Volktstumskampf,* as is apparent on the level of symbols from the reference to the use of the two flags, that of the Habsburg Empire and that of Germany, side by side. This motif recurs in the father's attachment to the flags, for the possession of which he is arrested:

> But he would not give them the flags! And he thought of the people
> who sat languishing in prison, because they could not become Ital-
> ians out of Austrians, or Welsh out of Germans. He was a captive on
> his own soil, a servant in his home (Lucka, 1931, 23).

As this citation makes clear, membership in the state was tantamount to membership in the *Volk*. To be Austrian and German was, for Lucka, not a contradiction, just as the memory of the Monarchy and German *völkisch* memory not only were harmonious and compatible, but were inseparable, for instance in the mythos of the Hofer uprising, as the most significant point of reference of Tyrolean identity.

Conclusions

The novels of Brehm and Lucka both consider the question of the potentials of the individual in the formation of his relationship to a community in the context of the same ideological system of references. The common perspective of the two novels is the *völkisch* idea, which takes first and foremost the conceptual pair of attachment and belonging as its starting point in relation to the individual. In *völkisch* ideology (and thus in the *Heimatsroman*), membership in a community is not a choice. Rather, it constitutes a given attribute and a task, the recognition of which is the challenge set for the individual, being in this sense identical with the way in which the *völkisch* community itself is conceived. In his novel Brehm examines the attempt (in his view doomed to failure) to escape from the *Volk* and an identity the roots of which lie in the *Volk,* while Lucka considers the potential for the realization of the duties and freedoms stemming from *völkisch* consciousness.

From the point of view of an assessment of the new-Austrian [*neuöster-reichisch*] prose that developed in the period following the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the two novels presented here as paradigmatic and

representing a significant segment of the popular literature at the time are revealing. Aesthetically they do not bear comparison with the works of Elias Canetti or Joseph Roth, for instance, and they have little or no significance in the context of literary history (from the point of view of canon formation). Nonetheless, they were printed in huge numbers of copies, and thus not only are of interest as sources in the study of the *histoire des mentalités,* but in several aspects offer more faithful representations of the era than the works of such writers as Robert Musil or Karl Kraus, which were of significance only for a small layer of the intellectual and cultural elite. Understandably, the Habsburg renaissance of the past two decades established canons in every field of scholarship laying emphasis on the languages and manners of writing in the discourses of the past that can be read as part of a dialogue with our age, discovering in them aesthetic and conceptual prefigurations and anticipations of the present. The historian, however, cannot restrict himself to investigations of the past in which dialogues between with the historical horizon follow naturally. She must strive to present intellectual currents which were as significant socially at some point in the past as they are alien today, and the language of which, indeed, she may not even speak.

It is therefore useful to remember that Brehm and Lucka were themselves heirs to the legacy of the Monarchy, and its utter collapse prompted them (as it did Roth, Kraus and others) to reconsider their circumstances. In the situation created by the disillusionment following the fall of the Monarchy, the two novels under discussion constituted documents of the range of ideas of the *völkisch* movement, which for many were gradually becoming increasingly irresistible because they offered, through the *grossdeutsch* idea, a way out of the intellectual and political crisis. They could be considered as responses to a painful calamity: the experience of the historical failure of the *Vielvölkerreich* (the multinational empire), the death throes of which were seen as dating back to 1866–67, constitutes the metaphorical soil in which their tenets and precepts took root. As responses, they cannot be separated from the Habsburg Empire, even if they constitute a rejection of the ideals that held it together. For these texts vehemently reject the possibility of assimilation and the assumption or transformation of identity (whether imperial or *völkisch*), just as they deny the potential of historical process and political art to foster new identities. In response to the fluctuations of history, they gesture to the *Gemeinschaft* as a universal and timeless measure of value, and they derive the position of the individual in the world from his relationship to the *völkisch* community. In this discourse, the border(lands) emerged as the true frontier of German experience. These wild countries – be they of the heart of Francesco Perlini or the Alps themselves – were presented as mortally dangerous for the individual and the community, yet also calling for and serving as the backdrop for great deeds. The *Grenzland* was thus truly the space of *Grenzsituationen:* the border became the liminal, permitting a deeper and truer understanding of key knowledge required for the functioning of the individual, the tribe and, ultimately, the nation.

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Notes

[1]   The cited popular lexicon of the era gives the following definition of *völkisch:* "a common term of recent coinage the use of which, like *volklich,* is widespread," and "the German equivalent of 'national'".

[2]   Bruno Brehm (1892, Ljubljana – 1974, Altaussee; also known by the pseudonym Bruno Clemens), a popular novelist whose trilogy on the collapse of the Monarchy has been translated into almost all the languages of Europe. In the 1930s he associated with members of the National Socialist party, and during the Second World War worked as a propagandist. In the final stages of his career as a novelist he turned against his own Nazi past, although he did not distance himself from the national program. His works include the following: *Apis und Este, 1931; Das war das Ende, 1932; Weder Kaiser noch König, 1933; Zu früh und zu spät, 1936; Auf Wiedersehen, Susanne, 1939; Die sanfte Gewalt, 1941; Der fremde Gott, 1948; Der Lügner, 1949; Aus der Reitschuln, 1951; Das zwölfjährige Reich I–III., 1960/61; Warum wir sie lieben, 1963; Am Ende stand Königgrätz, 1965.*

[3]   Emil Lucka (1877, Vienna – 1941, Vienna), writer, dramatist and essayist. In his youth he was a close friend of Weininger, whose ideas exerted a strong influence on him. He defined the concept of race from a historical perspective, but at the same time was considered a representative of German *völkisch* literature, his Jewish background notwithstanding. His works include the following: *Otto Weininger, 1905; Isolde Weißhand, 1909; Grenzen der Seele, 1916; Heiligenrast, 1919; Dostojewski, 1924; Michelangelo, 1930; Tod und Leben, 1907; Am Sternbrunnen, 1925; Der blutende Berg, 1931; Der Impresario, 1937*.

[4]   In the heat of one of the debates Francesco cries out, "We lost the war? I didn't just lose the war! I am left with nothing, nothing in the world! I don't even know what to seek, no matter how badly I yearn to find something" (Brehm, 1938, 57).

[5]   The family's name is revealing: *Scholle,* or soil. It represents the bond between the German peasantry and the land, which is inseperable from the *Volkstum* and the identity of the individual.

BRIDGE TO NOWHERE: DANILO KIŠ'S "MUDDY TALE" AND EUROPE'S SHIFTING FRONTIERS

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This paper discusses Danilo Kiš's relationship to Hungarian culture in general and Hungarian literature specifically. It also presents Kis's views of the regional geography of Pannonia and analyzes the three complementary elements in Kis's identity: the Serbian, the Jewish, and the Hungarian.

Keywords: Danilo Kiš, nationalism, translation, Szabadka/Subotica, Pannonia, Central Europe, Balkans

In 1986, the Yugoslav novelist Danilo Kiš wrote the following passages in an essay about his hometown, Subotica (Szabadka), in northern Vojvodina, where he was born in 1935:

> It was in this city, then, that two crucial factors in my life took shape, as ordained by God or Chance: here is where my father, Eduard Kiš (orig. *Kohn* – JKC), senior inspector of the state railways and author of the Yugoslav Timetable for Railroad, Bus, Ship and Air Traffic, met my mother, Milica Dragićević, a Montenegrin beauty, away from her native Cetinje for the first time, on a visit to her sister. A rare encounter, perhaps unique in those times.

> I first saw Subotica sometime around the end of the 1970s, if I don't count the train station, which I saw from the train when I was seven, at the time of my journey to Hungary, and again when I was 13, upon my return. I don't know what mechanism of memory was in play – perhaps it was because the train stood so long in the station – but I remembered the muscadine-filled baskets that served as decoration on all train depots in those days.

> That winter of 1942 was one of the coldest winters of the war; the temperature dropped below 30 degrees Celsius; and thus the massacre of the Jewish and Serbian population was known in those parts as "the cold days," as if people wished to avoid the real, and more fitting, construction "the bloody days" by using a meteorological meta-

phor. For in these Central European and Balkan regions of ours, we have a lot of "bloody days," and it would seem that some serviceable causal factor was being sought, insofar as the discussion was not about the human need to avoid calling horrifying things by their rightful names.

[T]he language (In the spring of 1942, my father decided to teach us Hungarian ... the courtyard at twilight, open windows with bright red geraniums in berry-shaped enamel pots. My sister and I are sitting on a low wooden bench, with my father opposite us in a squeaking wicker armchair; suddenly he jerked his head up straight, probably because a snowflake had landed on a page of his open book. "Hull a hó," he says. "Repeat after me: hull a hó." That means: it's snowing. This meteorological sentence, the first sentence I learned in Hungarian, would hover above my Pannonian childhood like the title of a catchy ballad.)[1]

These excerpts from a little-known essay give a good feel for some of the material and intellectual culture of the Vojvodina that was so important to Kiš in his cycle of autobiographical novels.[2] Kiš's connections to Vojvodina and his own mixed ethnic background[3] make him a logical subject for investigation as a cultural actor in the Hungarian–Serbian borderlands. The goals of this essay are to delineate Kiš's role in this important zone of cultural exchange and to analyze this role in the context of his life-long artistic engagement on many fronts.

That Kiš's *de facto* approach to acting as a bridge between cultures is likely to be undramatic, fitful, or lukewarm is set up by two pillars of the author's intellectual world. The better known of these is his opposition to nationalism, which Kiš derided as kitsch and moral relativism of the worst sort; this aversion left him allergic to singing any particular culture's "greatest hits," even sympathetically or to a sympathetic audience. When trying to account for Kiš's rejection of nationalism's emotional or political worth, one could argue for the influence of two strands of thinking. First, there is the tortured epistemology of his tales; whether making use of incipient post-modern self-referentiality, intertextuality, or "cataloguing," or of competing modernist points of view, Kiš shies away from the well-defined, seamless narratives that serve a political nation, its historians, and its leaders so well. Second, Kiš deviates sharply from the most famous Central European and Balkan writers from the century or so before him because he is not in any way involved in a nation-building project, nor is he even plumbing the depths of the character or "soul" of any national group. He is no Petőfi, Prešeren, Mickiewicz, Andrić, Botev, Krleža, Shevchenko, Fishta, or even Kadare. His project, his quest, is a filial one: to track, in the family cycle, with whatever tools he can, including his own deficient memory, the "muddy tale" of his father and to make sense of it in the political cycle. This filial quest is a concern at once norma-

tive and, literally, formative: it shapes his work and drives his hunt for narrative form as a bulwark against oblivion and chaos. Kiš is his father's son and he is a son of literature, but he is no son of the Hungarian, Serbian, or any other nation.

These factors led Kiš to advocate literature with universal moral relevance; specific characters or settings in his work, be they ethnic, political, or biographical, are merely the case studies he employs as he "writes what he knows." To tie the relevance of one's art to a specific group is, in essence, to suppress truth about the human condition. Far from doing that, Kiš struck out radically in the opposite direction, encouraging all sorts of comparisons and confessions and discouraging triumphalism of any sort.

The second hallmark of Kiš's thinking that discourages "bridge-building" is his extensive, albeit not flawless, rejection of traditional regional typologies. If Serbia is Balkan, the wishful argument might go, then Hungary is Central Europe and Kiš spans, links, and interprets the two to each other. Kiš, however, does not accept the existence of the gulf requiring a bridge. Analysis of Kiš's fiction and non-fiction texts shows, at a minimum, that he expands the idea of Central Europe to include nearly all of southeastern Europe; Transylvania, Bucharest, and Bosnia he includes in the "mildly Baroque" area extending from the Baltic Sea to Trieste or in the zone of, to paraphrase, Vienna and its allies or the zone of the Danubian tribes. Where the Balkans exist, they have something to do with an Ottoman legacy (including, jocularly, a lack of punctuality which Kiš thought he shared) and, most importantly, with the condition of being ruled from outside; that, in turn, is also generally held to be a Central European historical trait. More radically, Kiš sometimes stands the traditional hierarchy of Central Europe over Balkans on its head. For him, Central Europe was where his family met death and where cold, muddy, intolerant childhood misery was visited upon him; by contrast, the Balkans was for him the fertile southern garden of mountain vistas, citrus blooms, and the peaceful, quiet, reading of French literature and glorious family history in his mother's Montenegrin home. Most radically, he replaces the venerable regions of Miłosz, Kundera, Konrád, and Schöpflin with new ones, such as Pannonia and the Mediterranean. There might be tension between "Europe" and "Russia," but more interesting for Kiš is why the small or unfamiliar languages of "Eastern Europe" have such difficulty slipping into the canon of the West. It is less a plea for particularism than recognition of cognitive and cultural reality that prompts Kiš to defend his own and others' first languages. The East European writer drags with him or her on all journeys a piano (beauty, intelligibility) and a dead horse (historical and linguistic specificity, in all its dimness and grimness). There we have it: if no nation, if no regions, then no arbiters and no moderating. But we can still ask: are there nonetheless some kinds of frontiers that do separate people, and what does the work of managing or effacing those frontiers look like?

For Kiš, frontiers were mental and moral, but his childhood, personality, and cultural identity were shaped by three major factors. All of these are reflected in his writings across the spectrum of genres. Arguably the most fundamental of these strata is his Serbianness. During the wars of Yugoslav succession in the 1990s, Kiš's status as a "good Serb" (i.e., an anti-nationalist, for better or worse) brought this cultural and ethnic association into the foreground; Kiš's well-known intolerance of nationalism and political narrow-mindedness and his truly multicultural Yugoslav affinities made revanchist Serbs wary of him in the 1980s, just as they endeared him to the international community in the 1990s. But we should not forget that although Serbs do not, by a long shot, appear in the "starring" roles in Kiš's fiction, he wrote almost exclusively in Serbo-Croatian, and Serbo-Croatian was the target language of his voluminous translations. Serbia and Yugoslavia were the focus of his professional world, even though he worked for many years in various cities in France. After his death in Paris, Kiš was, after all, buried without controversy in Belgrade.

"Language," Kiš wrote, "is a writer's fate." Less than half of his corpus has been translated into English or German; slightly more is available in French. The fact that so much of his writing (the critical essays as well as short stories, plays, and more) is "hiding" from so many of us in Serbo-Croatian means that a sense of his full thematic range is elusive. Some of his most interesting essays treat neither nationalism, nor French symbolism, nor Yugoslav cultural polemics, but great South Slavic writers. He prized Miroslav Krleža (a Croat) as a great chronicler of Pannonia, Miloš Crnjanski (a Serb) as a high modernist, and Ivo Andrić (a Bosnian Serb, and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962) for his skillful portrayal of women and others as outsiders and victims.

The second component of Kiš's personal and artistic identity was his Jewishness. His early life was overwhelmingly dominated by the impact of World War II on his family. He was born in the northernmost part of Serbia, which since 1918 had been part of the new country of Yugoslavia, and his family moved to the capital of his home region, Novi Sad (Hungarian: Újvidék) in 1939, but they fled to Hungary in 1942 after Yugoslavia fell to a multilateral Axis invasion. Kiš then spent the remaining years of the war in Zala county, but his father was deported to Auschwitz, never to return, in 1944. In 1947 the surviving family members returned to Montenegro, where they lived with the family of Kiš's mother. In Kiš's fiction as well as in his understanding of his family's history, Jewishness is viewed fatalistically as a kind of martyrdom. This is the case even though Kiš's parents wrestled over his identity, his own religious views ranged from the existential to the agnostic, and his father was persecuted (though not lethally) for his alcoholism, public rages, and eccentricities as well as his ethnicity.

Kiš was eventually criticized in communist Yugoslavia for the supposed Jewish "particularism" of tales of characters victimized by intolerant states and ideol-

ogies. But in response he asserted the exact opposite: his characters were selected for their universality, since in their historical setting the (mostly) Jewish characters were plausibly portrayed as victims of both extreme left and extreme right, and since every writer has the right to pick a certain material, preferably familiar or intimate, with which to work. Kiš suspected that the real reasons for much of the mistrust, especially in Serbia, of his work had to do with the lack of ethnically Serbian voices therein and the equation of leftist and rightist extremism.

Nonetheless one feels, from Kiš's first writings in the 1950s to his final interviews in the 1980s, the overwhelming centrality of his awareness of his family's Jewish identity and the importance of the example of Jewish suffering in understanding the 20th century. That his father's struggles and death would shape Kiš's entire career is foreshadowed by his powerful but little known poem, "Biography," from 1955:

> That Eduard Kohn was a prodigious drunk.
> He wore eyeglasses of glistening prisms
> and watched the world through them
> as if through a rainbow.
>
> 1.
>
> Even as a child
> he had to urinate after the others at school,
> for he was circumcised.
> Once he was in love
> with a baker's daughter,
> felt a touch of happiness then.
> When she learned he was circumcised,
> she didn't think
> she could share his bed.
> From that point on
> he loved to slip his wages to csárdás-fiddlers
> and trade kisses with Gypsies.
> And then,
> seeking comfort,
> he grew enamored
> of Deliria,
> and she wrapped him up in her sincere embrace.
>
> 2.
>
> The wind scattered his ashes
> through the narrow smokestack
> at the crematorium,
> higher, higher,
> all the way
> to the rainbow.[4]

Finally we arrive at the last component of Kiš's identity, his Hungarianness. Kiš's memories of his earliest childhood are couched largely in Hungarian; the dream-like "hull a hó" quoted earlier is paralleled in other stories by the wartime phrases "büdös zsidó" ["stinking Jew"] and "Éljen Szálasi!" ["long live Szálasi," leader of the Arrow Cross party that was installed in Hungary by the occupying German forces in autumn 1944]. Hungary's impact was also felt positively: Kiš's first great literary fascination was with Endre Ady. He translated many of Ady's poems into Serbo-Croatian and remained an advocate of Ady's elevation into the Western canon his whole life. Ady at once inspired Kiš and convinced him to concentrate on prose instead of poetry for, as he put it, Ady "castrated" him as a poet. If the great Transylvanian showed what the Hungarian language could do in the era of revolutionary modernism, Kiš was convinced that Ady had done it both for Hungarian and for poetry.

Kiš remained attracted to and engaged with the Hungarian literary tradition for his entire life, however. He translated works by a wide range of Hungarian authors, from "revolutionaries" such as Petőfi and Ady to his modern favorites Ottó Tolnai and Ferenc Juhász, and he was a strong advocate for the works of György Petri, whose "The Under-Secretary Makes a Statement" he both translated and praised in an essay. The poem's ribald flavor and invocation of misogyny and pessimism remind one to a certain extent of Kiš's own works, even though Kiš was seldom grotesque. But above all it is Petri's lampooning of autocratic officials that reminds one of Kiš, especially his own late poem "The Poet of the Revolution on Board the Presidential Yacht."

References to Hungary and Hungarians are abundant in Kiš's fictional works, especially of course in the family cycle. A useful summation of Kiš's attitude towards his own years in Hungary is found in the essay "A and B." Here Kiš describes southwestern Hungary, where he labored on a farm until 1947, as a "rat-hole" characterized by urine smells, rust, rotten wood, wet clay, and howling wind. These terms can just as readily be viewed as his boyhood understanding of the war years and the tragedy it brought to his family, and his appreciation of Hungarian literature and the Hungarian language, as well as that country's similar post-Stalinist political evolution through the one-party state with a socialist system, were undimmed by these early hardships.

In this essay, an attempt has been made to see Danilo Kiš as something other than a national cultural representative of one or more groups, something more than even an arbiter between groups. As individualistic and cosmopolitan as Kiš could be, he kept about him an earthiness and a pragmatism that was to some extent in competition with this cosmopolitanism and also with his incipient post-modernism. His work as a translator would seem to be the field in which we can profitably search for Kiš's role in cross-cultural processes, bridge-building, so to speak. He is not so much introducing one culture to another as merging his in-

tellectual and ethical tasks in copious and wide-ranging sets of translations from French, Russian, Hungarian, English, and even Vietnamese.[5] Kiš translated not as the representative of one culture or another, and not as the conservationist or advocate of a particular place, but as the architect of a certain type of mental space. In its broadest expanse, Kiš's filial quest becomes an examination of intolerance and the outsider, and in order to portray these concepts fully in the era of Hitler and Stalin and from the point of view of a "minor" European culture, an embrace of revolutionary artistic tactics (going back as far as Petőfi and Akhmatova) is necessary.

In the revolutionized space at the junction of Kiš's artistic and political thinking, the two kinds of people on our planet, if you will, are the tolerant and the intolerant. Intolerance is the barbarism and oblivion of the absence of form; intolerance is the state that denies individual rights and the culture that sneers at pluralism. Kiš's translated literary modernists and suffering revolutionaries, along with his characters, confront the world and history as individuals, not as groups. The reason for this confrontation is so that, to paraphrase the author, no one forgets to notice a day on which a child's death occurs. For Kiš, the human condition seems to this historian akin to a walk down a hallway that ends in a tub of poison and a shattered mirror. The mirror, difficult as it is to use, holds the only hope of inspiring wakefulness and awareness of alternate paths. Ferenc Juhász, one of the Hungarian authors whom Kiš most admired, wrote a famous poem entitled "The Grave of Attila József." In this poem, which Kiš translated into Serbo-Croatian, we find these grave words about the artist's ultimate responsibility, mirroring Kiš's own views about the supra-national, individualistic, and revolutionized space that art can create:

> For woe to us, woe to the earth, if with our star-dense
>   words we cannot
> steady the world's pivot, with words lark-wing light, or
> words fire-trailed, words whale-spouting, or mastodon-heavy…
> seal shut the furnace at the white-hot world's core, and
> with words soft as babies' soles pad our frail small body,
> your soapbubble frail body taken down from the cross of
> the world.[6]

Notes

[1]   *Source:* Danilo Kiš (1995) *Skladište* (Beograd: BIGZ), 315–21, 379–81. Mirjana Miočinović, editor of the *Skladište* volume, introduces the parenthetical material from another source into the essay at hand via a footnote at this point. Her argument is that it is "thematically connected" and the association would seem legitimate because of the high degree of overlap between many of Kiš's autobiographical texts.

²   This cycle, usually said to consist of the two great novels *Garden, Ashes* (1965) and *Hourglass* (1972), should also be considered to include the short stories of *Early Sorrows* as well as the play *Night and Fog*. These critically acclaimed prose works are paralleled by another cycle of sorts, the "hermetic" or historico-political story collections *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (1976) and *Encyclopedia of the Dead* (1982). These two cycles comprise the lion's share of Kiš's fictional output, though he also wrote, before his untimely death in Paris in 1989, other stories, three other novels, four other plays, and a wealth of essays and criticism.

³   Kiš's father was a Hungarian Jew from southwestern Hungary; his family had once been German-speaking. Kiš's mother, Milica Dragićević, was a Montenegrin who practiced Orthodox Christianity.

⁴   "Biografija" in Mirjana Miočinović (ed.) (1995) *Pesme; Elektra* (Beograd: BIGZ).

⁵   See Kiš's contributions to *Druže, tvoja kuća gori* (Beograd: Udruženje književnika Srbije, 1968).

⁶   Ferenc Juhász (1970) 'The Grave of Attila József' in Kenneth McRobbie and Ilona Duczynska (translators) *The Boy Changed into a Stag: Selected Poems, 1949–1967* (New York: Oxford University Press), 150.

KING MATTHIAS IN HUNGARIAN
AND EUROPEAN FOLKLORE

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The folklore surrounding the figure of King Matthias offers an illuminating example
of the international nature of both the culture of the Renaissance and folklore itself.
The following paper offers an overview of the history of much of the research and
scholarship concerning the figure of the king in European folklore (particularly the
folklore traditions of Central Europe), followed by a discussion of the historical lay-
ers of inter-ethnic (international) Matthias folklore.

Keywords: King Matthias, Corvin, Hunyadi, renaissance, myth, legend, folklore,
Hungary, Central Europe

> Kralj Matjaž King Matthias of the Slovenes, successor to Kresnik,
> and legendary conqueror of the Turks. Like Kresnik, Matjaž too was
> married to his sister, Alenčica, whom, in legend, he rescued from the
> Turks, or in Slovenian traditional ballad, from the underworld.
> Matjaž is also a king in the mountain, sleeping till the day of
> Slovenia's utter need, when he will emerge and save everything…
>
> It is said that during World War II the peasants thought King Matjaž
> would ride again and save Slovenia (Funk & Wagnalls, 1950, v. 1,
> 589–90).

The above citation is the only entry in which reference is made to King
Matthias in the 1950 *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore Mythol-
ogy and Legend,* which to this day remains the most famous such reference work.
Yet in Hungary and the bordering countries it is a well-known fact that the deeds
of King Mátyás (Matthias) Corvin (original family name: Hunyadi) are of interest
to this day not only to historians and cultural historians, but also to folklorists.
This is due quite simply to the fact that tales, legends, myths, proverbs, etc. in
which the king figured have been recorded not only in Hungarian folklore, but
also in the Slovenian, Slovak, and Ruthenian folklore of the past several centuries
(practically speaking up to the present day). Many prominent Hungarian and
non-Hungarian researchers of folklore have examined these themes. While the

folklore phenomena of the Carpathian Basin or the northern and western areas of the Balkans are interrelated in thousands of other respects, the figure of the Hungarian king, who perished more than a half a millennium ago, is possibly the most recognized common subject in this region, which itself can only be truly assessed within the framework of international research.

The fact that for a long time innumerable stories have surrounded the Romanian origins of the father of King Matthias, János Hunyadi, the famous military leader who defeated the Ottoman armies at the battle of Várna in 1444, and the possible lineage of the Hungarian king Sigismund of Luxembourg, who was also Holy Roman Emperor, is part of this international perspective. Numerous Hungarian heroes (among them the young János Hunyadi, as Jankula, Matthias' uncle Mihály Szilágyi, and even King Matthias and his captains) regularly figure in Southern Slav heroic epic poetry. And even these broader relationships cannot be comprehended entirely if we fail to take into consideration further and more remote historical and folklore data and interpretations of these data, including material also from Albanian, Moravian, Czech, Austrian and Italian sources.

The imagology of King Matthias is a highly illuminating topic in European comparative folklore, a topic to which we can recently add further parallels, even those of a typological (i.e., not-genetical) nature. Here we can list only some motifs, e.g. the boy born amidst miraculous premonitions, the Christian ruler battling with the pagans, the king who protected the people and was the scourge of the lords, the ruthless yet just ruler, the sovereign who is not only not of aristocratic lineage, but is of outright peasant origin, and who explores the country in disguise, and finally the figure of the immortal returning hero all constitute models that could have been concocted in the folklore of many peoples.

The arrival and a certain blossoming of humanism and the Renaissance in 15th century Hungary, the influx of Italians and from other nations, the splendor until then unheard of in Hungary, the spread of court culture, the carefully tailored political and military propaganda, the breaking of the ideological monopoly of the Church, and eventually the final disbanding of the much feared professional soldiery (the king's so-called Black Army) into a gang of robbers represented new phenomena that could easily be transformed into motifs in local or comparative folklore.

Neither was the private life of King Matthias short of novelistic twists and turns. The execution of László (his elder brother), the captivity in Prague, the betrothal of the daughter of the Czech ruler Jiřý (George) Poděbrad, the election of the very young Matthias as king of Hungary by the common people on the "frozen waters of the Danube," the decision of the king to turn soon on his earliest supporters, the averting of several conspiracies (in which the majority of his favored Hungarian humanists in fact took active part), his ceaseless and endless military campaigns, his second marriage to a princess of Naples, his long and multifarious

relationship with the historical Dracula (Vlad Țepes), the capture of Vienna, his ambitions to become King of Bohemia, prince of Silesia, and indeed prince-elector of the Holy Roman Empire, and ultimately his unexpected and peculiar death and the fate of the illegitimate son, János Corvin chosen as his successor – all seemed almost to be recorded not simply as history but as fiction. And indeed his contemporaries themselves must have often conversed and debated or invented explanations concerning such events. Seeing as how within the span of only a few decades after his death the greatest peasant war in Hungary took place (1514), the Hungarian kingdom itself ceased to exist following the defeat at Mohács in 1526, the southern and central regions of the country were conquered in the coming 150 years by the Ottoman Empire, and then the century of Reformation and religious struggles began – the period of Matthias Heyday's rule can seem soon by the coming generations something of an irretrievable "golden age," and to some in Hungary does seem so even to this day.

Folklorists have known for some time that an idealized image of the king emerged invariably in the folklore of the above mentioned peoples. Ever since these texts were recorded in the folklore of these nations (essentially since the 19th century) the question has arisen: where lie the origins of this international agglomeration of multi-genre texts mentioning King Matthias? In the case of Hungarians (Croatians and Slovaks) one could suppose that by this time (in the 19th century) the already long and official historical consciousness in Hungary had become part of the broader consciousness of the people (however, presumably through intermediaries), though in the case of Slovenian and Ruthenian, Romanian (etc.) folklore such an explanation is by no means self-evident.

As early as 1842 or 1843 Matija Majar Ziljski published (in German) Slovenian songs about King Matthias. The first comparative scholar of folklore concerning king Matthias was the Galician philologist Zenon Kuzelja, a student of Vatroslav Jagić, the famous Slavist in Vienna. In a monograph (Kuzelja, 1906) he summarized these traditions of Slavic peoples (and Hungarians). Kuzelja is a representative of the comparative study of Slavonic languages and literatures of his time, most notably accepting the views on the migration of themes and motifs held by the eminent Russian philologist, A. N. Veselovsky. While we may be familiar today with a far broader array of information and texts, the methods and conclusions of Kuzelja (and of his teachers) are nevertheless still deserving our attention. A monograph published half a century later by Slovak folklore scholar Ján Komorovský (1957) essentially adopts this approach, at most adding more historical and cautionary Marxist social commentary. In Slovenian philology several generations of outstanding scholars examined this subject. Ivan Grafenauer first surveyed the legends (1951a) and later the songs (1951b). He also gave scholarly consideration to the hypothesis that in Slovenian folklore Matthias could be considered a substitute for an almost mythical figure of earlier texts. The possibil-

ity of an "ancient, mythical" interpretation arose in particular in the case of Slovenian narrative or epical-lyrical songs, an interpretation that was also maintained by scholars of novels and novelists to the extent that they substituted Matthias not for the figure of the Hungarian king, but for outlaw barons and rebels from among the people. Fortunately distinguished Slovenian scholars such as Milko Matičetov, Vilko Novak, Vlado Nartnik and others took a fairly cautious stance on this question. They and their colleagues drew attention to the fact that the themes of the texts mentioning Matthias also contain well known international motifs (which can nearly all be analyzed individually and which point into various and divergent directions). Of these the most notable is the Orpheus-motif known from the antiquity, and later the so-called Kyffhäuser motif of the hero waiting in a cave and returning with his army (see Lukács, 2001). Igor Kercha (2001) links the duration of the Ruthenian Matthias tradition to the present day with the historical consciousness of the local population of the most north-east part of the historical Hungary, which has existed for as long as folk texts have been collected in this Subcarpathian region.

As far as Hungarian researchers of folklore are concerned, although from the end of the 18th century to the conclusion of the 19th the theoreticians of this field (Mátyás Rát, Miklós Révai, István Kultsár, Ferenc Kölcsey, János Erdélyi, or even János Kriza, Arnold Ipolyi, Pál Gyulai, etc.) considered contemporary Hungarian folklore as the depository of the historical past, it was precisely the figure of King Matthias that they did not place in the foreground. While they published narratives containing the figure of Matthias, they neglected to emphasize their "historical" importance. The Hungarian national poet Sándor Petőfi reveals why he advises that no (modern) heroic epic should be written about Matthias: "Just don't take a king as your hero, not even Matthias. He too was a king, and one is a dog and the other is another dog" (as bad as the other). (See his letter to the famous Hungarian fellow poet, János Arany, February 23, 1847.) After the hesitant initiative of Lajos Abafi, in fact Elek Benedek was the first (in 1902, in other words fairly late) to place Matthias in the spotlight in Hungarian publications for the general public on folk poetry. The anecdotes related to the king were published by Béla Tóth in a six-volume series of common anecdotes in Hungary in a scattered way (*Magyar anekdotakincs* from 1898 onwards). It constitutes a work of unique importance for Hungarian national and historical identity, but it is not a collection of proper folklore texts. It is also from here that Hungarian belletrists borrowed their stories of Matthias once inspired by folklore. But the writers and the folklorists in Hungary at first they were unaware, however, that the role of Matthias in oral tradition was not unique to Hungarian culture.

Needless to say, this is not applicable anymore to the scholarly study folklore in Hungary. Ágoston Pável was the first (1909) who connected the Slovenian "Or-

pheus theme" with Hungarian texts. As a matter of fact, up until the end of his life he endeavored to provide a monographic survey of the Slovenian and Hungarian King Matthias lore, which he was not, however, able to complete, the lectures he gave at the beginning of the 1940s at the University in Szeged notwithstanding. István Szémán (1912) reviewed Kuzelja's book, Rezső Szegedy (1916) examined the role of the Hunyadi family in Southern Slav epic poetry, and in various writings József Ernyey (1921) called for the importance of the Czech Matthias tradition. On numerous occasions various scholars in Hungary expounded on the wealth of Southern Slav folklore. It is therefore all the more surprising that in the most prestigious ethnographic reference work *(A Magyarság Néprajza)* published during the interwar years professor Sándor Solymossy (1935: 218–27, 253–4), then the leading Hungarian folklorist, basically fails to recognize the majority of outstanding international connections of Hungarian folklore concerning King Matthias. As early as the 1940's, however, his student Gyula Ortutay accentuated precisely this international context in articles and university lectures, urging the completion of a comparative monograph (Ortutay, 1942). His efforts, unfortunately, were effortless and he himself failed to write the so much heralded summarizing essay. János Horváth, the most notable positivist literary historian of the interwar years (who incidentally took an interest in Hungarian folklore, at least that of the 19th century), does not discuss the stories pertaining to King Matthias in his writings. Another literary historian, Béla Zolnai (1921), also concerned himself exclusively with the literary history of the official Matthias tradition.

Fortunately the situation today is quite different. Imre Ferenczi, Zoltán Ujváry, and in recent decades Ildikó Kríza (2007), Zoltán Magyar and others have discussed the Matthias tradition on innumerable occasions as it has figured in historiography and folklore, to mention only the most outstanding, well-known scholars. István Lukács (2001) provided an overview of Slovenian material and András Dávid (1978) and recently Károly Jung (2008) examined Southern Slav folklore connections. Among literary historians Tibor Kardos attempted in a manner sometimes hardly credible but always ingenious to assemble the information from the Matthias era into a unified whole. István Fried reviewed the results of the comparative Hungarian philology. One may hope with good reason that the current anniversary year 2008 of the rule of king Matthias brought further scholarly achievements.

After this introductory survey two questions remain to be dealt with: what are the historical layers of this inter-ethnic Matthias folklore; and how might one characterize this from a social-historical perspective? The difficulty of the task and the limits of the scope provided here notwithstanding I nevertheless attempt to reach some kind of an answer.

"Matthias Folklore" before King Matthias

One should note first the possibility of a kind of Matthias folklore before King Matthias. Given that the international parallels of several texts have old records (examples include e.g., the heroic first strata of *Solomon and Markolf* texts), the possibility arises that the name of the king was inserted in these later. This is conceivable but hard to prove. There are, in any event, no such examples dating back this far in Hungarian, despite the parallels in motifs. About the Orpheus and Kyffhauser motifs' stratification I have already mentioned the common opinion in comparative folklore.

New, Emerging Genre(s) in the Age of King Matthias

Concerning the new genres that emerged in the age of King Matthias, it was Tibor Kardos (1955) who thought of the *trufa (jest, fabliaux, Schwank)* genre in Hungarian as of Italian origin and a genre to which there are references dating from the time of King Sigismund of Luxembourg. This is somehow conceivable, although no one has come across such texts from Hungary, but the only information available concerning the *trufa* even from the era of King Matthias is of a philological plausibility. At this historical point the references to *practical joke* appear in Hungary. (Examples include the story of the "traveling showman throwing peas through a keyhole" who is rewarded by King Matthias with a basket of peas so that he can practice, or the story "there was once a dog-market in Buda," which might be rendered in an English tale as, "once it came to pass, but only once.") With respect to the first occurrences of these and their later transformation as part of tradition little more than conjecture has been made. On the other hand, the propaganda value of such stories is clear: the (hidden) message is that the King has a most modern technique in his castle, including doors with key-holes (a novelty in Europe then), or, he has constantly developing markets with surprising new wares to sell and buy.

The Kinds and Genres of Royal Propaganda

It is commonly known that the Italian Renaissance marked the beginning of a new era in the thousand-year-old ruler's propaganda in Europe. Hungary and especially King Matthias followed the new trend: bringing specialists to his kingdom educated specifically for this task. One of them, Antonio Bonfini, not only created a family genealogy *(De Corvinianae domus origine libellus)* but also

wrote the ambitious complete "Hungarian history" *(Rerum ungaricarum decades),* a work that took into consideration the writings of Hungarian historians. Janus Pannonius, an extremely talented poet from the Hungarian Croatia schooled to be a minion of the king, was charged with, among other tasks, the provision of a heroic epistle collection from the battlefield, or a similarly magnifying poetic description of the king's battles *(Annales),* instead of which the haughty and individualistic poet wrote reflective elegies about the for him too long time he spent with the royal army fighting the Turks (speaking but most exclusively about his own health, dreams and astrologic speculations). The Latin verses written by Janus Pannonius remained familiar to European humanist poets, but no folklore concerning King Matthias originated with him. Bonfini, on the other hand, remained an inexhaustible source for Hungarian historians for centuries.

One of the most interesting of these Corvinian propagandistic works is the small collection of reports entitled *De egregie, sapienter, iocose dictis ac factis regis Matthiae /ad ducem Johannem, eius filium liber/* ("the excellent, clever and witty sayings and deeds by King Matthias," dedicated to his son) by Galeotto Marzio (*cca.* 1427–1497), from which dozens of anecdotes could be borrowed any time. Galeotto became a friend of Janus Pannonius while studying in Verona. It was on Janus' invitation that he made a short visit to Hungary in 1461. The Italian Humanist came for a longer stay in 1465 only to return home in 1472 at the time of the conspiracy against the Corvin king. Because of his heretical work (*De incognitis vulgo* – 1477) Galeotto was imprisoned in Venice during the Inquisition and was only set free through the intervention of (among others) King Matthias. Following this he came to Hungary on many occasions to meet with Matthias, though he wrote the above mentioned collection of anecdotes not in Hungary but in Italy in 1485, dedicating it to the King's son, János Corvin. It is not likely that Galeotto ever returned to Hungary after this year. We know little of the last years of his life (by 1497 he had died). The typical "itinerant humanist" with a life full of twists and turns was therefore first the hireling of King Matthias, later became a member of the opposition against him, only then to find himself in his debt in the end. In the small collection of stories *(De … dictis ac factis…)* depicting life in the Hungarian court (what one might refer to as brief sketches in contemporary journalism) he proved to be a clever PR-specialist and staunch adherent of the modern and cultured king. The Italian author ascribes to the Hungarian King some proverbs (with more or less credibility) that might be a good topic for further research. E.g., in a later written vernacular document the well known quotation from Cicero (*Pro Mil.* IV.10), *"Silent leges inter arma,"* was referred to as one of the favorite sayings of Matthias in an innovative form: *"Inter arma silent Musae,"* which is, in fact, not registered in international paremiology, but is well known also in modern Hungarian. We do not know how well Galeotto's Latin work was known in Hungary at the time of his contemporaries and afterwards.

And although a few people looked for signs of what we might call "heretical" ideologies in this work, none were found.

Ultimately, apart from generalities, we have little idea of how the Hungarian king made practical use of the propagandistic works that he himself commissioned.

On the Trail of the "Political Officers" of the Black Army

In Hungarian language literature we can read, in addition to the texts adapted by official historians, "popular" stories about the era of King Matthias first in the chronicle by István Bencédi Székely entitled *Cronica ez világnak jeles dolgairól* ('Chronicle about Notable Affairs of this World', 1559) and in the work of Gáspár Heltai entitled *Krónika az magyaroknak dolgairól* ('Chronicle about the Affairs of the Hungarians'), which was published posthumously by his widow in 1575. He makes mention of the popular stories as texts that he heard from the "former soldiers of the Black Army."

Székely, born in Bencéd (Benţid in Romanian) in the region of Udvarhelyszék (Transylvania) sometime after 1500, studied first as a Franciscan monk and then as student at the university in Cracow. From 1538 on he was an evangelical (Lutheran) pastor (and later in the church he belonged to a so-called sacramentarian movement). We know of printed works of his dating from this time that were written with the intention of addressing all strata of the population in Hungary. These included calendars, hymnals, catechisms and translations of psalms. He even embarked on a Hungarian translation of the Bible. The Transylvanian Saxon Kaspar Helth (Gáspár Heltai) was a decade younger than Székely. Born around 1510 in Heltau, today Cisnădie (Nagydisznód in Hungarian), he began as a Catholic priest. He learned Hungarian only around 1536 and became a Lutheran (later he too became a sacramentarian and indeed at the end of his life was outright antitrinitarian). He joined hands with another Saxonian in Transylvania, the printer Georg Hoffgreff of Kolozsvár (Klausenburg, today Cluj/Napoca) in 1550. Heltai's remarkably diverse printing activities led to the wide range publication of popular and educational materials in Hungarian. It is not easy to decide whether in the 1530s István the "Székely" and the Saxon from Heltau in fact met with the discharged soldiers of the Black Army who allegedly recounted the Matthias stories. It was with the help of this army that the seventeen-year-old János Corvin attempted (unsuccessfully) to seize power at the time of the death of King Matthias in 1490. In 1492 Pál Kinizsi, once the chief commander of the king's army, a very cruel soldier routed the Black Army. Kinizsi died only a few years later (1494) and János Corvin, who in the meantime had taken the side of the Jagellonian King Wladislaw (Ulászló) II of Hungary, and as the viceroy *(banus)* of Croatia and Slavonia oversaw the defense of the country's south western territories against the

Turks, died in 1504 just above his thirtieth birthday. This constituted the point in time up to which the former soldiers of King Matthias' army, or at least small contingents of them, might have stayed together, sharing some "common folklore." By 1530 the former soldiers of the Black Army would have been around 70 years old. It is conceivable that people listened with greater interest to their recountings in Transylvania, which in contrast with the rest of the country the Ottoman armies had largely avoided. We know little more, however, of exactly how and where István Székely or Heltai might have come into contact with this oral tradition. Nevertheless, both of their works are distinguished by knowledge of contemporary public opinion, the knowledge of the simple folk.We have no reason to doubt that the soldiers of the Black Army were "ideologically" instructed by "political officers." No doubt one of the main themes was that the professional and mercenary army, not only well trained and successful but also forceful and ruthless, was waging war in the name of "righteous and noble" goals in lands that lay usually far from Buda. As for the "mother tongue" of most of the soldiers we can admit Hungarian, Czech, German, and further languages, because the soldiers were recruited from several regions. It made the international spread of narratives more easy. Like so many iron fisted kings of feudal times Matthias himself regularly came into conflict with the nobility, and although the life of the simple people was certainly not easy under the rule of the bellicose king, who continuously had to collect more and more taxes in order to finance military ventures, yet under subsequent rulers the burdens simply grew while the benefits dwindled. It is conceivable that from the beginning of the 16th century the popularity of the "our once great king" grew. *Matthias obiit, iustitia periit* 'King Matthias died, justice perished' – popular opinion might have said.

The Splendid Image of the Corvinus Kingdom in Contemporary Europe

   The tidings of a dynamic reformer and a rich, splendor loving king quickly spread, mainly in Austrian, Czech, Italian, and Romanian territories, but also in more distant lands, among Germans and Poles, in the Balkans and even in the Ottoman Empire. His envoys traveled widely in Europe and foreign delegates, who were masterfully dazzled in his court, came to Hungary from all directions, from Stambul and Rome, from the Holy German Empire and even from Muscovy. The king was indeed a man of erudition, a sovereign ruler who had a firm opinion on many questions. Those delivering to Hungary weapons, luxury items, and splendidly decorated books no doubt spoke in their home countries of the ruler who assured such an immensely rich market. Yet this could not have been the thematic basis of a "European folklore" about Matthias Hunyadi. If we take into consideration that in 1477 the queen Beatrix of Aragon's (from Naples) sister, Eleonora,

duchess of Ferrara, sent 56 varieties of carnival masks to Hungary and that on other occasions lions (who – according to the narratives – later died just on the day of Matthias' death!) were sent to the king's court this nevertheless does little more than give the impression that this was a wealthy and somehow barbarian country (like today's Kuwait or Abu Dhabi) where there was money to be spent on all sorts of luxury. And the idea that Matthias was the "hero" of Machiavelli's work *Il principe* ('The Prince' – 1513) or that he was one of the main protagonists of the work of the German Emperor Maximilian I entitled *Weiskunig* ('The Wise King' with a pun to 'The White King'), an allegory and illustration of court pomp and splendor, is a mere suggestion put forward only by later scholars. It is nevertheless certain that inscriptions and depictions in many places immortalized the Hungarian king, and not only in Vienna, the place of his death, but even on the wall of a watch-tower in the Silesian (in Lusatia) town of Bautzen. When in 1541 the Turks sacked the royal library in the Buda castle containing the magnificently illuminated Corvina codices it is possible that the soldier carrying the voluminous volumes had no previous knowledge of the great Hungarian king, but he must have observed the existing traces of unusual splendor, and the bulk of the treasures sooner or later reached the Sultan's treasure house in Istanbul. (On the *carnevalesque* features of the court life in Corvinian – and later – Hungary, see Voigt, 2000.)

There was, therefore, some foundation on which folklore, not solely Hungarian, concerning King Matthias could develop. When we read in the first tale of the second night of *Le piacevoli notti,* the famed collection of tales of Giovan Francesco Straparola (published in Venice in 1550), that Galeotto (a common family name in Italy, with no affiliation to the humanist of King Matthias' court), the rich king known from the so-called "Breton stories" in European tales, weds *"la figliuola di Mattias re di Ongaria, Ersilia per nome chiamata"* ("the daughter of the Hungarian king Matthias named Ersilia, in comparison with whom there was in her time no one more beautiful, virtuous or refined in courtly life"), we notice that the notorious wealth of the Hungarian king goes without saying, as does the name of the daughter he never actually had.

Writing in the sixth chapter of his well-known book *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* Peter Burke (published first in 1978), speaking on the prototype of the "ruler", mentions King Matthias, who fought against the Turks and after whose reign "justice ceased to exist." When discussing other stereotypical rulers he mentions the king traveling in disguise (i.e., the Harun al-Rasid *topos*) and lists Matthias among the examples of the Kyffhäuser motif. He is correct in all this and he draws a broad range of examples. Yet precisely because so many figures mentioned in his chapter, from King Arthur to Saint Olaf, the founder of the feudal Norwegian Kingdom, to the "real czar" figures as pretenders to the Russian throne and the bellicose Swedish King Charles XII in the 18th century, seem to embody

this "prototype" there is no explanation as to how national or international folklore about a particular ruler – in this case King Matthias – develops practically.

Folklore in itself is international; however, the development of individual works and genres must be carefully and separately examined in each case.

The First Non-Hungarian Folkloric Texts Concerning Matthias

Czech scholars (such as Čeněk Zíbrt and Otakar Hostinský as early as 1888 and 1892) alluded to the fact that from the mid-16th century there are traces of songs mentioning King Matthias in Czech hymnals (see Kuzelja and Komorovský; examples include *Pán Bůh z své milosti nyní lid sobě vybíra…*[By the All-Merciful Lord God the people has elected…] from 1564, *Bože nebeský, ty větrou spojuješ* [O Heavenly God, connected with the faith] from 1612 and again in an evangelical hymnal in 1620). Komorovský assumed that these texts were also sung by Slovaks. In a poem by Aleš Knobloch written in 1561 there are two data about melodies that are of relevance to Matthias folklore (*Zpívá se jako starodávná píseń vojenská o Králi Matyášovi, Králi Uherském…* [On the melody of very old soldiers' songs about King Matthias, the king of Hungary…]). We cannot determine, however, whether they are Czech or Slovak songs, or Hungarian songs that have been translated into a Slavic language.

Among Slovenian scholars, Simon Rutar mentioned in 1879 the comment by Marcantonio Nicoletti (1536–89), notary of Cividale, that the Slovenes in the seaside region of Tolmin "sang in their mother tongues not just about Christ and the saints, but also about the Hungarian King Matthias and other heroes of that people." *(Usano essi cantare in versi ne' varii modi della loro lingua le lodi di Christo e de' Beati, nonche di Mattia re d'Ungheria e di altri celebri personaggi di quella Nazione).* Since then this record, which can be dated to the second half of the 16th century, has been mentioned by all philologists examining the Slovenian Matthias tradition. But we do not know which nation the "altri celebri personaggi" belong to (see Grafenauer and Lukács).

There is little doubt that both the Czech and the Slovene records in one way refer to the Hungarian king, which indeed is how they were interpreted by the late authors themselves. Yet the content and texts of the songs are unknown, as is the manner in which they became part of the Slovene and Czech (and Slovak) tradition. If there are references to heroic deeds and soldiers' songs the simplest approach would be to link these songs to the songs of Matthias' army. This constitutes little more than a readily available hypothesis, however. Nor do we know if these songs were translated from Hungarian or if it was only the subject matter, possibly only the name of King Matthias that was Hungarian.

As for the first folk narratives from Roumania, referring to King Matthias, a German agricultural engineer Arthur Schott was working in 1836–41 and again in 1844–52 in Oraviţa (Banat, then in southeastern part of Hungary), collecting Romanian folklore. Together with his brother, Albert they have published the very first collection of Romanian folk tales: *Walachische Märchen* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1845), which does not contain stories about King Matthias. But among the texts from his second collection, published originally in the German journal *Hausblätter* (vol. 4, 1858, 367–71) there is a legend about "Emperor Matei Corvin", who learned the language of the animals, and being a magician visits Tsarigrad (Constantinople). Schott remarks (300–5) that one could read on the trip "in books". Thus the oldest known Romanian folklore text about King Matthias at least to some extent might stem from written sources. All the later Romanian folk legends were collected in Transylvania (Brill, 2006, 295–8). A noted Transylvanian Hungarian folklorist, József Faragó (1997, more recently 2005, 704–5) mentioned two Romanian folk ballads, with the hero's name *Mateaşiu Craiu* or *Mateiaş Crai* (King Matthias).

The famous Romanian folklorist, Atanasie Marian Marienescu published the first ballad in a journal *Albina* (1866, No. 20.), then in his collection of Romanian ballads entitled *Poezia poporală. Balade* (Popular Poetry. Ballads, vol. II, Vienna, 1867, 92–4). According to the story King Matthias punishes his treacherous lords by destroying the castle of Buda, along with all inhabitants, with gunfire. The story is unknown elsewhere in Romanian or Hungarian balladry. Most probably it stems from the Romanian Banat, where Marienescu from 1862 was working as lawyer. In his rich collection of Romanian folk literature he wanted to find motifs which might be related to historical persons as Marius, Sulla, Hadrian or Aurelian from the Ancient Rome.

The certain teacher Iona Papa collected the second ballad in November 1898, in the region Bravo in Transylvania. It is a common European ballad (international type number *Child 75*) well known both in Hungarian and Romanian variants. Papa's version is the only one where the hero is named King Matthias. In both cases we find very late and corruptible texts, which do not represent any historical traces of King Matthias in Romanian folklore in the proper sense of the term.

For centuries Hungarian heroes were included as characters in the heroic epic poetry of the Southern Slav peoples (Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian). As the examples of such texts that have come down to us are from later times the task of unraveling their historical layers is not simple. I do not enter here into the very complicated problem of the historical stratification of South Slavic epic poetry. For summaries see Burckhart (1968, 60–3) and Krstić (1984, 524–5). For a folkloristic treatment of several motifs in "non-historical" Serbo-Croatian "epic songs" see

Milošević-Djordjević (1971, especially 220–1). We find some songs, which mention *kralj Matijaš* already in the *Erlangen manuscript* of South Slav heroic songs. This is a collection of 220 song texts, the majority from possibly oral sources. The manuscript can be dated to 1717 and 1730, and some of the texts belong to earlier times of the Serbian-Ottoman wars. Their attitude is clearly against the Turks, and represents Serbian attitudes, but not a Hungarian point of view. Serbian philology and folklore uses the material as for establishing the historical development of Southern Slav epic poetry. Folk or popular variants occur in 19th century collections. We can, however, claim with some certainty that the later collected songs also had precedents. They are essentially of a Southern Slav point of view, so while we may be able to explain the heroes or events on the basis of events and characters of Hungarian history (as e.g., *Janko vojvoda, Jankula vojvoda, Sibinjanin Janko* = János Hunyadi, *Mihailo Svilojevič* = Mihály Szilágyi, *varadinski ban Petar Dojčin* = most probably Péter Dóczi, etc.) we should not, however, assume that they represent Serbian (etc.) adaptations of completed Hungarian texts. (See the works e.g., Dávid, 1978, and especially Jung, 2008 – with detailed textual history of some variants.) The recent publication summarizing Hungarian narratives on King Matthias from the Vojvodina (Raffai, 2008), mostly with recently collected and hitherto unpublished texts, does not show direct Serbian–Hungarian textual interferences.

Conversely we must call attention to the fact that until now scholarship has devoted little attention to the images of Hungarian rulers in the Balkans and

Mathias Corvinus, König der Hungarn, erster Band, von Dr. I. A. Feßler, Carlsruhe, 1809
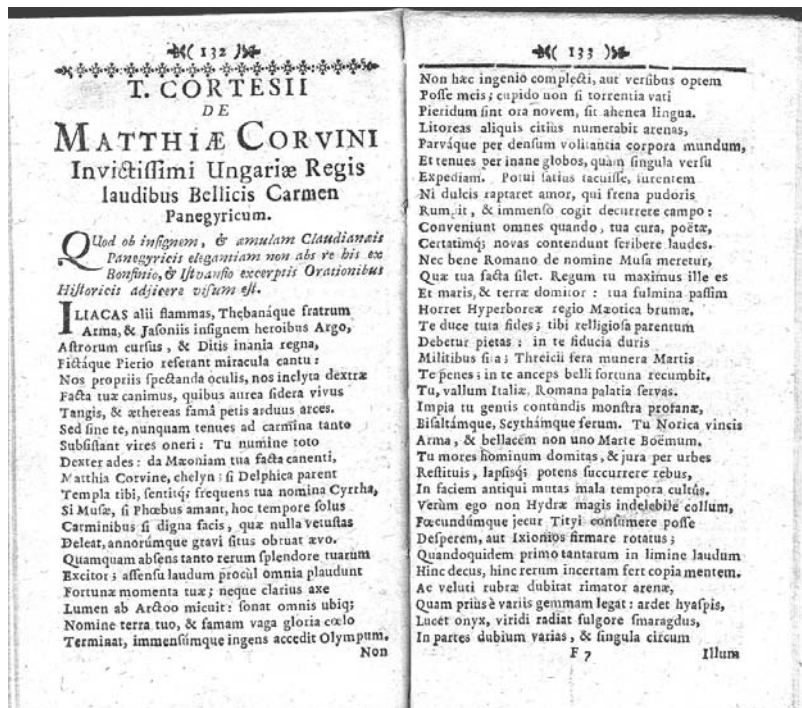(without the publisher's name), front pages

Romania during the time of King Matthias. In this case it would be informative to specify both the similarities and the differences. As for the literary traditions praising or mentioning King Matthias, a thorough and detailed study is yet to be done.

If we turn the pages of any later publications, we find interesting details, little in the way of explanation. For instance, in the third volume of Fessler's *Gemälde aus den alten Zeiten der Ungarn* (Karlsruhe, 1809) on the frontispice of *Matthias Corvinus, König der Ungarn* we find an idealized portrait of the king (with an appropriate inscription). But, on the opposite page there is a drawing of a historical scene that scholars have been unable to identify. Five men meet and greet one another at an unidentified event. The third from the left looks like a Lutheran bishop with the Ten Commandments. The central figure looks like the young Matthias, on the opposite page, but without Hungarian royal insignia. If this is intended to indicate that Matthias has not yet been crowned king, the fifth figure, an elderly man, might be either the Czech George Poděbrad, a becoming father-in-law, or Mihály Szilágyi, governor of Hungary. Since the costumes are "historic" but not specific, they are open also to varying explanations.

In order to illustrate by example how complicated these traditions might be, I mention here only one further case. It is a well known fact that in 1487–88, i.e., when his patron king was alive, an Italian humanist in the court of the Hungarian king, Alessandro Tommaso Cortese, wrote a *Carmen panegyricum* in Latin hexameters honoring him. A later edition of the poem (Hagenau, 1531) was included by the famous Hungarian scholar Johannes Sambucus (János Zsámboky) as an appendix into his then new edition (1606) of the Italian court historian of Matthias, Antonio Bonfini's summary of the Hungarian history: *Rerum Hungaricarum Decades.* Cortese's epic poem could serve thus as one of the sources of the "Meditations about King Matthias" (as well as to the baroque heroic poem *Obsidio Sigetiana*) by the famous Hungarian poet and statesman, Nicolaus Zrini (Miklós Zrínyi). When, even considerably later, in Kassa (Kaschau, Košice) a sample of Bonfini's and Istvánffy's Hungarian history was published (*Livii Hungarici … Antonii Bonfini … Nicolai Istvanfi …*) at the end of the book (on pages 132–66) we can read Cortese's literary work *De Matthiae Corvini invictissimi Ungariae Regis laudibus bellicis*, a poem among the historical sources, and 250 years after its first publication (see Szörényi, 1993, 26–31).

In summary, when examining the Hungarian Matthias folklore it would be worthwhile to demonstrate old and international connections. This would serve not only to promote the comparative study of folklore but also to further the interpretation of Hungarian historical records.

There are two major problems involved. First, it is not easy to separate the "international" versus "historic" context data. Second, it is not easy to prove the historical "continuity" of texts, narratives, motifs, etc. In many cases the folklore

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T. CORTESII
DE
MATTHIÆ CORVINI
Invictissimi Ungariæ Regis
laudibus Bellicis Carmen
Panegyricum.

*Quod ob insignem, & æmulam Claudianeis
Panegyricis elegantiam non abs re his ex
Bonfinio, & Istvanfio excerptis Orationibus
Historicis adjicere visum est.*

ILIACAS alii flammas, Thebanáque fratrum
   Arma, & Jasoniis insignem heroibus Argo,
Astrorum cursus, & Ditis inania regna,
Fictáque Pierio referant miracula cantu:
Nos propriis spectanda oculis, nos inclyta dextra
Facta tuæ canimus, quibus aurea sidera vivus
Tangis, & æthereas famâ petis arduus arces.
Sed sine te, nunquam tenues ad carmina tanto
Subsistant vires oneri: Tu numine toto
Dexter ades: da Mæoniam tua facta canenti,
Matthia Corvine, chelyn: si Delphica parent
Templa tibi, sentitq; frequens tua nomina Cyrrha,
Si Musæ, si Phœbus amant, hoc tempore solus
Carminibus si digna facis, quæ nulla vetustas
Deleat, annorúmque gravi situs obruat ævo.
Quamquam absens tanto rerum splendore tuarum
Excitor: assensu laudum procùl omnia plaudunt
Fortunæ momenta tuæ; neque clarius axe
Lumen ab Arctoo micuit: sonat omnis ubiq;
Nomine terra tuo, & famam vaga gloria cœlo
Terminat, immensúmque ingens accedit Olympum.
                Non

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Non hæc ingenio complecti, aut versibus optem
Posse meis; cupido non si torrentia vati
Pieridum sint ora novem, sit ahenea lingua,
Litoreas aliquis citiùs numerabit arenas,
Parváque per densum volitantia corpora mundum,
Et tenues per inane globos, quàm singula versu
Expediam. Potui satius tacuisse, iurentem
Ni dulcis raptaret amor, qui frena pudoris
Rumpit, & immenso cogit decurrere campo:
Conveniunt omnes quando, tua cura, poëtæ,
Certatimq; novas contendunt scribere laudes.
Nec bene Romano de nomine Musa meretur,
Quæ tua facta silet. Regum tu maximus ille es
Et maris, & terræ domitor: tua fulmina passim
Horret Hyperboreæ regio Mæotica brumæ,
Te duce tuta fides; tibi religiosa parentum
Debetur pietas: in te fiducia duris
Militibus sua; Threicii fera munera Martis
Te penes; in te anceps belli fortuna recumbit,
Tu, vallum Italiæ, Romana palatia servas.
Impia tu gentis contundis monstra profanæ,
Bisaltámque, Scythímque ferum. Tu Norica vincis
Arma, & bellacem non uno Marte Boëmum.
Tu mores hominum domitas, & jura per urbes
Restituis, lapsísq; potens succurrere rebus,
In faciem antiqui mutas mala tempora cultûs.
Verùm ego non Hydræ magis indelebile collum,
Fœcundúmque jecur Tityi consumere posse
Desperem, aut Ixionios firmare rotatus;
Quandoquidem primo tantarum in limine laudum
Hinc decus, hinc rerum incertam fert copia mentem.
Ac veluti rubræ dubitat rimator arenæ,
Quam priùs è variis gemmam legat: ardet hyaspis,
Lucet onyx, viridi radiat fulgore smaragdus,
In partes dubium varias, & singula circum
F 7   Illum

The first pages (132–3) of Cortesius: *De Matthiae Corvini … in Livii Hungarici …
Antonii Bonfini … Cassoviae, Typis Academ ... per Joan Henrie. Frauenheim, 1732*

publications from the 19th century can only be dated back to popularizing histori-cal works, literary works, schoolbooks, calendars from some earlier time. There are "optimistic" and "pessimistic" scholars in constructing the "continuation" of the "King Matthias lore." I definitely belong to the second group.

It is not difficult to demonstrate that there remain many tasks to be completed, even if we deal with seemingly "long traditions" of that lore.

One of the most well-known elements in the iconography of the Hunyadis is the raven (*corvus* in Latin, from which the word *Corvinus* was forcefully derived), carrying a (golden) ring in his beak. We do not know for sure, what was the actual origin of the adopted family name *Corvin/us.* (Perhaps it was originated from the name of the town Kovin at the borderline of South Hungary, which in fact was owned by the Hunyadi family. But there is no direct evidence supporting the sug-gestion.) Though several scholars have studied this heraldic motif, we nonetheless have no precise knowledge of its origins. The old references do not describe the story relating to it precisely, alluding instead at most to some kind of ostensibly commonly known explanation.

A strong indication of continuity would be the proverbial lore, i.e., proverbs and sayings mentioning King Matthias. In fact there are such texts, but most of

them are modern and represent school lore. There are only some possible exceptions. The recent Hungarian collections of proverbs all mention the well-known maxim: *meghalt Mátyás király, oda az igazság (*'King Matthias has died, gone is justice', but they all draw on Antal Szirmay's book *Hungaria in parabolis* (1805), i.e., a common source written centuries later. The history of the saying, which can be found not only in Hungary and in languages other than Hungarian, is an interesting, complicated and international topic, which needs further investigation.

The other, today less well-known phrase, "Király Mátyás és Mátyás király," which means simply "Matthias the King and King Matthias," in other words there is considerable difference between two names that apparently seem almost identical, figures on the very personal collection of proverbs by András Dugonics (written from 1792 on, and published in 1820) entitled *Magyar példabeszédek és jeles mondások* (Hungarian parables and notable sayings, vol. I, 44). Dugonics tells an explanatory story, most probably of his own creation. A shoemaker by the name of Király Mátyás ('King Matthias') lived in the capital Buda, and on the name day of the Corvin King he went to the royal castle to greet the ruler. The guards stopped him, and the shoemaker told them he had the same name as the king and he had come to greet his namesake. The guard replied that the difference between King Matthias and Matthias the King is as great as the difference between a king and a shoemaker. We know from historical documents concerning the development of family names in Hungary that in the time of King Matthias nobody could use the word "King" as family name and Matthias as a given name, especially someone from the lower social strata. Even Varga Mátyás ('Shoemaker' + Matthias) became a frequent variant from the 16th century on. "Name's day", i.e. celebrating someone's given or Christian name on the day of the patron saint, is much later attested as a common family event. Dugonics' explanation has been repeated in later collections of Hungarian proverbs. Indeed Dugonics, who also wrote fictional works about the age of King Matthias, had a penchant for transforming proverbs with which he was familiar, contriving explanations for them if nothing else. In other words, even in the case of some twenty sayings concerning King Matthias that figure in his writings, we cannot prove when they came into being. In some cases he refers to Galeotto Marzio's work. (Incidentally Hungarian sayings more frequently make mention of *Jégtörő Mátyás* ('Icebreaker Matthias') on February 24th, and the weather forecasts in connection with this than they do of the king himself.)

We have already mentioned that we know of many popular texts collected from the 19th century onwards. These and the official Hungarian Matthias tradition, however, must form the topic of another paper.

In 2008 a very fine exhibition was organized at the Ethnographic Museum in Budapest entitled *"Legendary beings, enchanting flowers. The Renaissance We All Know and Love"* (Fejős, 2008). The aim of the exhibition was to "rethink the

relationship between the Renaissance and Hungarian folk artefacts of the 18th and 19th centuries." The several showcases and rooms were filled with printed books and woodcuts, stove tiles, guild-woven cloth, illuminated documents and manuscripts, figural images on painted wooden church ceilings, decorative vessels, furniture craft, embroidery on linen and hemp – as the chapters of the imposing catalogue tells. In all cases the historical continuity and the social affiliation of the exposed items was very complicated and the labels (e.g., "folk") are not without hesitation. In description and bibliography the international context was present, and many of the artifacts stemmed from Hungary, but not necessarily being "Hungarian" ones. All this is demonstrating again the difficulty of comparative and historical interpretation of the Renaissance in Hungary and its possible "folklore continuation".

Of course we greet the splendid exhibition with its 500 items carefully presented and described. Only after such collection of data can we start with the thorough analysis of the "Renaissance impact" on Hungarian folk culture.

It is not necessary to stress again that in all domains of the exhibition the motifs are of a wide international character, and they reach far beyond the borders of the then kingdom of Hungary. Not only the Renaissance is a "Europe-wide" phenomenon, but also the artifacts and motifs resembling the Renaissance in the folk cultures in Europe are of the very same character.

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INTERNET AND LITERATURE
– SOME RECENT HUNGARIAN EXAMPLES

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Digital storage and retrieval of texts has been in the focus of an entire branch of contemporary literary studies. Literary texts online meant a new step, allowing readers to access (and editors to build and modify) the corpus in a radically new way, via the Internet. A recent development, however, the era of the network (with its "community sites" and all the different interactive communications between users) raises quite new issues. In addition to problems of archiving, accessibility and connectibility, the issues of literature produced and received on the Internet came to the fore, and deserve interest and theoretical reflection in their own right. In this study, some cases from the Hungarian internet scene concerning the temporality, authorial position, collective production, etc. are described, in order to call for a more systematic and thorough survey of these phenomena in general.

Keywords: Internet, literature, Hungarian literature, temporality, Facebook, archiving, online, network

Online Archives

Much of the discourse in Hungarian professional circles concerning the relationship between the Internet and literature is centered around archiving; i.e., around the issues of preserving, structuring and retrieving literary texts (which, of course, have been produced and published before gaining their position in the field of internet communication). In present day Hungarian literary studies, since as early as the 1980s there has been a growing interest in databases and critical editions of literary texts (especially poetry), both theoretically and practically. Later the problem of Internet publication of literary studies and even a huge handbook of Hungarian literature on the web became fairly well known among literary scholars.

This orientation is largely due to the work of an excellent and influential literary scholar, Iván Horváth, who first produced a large (and, to my knowledge, complete) database of old Hungarian poetry[1] that allows the reader to retrieve and

classify, according to several features, any of the poems written in Hungarian be-
fore 1601 (and published before 1701). The user of this database can search, for
instance, types of lines and stanzas, genres, metrical schemes, rhymes, religious
content (if any), and so on – or a combination of these criteria, and, of course, free
text search is also available. Following the completion of this monumental work,
Horváth, together with his colleagues and students, turned to the critical editions
of some major Hungarian writers; first the Renaissance poet Bálint Balassi,[2] and
later a work still in progress, all the poetic and other works of Attila József, one of
the most significant Hungarian poets of the first part of the 20th century.[3] Since
the late 1990s, several students of Horváth have produced a number of online crit-
ical editions.[4]

    There are at least two more important bordering areas that have become foci of
Horváth's interest: first, the "computational" production of poetry, starting from
the mechanical versification machines of early Modern Germany to the computa-
tional experiments (variations, permutations, etc.) of the Oulipo Group and the
Neo-Avant-garde. As computing technologies develop, one may have a more pre-
cise and clear way of understanding, reproducing and expanding these practices.
Second, the course of editing a huge monograph on the history of Hungarian liter-
ature, with contributions of numerous authors, raised the issue of reformulating
and reorganizing this "history" and making the text, in a way, interactive – that is,
inducing and producing a "stochastic" reading of the literary historical text, thus
offering the reader the possibility to make a literary history of her own. (This
problem related to an element of Horváth's theory of text editing, namely that in
cases in which several rival textual variations exist effectively one must make a
decision on a random basis.)[5]

    This pioneering work deserves nothing but respect; however, some later devel-
opments may reveal its shortcomings – or, rather, it now seems that this concep-
tion of the relationship between the internet and literature should be comple-
mented. It is highly telling that what is called "online" in the English translations
of Horváth's enterprises is, in Hungarian, "network" – but, in fact, "online" is the
suitable expression. "Network" suggests that, in addition to his/her connection to
the database or the critical edition, the reader will establish connections to other
readers or, for that matter, the editor(s) of the texts in question. However, these
online editions can be very easily replaced by a CD-ROM or a DVD (or any other
vehicle of information), and they do not even have to be online; no reader–reader
or reader–editor communication is possible, except perhaps for the very limited
feedback via email to the editors or (sometimes) forums for comments.

    Horváth and his disciples have a detailed and subtle conception of what a text is
and how it should be digitally stored and processed. What they have in mind is
clearly a text as a manuscript and/or a publication, its copies, variations, frag-
ments and distortions, independent of its visual (calligraphic, typographic, etc.)

appearance. Paratextual and contextual features are more or less excluded. They may "intrude" (along with a very limited amount and kind of interpretation) only inasmuch as they contribute to the precise archivation of the text. The texts in question are ready, finished, completed; thus archived, they are not open any more for any alteration, modification, or emendation, except perhaps for the editor: the archive is not at all interactive, it has a privileged position.

Online and Network

This archive (critical edition, database) belongs to the "online" period of the era of the Internet, as opposed to the "network" era in which we are living now. The reader has (free or prepaid) access to the corpus, wherever he/she happens to be; he/she does not have to store the whole material on his/her bookshelf, and still may access the data he/she needs whenever and wherever he/she would like. And, of course, an archive like this is incommensurably faster and more reliable than any of those in the "book" period. It offers far more opportunity for sophisticated retrieval, and it is much easier to handle in general.

A private initiative was launched very early, at the beginning of the Internet era in Hungary, with the intention of digitalizing – in a rather chaotic, capricious, random way, relying merely on the taste of the volunteering contributors – major Hungarian literary texts. It was then taken over by the National Széchényi Library and went through substantial technical developments. It now works as the digital part of the library itself. Another official corpus is produced by the Digital Literary Academy, formed after the enactment of a law ensuring the digitalization of all the texts of literary Kossuth Prize winners. (It is the highest official, state adjudicated award for writers and other people of culture and – earlier – science.) DIA is responsible for producing and maintaining possibly the whole work of the award winning writers, along with a bibliography and a selection of critical works.

The "network" period, however, requires a verily interactive usage of the text(s collected). An opening must be given to the reader to comment on the text and to cooperate with other readers, as well as with the "service" (the editors and administrators of the text). There may be graduation in access, i.e., some professionals might be given more rights than others, and there can be moderation with clear rules; but, in sum, a lively discussion may arise from the different and contradicting interpretations and comments in general. The archive itself, though, should be kept intact (and sometimes modified, according to new findings, perhaps the fruits of the discussions themselves, by the editor); but anyone can, individually or together with other users, produce a special modification: an anthology of poetry of five line stanzas, another of a specific rhyme pattern, etc. Anyone may publish his

or her own text(s) connected in some fashion to the text(s) of the archive. This is a version of what Siegfried J. Schmidt once called "the erotic of interpretation" – a continuous generation of texts on texts, without any prior theoretical consideration; this is both a source and a reduplication of what is called literary life, and it is in fact a part of literary life.

This insight must have been in the background of what was designed to be a new history of Hungarian literature. This project, then, can be considered as belonging to the "network" era. Unfortunately, it does not really work, despite the expectations and previous declarations. The work (tellingly entitled "Histories of Hungarian Literature") contains too many chapters, the formulations are too professional, and it is too voluminous a text to manage anyway. The idea is that of a network – the reader is invited to make a history of his or her own, and to discuss this history with other users. The policy of the site, however (which unfortunately is moved from time to time, and therefore it is not easily available – search "Neospenót" or "Villanyspenót" to find it), is perhaps overly cautious: for one to comment one must not only register, but comments must be approved by the editor and an editorial group, and they are published only after a corporal decision.

Another work in progress is worthy of mention in this context, an undertaking similar in vein but independent of Horváth's school: the critical edition of the Hungarian translation(s) of Joyce's *Ulysses.* This work, soon to be published on the Internet (http://www.mjjm.hu/), edited by András Kappanyos and co-edited by Gábor Zoltán Kiss, Marianna Gula and Dávid Szolláth, compares the two existing translations with each other as well as with the English original. It emends and corrects them and offers commentary on the more delicate points, including discussion of possible variations. Readers may, after registration, send their comments and discuss the solutions. It represents an excellent work, though it is certainly not for the widest reading public.

Roughly, the conception (both of Horváth and Kappanyos) is to produce an archive (or a set of texts) and make it open for readers; the central text may generate discussions, and the readers will then create a network around this core element. No doubt, this could be one way to make literature (in a broad sense, including literary studies, criticism and any interpretation of literature whatsoever) interactive. There has been also another form, namely mailing lists and SIGs ("Special Interest Groups, which are normally focused on a mutual interest or shared characteristic of a subset of members of the organization" – Wikipedia). These virtual communities are formed to discuss various problems and different issues in literature (or literary history) among several others. In its original, e-mail based form, the group system has some shortcomings. It is quite difficult to search (old, forgotten topics may turn up again and again), the results are not fixed on any independent site, it is not easy to form a smaller cluster, it is not possible to publish one's profile (introducing one's interests, works or personal details), just to name

a few of the complications that arise. Some virtual communities, however, while preserving the mailing list component, manage to organize a stable homepage site where important and permanent elements are stored.[6]

Literature on the Net

Networking may pose new questions for the student of literature not raised by online reading. First, not only is it possible to read (and/or rearrange, interpret, and comment on) previously archived texts in hyperspace, but one may also come across texts in the making; a reader may have opportunities to comment on a work underway. Second, it is likely that he or she will communicate with other readers of the same text, or she may call the attention of others to a particular text (completed or in progress). And, third, new genres can be found on the net, or texts with special borderline positions – between text and image, between literary and other discourses. There will be quite special types of paratext, authorial positions, and contexts.

Blogs

To clarify the meaning and types of blogs is far beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that there must be a subset of blogs, among the tens or even hundreds of thousands of them on the Internet today, which can be characterized as being close to what are referred to as literary texts. There is, furthermore, an interesting version of blogs where earlier literary works are posted (for instance, on a daily basis), the favorites of the blogger; a sort of ever growing private anthology. If comments are allowed, this may be instructive as far as the (re)interpretations of works more or less broadly familiar are concerned, or they may reflect on the ways the choice is made, etc. There are also blogs of various types about literature, including subjective accounts of literary texts, occasional digressions concerning literary experiences, etc.

Some blogs may be regarded as literature partly due to their stylistic features, partly to their self-classification, partly to their reception (classifying them as literary blogs), and so on. If it is true that it is impossible (and perhaps pointless) to circumscribe literature, in its "traditional," printed (or manuscript) form, the same task would be considerably more complex in the case of blogs, where even the well-established institutions of literature are absent. The concepts of authorship, publication, paratextual information, reading public and interpretive communities gain new meanings.

To eliminate these uncertainties and canalize these disturbing features into a course of a long tradition, blogs are sometimes presented in printed (book) form. They then take the form of a diary, a novel, a volume of poetry – something with which the reader is already familiar. However, this is a highly doubtful operation. First, omitting the comments constitutes a clear truncation by which the text may lose much of its interest, not only because it is a loss in paratexts but also because comments may influence the (next) posts and the whole interpretive context of the text. The omission gets rid of the whole "community" of readers who interacted with the creation of the work. (In footnotes, however, the comments attached to the post may be preserved and reproduced.) Second, the temporality of the blog is lost. A printed text is unable to reproduce the fact that the blogger may post a text three or four times a day, may then take a week break, and then return to a rhythm of daily posting. The blogger may post at a hectic pace for a time, and then fall silent, ignore, or discuss the comments. Comments may be posted much later than the original post, or there may be prompt reactions.

Temporality: Prose Fiction

This second peculiarity of the blog is impossible to reproduce; the reader's experience will be very different reading the blog online, in real time, than facing it in its offline reproduction. It is impossible to ask the reader of the offline version to wait a few days before passing to the next post; the event of posting is a dramatic one, to which the temporal dimension is very closely attached; they are unique, single happenings that can be experienced only in their immediate occurrences, like a dramatic action in a theater (the big difference being that a piece of theater is – more frequently than not – designed to be staged, with all its stage and other directions; on the other hand, a theater performance can be more or less precisely recorded – on film or video – , preserving the time element; but it would be absurd to make a months-long video about an evolving blog, with its pauses, accelerations, and retardations).

Temporality appears in several shapes in online (or network) literature. For instance, presenting a work in small doses, in regular intervals, in a literary magazine, is a tradition dating back some two centuries, or perhaps more. Several novels were first published in even portions. In some cases they were completed prior to this dismemberment, in others they were in fact being written during the intervals. In this respect, some forms which seem to belong to what one may label Internet-based literary communication follow, in fact, a very traditional scheme: the author publishes a text, as a whole or in discrete portions, which then is read by the readers – this being the case even if the site of publication is the Internet (blog,

"community site" or anything else). Temporality, in this respect, does not count too much.

However, even in early variants of such works of literature, in the 19th century or before, the chance for reader-writer interaction was present: authors could (and sometimes did) change the course of events represented, taking into account their readers' reactions. Changes were made to the initial conception, due to the pressures of editors, readers, censorship, or the social-political environment. In the age of Internet, and especially in the network era, however, these influential factors may be public, overtly seen and discussed by those within the network, so that the temporality of presenting the work is supplemented with the temporality of the readers' comments.

An outstanding prose writer, Gergely Péterfy, for instance, created a page on Facebook for his tale-novel, "Pannon Mese" ("Pannonian Tale" – Pannonia being the Latin name of the ancient Roman territories, partly in Hungary, west of the Danube). It is a page following the publication, every Sunday, of new chapters of the work. The Facebook page hosts the reflections of both the author and his readers, and Péterfy even explicitly calls on the "fans" (the page has more than 1,000 of them) to comment on issues bearing on the characters, plot, intelligibility, etc. The offline (book) publication is in preparation, and allegedly the final version will take into consideration the comments made on Facebook. Furthermore, some characters of the novel have their own profiles on Facebook, so that they too can have "friends."

Temporality: Lyrical Poetry Offline

Temporality of narrative, in this sense (that is, episodic publication, with intermissions), seems to be, then, a conventional phenomenon, even if the Internet opens new and interesting prospects. It is far easier, for instance, to overcome the difficulties of anachrony. In a print periodical it is not advisable to invert time patterns or change time levels, because this may hinder the perspicuity of the plot. On the internet this is somewhat less dangerous. And after all, a narrative evolves in time, so presenting this process by picturing the time passing seems to fit what is presented.

Lyrical poetry, on the other hand, has quite a different relation to the element of time. There are, to be sure, a number of lyrical poetic works with narrative elements, and one could even suggest that any lyrical work can be read as a sort of dramatic monologue, a sort of speech recited in a certain situation, in a scene, as it were. However, it may well be the general impression that works of lyrical poetry are beyond and outside of time. What impressions do recitations of poems with pauses or sudden changes of pace actually make? Impressions of the (imagined)

temporal progress of writing the poem itself? Or the tempo of recalling the text? Or the weight of the thoughts? Reading the poem, however, can give only visual signals of the time passing, such as the blank spaces of Mallarmé or the stanzas as articulations, or, again, breaking the lines, or certain punctuation marks (– , …, :, etc.). But note that all these indicators serve to block (or slow down) reading (or reading aloud) the text – nothing will make the reader accelerate, jump or "jabber."

Representing the passage of time in a poem (or rather, the time of the poem) may have a humorous effect. For instance, take Dezső Tandori's poem, *The Sonnet* (1973):

> *a*
> *b*
> *b*
> *a*
>
> *a*
> *b*
> *(At this line, he stalled.)*
> *b*
> *a*
>
> *c*
> *d*
> *d*
>
> *c*
> *d*
> *c*
> *(then he went on anyway, and completed it.)*

Here the lyrical is transformed into a narrative: the writing of the poem itself has a history, and this can be built into the poem itself, and also into reading of the poem. And, ironically, the "purely" lyrical element, which is confronted here with the narrative of writing/reading the poem, is nothing but a "pure" series of letters symbolizing the rhyme pattern.

Temporality: Lyrical Poetry Online

In addition to these phenomena, where breaks, stalls, stops are only momentary and left to the reader (in other words, in addition to conventions realized in the medium of the printed text), there is now in the age of the Internet a new possibility to utilize the temporal aspects of poetry. The "dramatic" nature of presenting

the text in portions, the unique nature of following (in real time) the online publication of the text, mentioned above in connection with the event of posting chapters of a narrative, may be part of online lyrical poetry as well. What happens in these – rare – occasions represents an instance of written literature, but poem here is drawn near to the genre of performed drama: it is prescribed how the text should evolve in the readers' time, their passing the time is controlled, and even the process itself may be suspended or cancelled.

Mari Falcsik, a well known poetess (http://www.freewebs.com/falcsikmari/, http://falcsikmari.honlapepito.hu/), in early 2010, published two lines in English on the Facebook "News Feed" page (available for all her "friends"), evidently (part of) a poem, without any explanation. A few minutes later she added two lines in Hungarian, apparently the translation of the English (or vice versa). Then a few minutes later two more lines in English, follow by two in Hungarian, and so on and so forth, with 5-10 minute intervals, until the end of the poem. Those who were "present" were able to comment on the posts, express whether or not they "liked" them, and, paralleling to this publication, the same text(s) appeared on Twitter.

Experiencing the act of creation in real time was an extraordinary incident. Not because of the poem itself (it was, in fact, the act of translation of Falcsik's own poem into English), but because the reader was able to feel like a participant in a dramatic event. Something developed before the reader's very eyes, so that something (a text) which normally is as a poem gained a temporary dimension, becoming an event. The poem then could be read later, starting from Falcsik's older posts on the News Feed, but then what is found is merely a text in small portions, and the reader misses the experiment of the poem evolving in time.

Authorship on the Internet

But who is the actor directing the reader and controlling his or her reading? Whose is the "power" in the Internet communication of literature in the cases mentioned above?

Even in the case of offline texts, that is, in the more conventional, traditional forms of literary communication, the position of the text has long been discussed, and the concept of authorship always entails assumptions and hypotheses, rather than positive knowledge. The "real" author may be regarded as dead, can be parenthesized, or can be seen as palpable, responsible, existing in real life, etc., depending on conventions, erudition, or concept of literature. The internet, however, produces a more complex situation: it opens possibilities for the author to play new games with his or her identity, just as in traditional literary communication it is a certain set of texts by which (unreliable) information is gained concern-

ing the ("real") person belonging to the authorial name, so in the medium of world wide web these texts will easily and quickly proliferate, and we find ourselves rapidly enmeshed in the net of the texts encompassing that name.

This year (2010), Margaret Attwood published an essay in her blog of The New York Review of Books on her experiences with Twitter. When she started using Twitter, there had already been two persons using the same name ("Margaret Attwood"), and she received several letters asking if it was really her, since one can never be quite sure who one is communicating with through the medium of the Internet. Politicians making use of Internet marketing and propaganda do not (or perhaps only in the rarest cases) write their own posts. Rather, they have a group of PR experts working for them. The strategies underlying the processes of building and using a *persona* (an imagined identity which can be hypothesized or inferred) merit a separate study. This is of interest in this context not only because of literary (aesthetic) reasons (or, for that matter, political, business, etc. reasons). On the "community sites" people demonstrate certain behaviors: some are hectic and aggressive, others are reserved, some tend to comment on every possible post, and, of course, there are several forms of conduct, not to speak of habits of posting music and pictures, of the abundance or narrowness of the personal network, that is, of non-textual peculiarities. Some are known as writers, and they are positioned accordingly in the set of information mediated by the world wide web, and there are "no name" friends (either literally, using a pseudonym, or because their name is not familiar) who nonetheless begin to be taken into account as creators of some aesthetic experience.

Collectivity

In 2000, the Magvető publishing house and Fókusz Online (the Internet site of one of the biggest bookshops in Hungary) invited applications for the composition of a novel. Several participants published one part per week, and on the basis of the decision of a jury six of them were chosen to continue. Finally the work of a certain Jake Smiles (a pseudonym, of course) was announced as winner. His (her?) text was very soon published in book form, with considerable success. Jake Smiles is well informed in the world of the web, and he very consciously uses the instruments available (and his/her knowledge of the media itself is evident in the few interviews given by him/her).

The work has some traits of collectivity, inasmuch as the text was modified (or could have been modified) in accordance with the comments of the readers following its production. However, with the heyday of the "community sites" in the past couple of years, collectivity appears in quite a new situation. Readers of the text being composed are there not specifically to observe or comment on the pro-

cess, they just happen to be present. The pages serve social life and information exchange. The users may contact acquaintances, either close or casual, they can chat in public or privately, they can share news or their favorite music, pictures, links – and the acquaintances then can reflect on all these manifestations or simply express whether or not they "like" them. It is a great opportunity to have a social network and get acquainted with one another's tastes, and one is absolutely free to do so. One may refrain from entering the page for months, if one so chooses, or just merge into mere observation without commenting any post, music, picture, or link. And, of course, one can be present day and night, looking for new friends and commenting on whatever happens to grab one's interest.

This also means that the chances of encountering literary works are much greater than if somebody were simply to surf websites. Sooner or later a friend (or a friend of a friend) may suggest a book (or a poem, novel, short story) to read, advise to join some "fan club" of writers, publishing houses, etc., or friends may make an effort to write a poem or a short story themselves, and references to and citations from literary works eventually will appear in the flow of posts. This is not necessarily "high" or valuable or "classical" literature, but when people all around the world have less and less interest in written literature – and, accordingly, there are less and less reader–work encounters – "community websites" may contribute to restore the position of literature. Thus not only creation may sometimes (if rarely) be of a collective nature, but – more importantly – the consumption of the work is very often a collective act of the readers, with interpretations and their discussions, sometimes with direct access to the writer (and his authorial interpretations).

As to the cooperative creation of writers of literature, a recent example is a short poem by two first-rate poets, Ágnes Rapai (http://legeza.oszk.hu/Rapai_Agnes/index.html) and Lóránt K. Kabai (http://kkl.mentha.hu/ – he writes his name "k. kabai lóránt", without capitals). Rapai sent a line to k. kabai's wall; k. kabai added another line, then sent it back. It was Rapai's turn again, and k. kabai wrote the fourth line… Those who were "friends" of both could follow the poem as it developed. Others, who knew only one of them, could read the whole poem after it was finished, on both authors' walls.

Another case of (a limited version of) collectivity happened when a lesser known poet, Gyula Hodossy, asked his Facebook "friends" (and the members of a group devoted to Hungarian net literature) to help him edit his new volume – that is, after the Internet publication of his work on Facebook, the readers were invited to form the final contents of the would-be book and the order of the text, and also to comment on each poem.

Another type of collectivity (in a very limited sense, again) is when a writer publishes his or her work in portions on the Internet (in this case, Facebook, again), making use of the comments attached to the work in progress and even in-

serting the names of (or allusions to) those commenting on the text. Ágnes Rapai published a cycle of poems and letters of the (fictitious) lover of the Russian poet Sergei Ésenin, and sometimes in the text itself reflected on the comments concerning her previous posts. Also, she appropriated some photos recommended to her. Mari Falcsik (and others, too) make a wide use of photos appropriated or taken over from other users, and integrate them as a form of commentary into her own poetic texts, thus producing an original "picture book" of some sort – and one can witness the procedure, during which a small series of poems is formed through the discovery or selection of a photo, which is then given a special position (and interpretation) among the poems. And this is Internet literature par excellence. It is highly doubtful that these poems, along with the corresponding photos, will ever be published in book form, and if they were to be published, the experiential process of witnessing the cycles of forming and reforming would be lost.

If, as suggested above, the reader may be part (or at least observer) of a literary text in its very creation, this implies a new experience never to be gotten from traditional literary communication. Even if there is no live interaction, for the reader to be a spectator during the process of creation is a unique literary event.

Dispersion in "Space"

As has been discussed, a poem can be scattered in time. The time of the reading process can be controlled by giving portions of the text with certain (random or designed) intervals. Cyberspace, however, offers the opportunity to disperse the text in "space." Lines or parts of the poem (or narrative, for that matter) can appear in different "places." Thus, for instance, in the summer of 2010 Ágnes Rapai posted lines of a poem of hers on the Facebook pages of about a dozen "friends", one line for each. One could read the whole poem only if one were "friends" of Ágnes Rapai's friends. This required some work (and the courage to ask some people to be "friends" so that one could get access to the missing line[s]), and one could speculate whether the persons hosting the line of the poem in question had anything to do with that very line. Unlike temporal dispersion of a text, this trick is not impossible to repeat, and you do not have to be online to perceive its upshot. However, the poem presented in this manner is not at all the same as a poem conveyed through conventional channels of communication, in an offline written form.

Marketing Literature

As has been suggested, reader–literature encounter has an extended chance on "community sites." People are more likely to read literary texts on the net than irl [in real life]. This includes, in addition to the original and strange cases listed above, the much more traditional forms of literary communication in the medium of Internet communication. These latter forms serve to popularize, circulate, spread (and comment on) the literary text, which, in turn, is a previously written, sometimes already printed (published) work. They are not at all inferior to the more innovative versions, but their objective is clearly different, and the fundamental structure of the reader/writer relation is not changed. However, both presenting the literary work and the literary marketing on the net opens new perspectives, first of all because a huge amount of paratexts are generated, such as authorial statements and pronouncements, ads, and readers' comments, which are present in the printed medium in a more rudimentary way. Furthermore, a sort of intimacy can be regained through the fact that the writer may know his or her readers personally (or at least by name). He or she can react to their comments, and may make their communication interactive.

In his seminal essay of marketing literary works in the cyberspace (http://www.prae.hu/prae/articles.php?type=4&cat=3&aid=1326), Dániel Levente Pál mentions some interesting cases, including the launch of a special blog by a publishing house to the PR activities intended to "build up" a new author (by publishing his or her biography, the cover of the book, blurbs, etc.) or even creating a virtual introductory show of the book (via video cameras, SMS's, projectors, net communication, etc.). The possibilities are countless, and it also should be mentioned that the main instrument of both communicating and marketing literary works, literary magazines, are more and more present on the Internet (moreover, some facing extinction in the print world and survive only on the web). Thus an ever growing part of both publication and marketing is continuously moving to the field of digital communication.

Conclusion

It was not my intention in this paper to suggest that the interesting phenomena listed above (making the presentation of the work temporal, dispersing it spatially, the collective composition of works of literature and interactive creation) will, in themselves, produce aesthetically valuable literature. Nor do I mean to imply that these variations are momentous in the history of literature in general. Emphasis is

on their potential. If certain traits and procedures, which may now seem accidental or casual, will be iterated several times, if they gain certain rules and frames, then new forms will have the chance to develop, forms that one can call new genres, genres in which, for instance, the temporal evolvement of the work will be the focus, or else the motion between different sites where text dwells. But, more importantly, we cannot foresee the possible new, original and perhaps surprising forms yet to be born, so let us be perceptive and attentive to the new phenomena.[7]

Notes

1   Iván Horváth, sous la dir. de (1992 [1993]) *Répertoire de la poésie hongroise ancienne. Manuel de correction d'erreurs dans la base de données, I–II* (Paris: Éditions du Nouvel Objet), 49 + 808 pp., assisté par Gabriella H. Hubert, cooperé par Zsuzsa Font, János Herner, Etelka Szőnyi, István Vadai, György Gál (responsable de mathématiques), Tamás Ruttner (responsable d'enregistrement textuel); *(version 3.0), MicroCDS/ISIS, 6 disquettes* (1992 [1993]) (Paris: Éditions du Nouvel Objet), in Hungarian: *A régi magyar vers számítógépes repertóriuma (Répertoire de la poésie hongroise ancienne), 4.0 hálózati változat [Network version 4.0], BRS/Search 'POEM'*: http://www.iif.hu/db/poem/ (1993); Version 3.1 (CD), abCD, I (1994), fasc. 2; *Version 5.0 (internet edition)* (2000) http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/repertorium/dokument/index.html (online ed. Róbert Karsai).

2   *Balassi Bálint összes versei. Hálózati kritikai kiadás* (The Complete Poems of Bálint Balassi. Online Critical Edition) http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/gepesk/bbom/cimlap.htm (1998). (Ed. Iván Horváth, Tünde Tóth.)

3   *József Attila, Tanulmányok és cikkek, 1923–1937. Kísérleti hálózati kritikai kiadás* [Attila József, Studies and Articles, 1923–1937. Experimental Online Critical Edition] http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/ja/cimlap.htm/ (1999) (Ed. Iván Horváth).

4   For a full list of Online Critical Editions see http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/gepesk/index/.

5   Horváth Iván (2000) 'A legnehezebb kérdés' [The Most Difficult Question], in his *Magyarok Bábelben* [Hungarians in Babel] (Szeged: JATEPress), 191–201, http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/babel/3300.htm, http://magyar- irodalom.elte.hu/babel/2130.htm

6   Several issues touched upon above are raised in Dániel Levente Pál (2009) 'Philologia 3.0', in Vilmos Bárdosi (ed.): *Quo Vadis Philologia Temporum Nostrorum?* (Budapest: Tinta), 219–24.

7   This study is a version of my essay 'Az élő net-irodalom néhány változata' [Some Versions of Living Net-Literature] (2010) http://www.es.hu/index.php?view=doc;26101, *Élet és Irodalom* Vol. 54, No. 23, 13; an important reply was written by Levente Dániel Pál, 'Élő net-irodalom, kiberfilológia, (ön)marketing' [Living Net-Literature, Cyberphilology, (Self-)Marketing], (2010) http://www.es.hu/?view=doc;26187, *Élet és Irodalom* Vol. 54, No. 25, 2.